

TOO FAR NEWS

Protecting & Conserving Our Water

April 2008 Volume 197



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The following was recently published in the Citrus County Chronicle

The Florida Department of Community Affairs is trying to save Citrus County from itself. The timid and multi-year approach that the Citrus County Commissioners took in protecting our springs was the result of erroneous and misleading information promulgated by some builders and builders' representatives. I cannot tell for sure whether they did not know any better or they were intentionally being dishonest. One told the BOCC that high performance septic system costs are site specific. He went on to detail the cost for one unnamed site at \$16,500. Contrary to popular opinion at the time, I believed him. BUT what he did not say was that a conventional septic system would have cost about \$12,500. We are talking an approximate addition of \$4,000 to make a major (more than 75%) reduction in probably the second most important source of nitrogen in our springs and lakes.

Inspection costs have also been misstated at \$400 to \$700 per year. I talked to a person that pays \$50 each for the three inspections he gets per year.

Another piece of misinformation was the suggestion that high performance septic systems should only be required near springs and other water bodies. The explanation was that the ground would filter out nitrogen. This misses the fact that all of Citrus County is a spring-shed and that filtering through our ground no more removes nitrogen from water than it would remove salt from saltwater.

Nitrogen is fertilizer for water weeds and algae.

Nitrogen is a major contaminant of our springs. Typically springs in our National Forests have .03 mg/L of nitrogen. Some of our local springs are over 5 mg/L of nitrogen. Our spring water is unfit for human consumption when it gets over 10 mg/L. We are halfway there.

It will take decades to reverse the trend and clean out our underground water systems. Let's get started.

Where sewers are not available, we beg the Citrus County BOCC to start now to require high performance septic systems for all new construction. Adding \$4,000 to the cost of a new house is a small price to save our water, our environment and our future. A rebate may be appropriate for hardship cases.

AI

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Earth Day April 22, 2008
Take Care of Mother!

HILITES OF THE MARCH MEETING

By Pat Brady

Thanks to Jerri Regan for the goodies and to Jerri and Pat & Bill Johnson for working the coffee room.

Call to Order—Al called the meeting to order, led the Pledge and delivered the Invocation. Minutes of previous meetings as well as Board Meeting minutes are available. The Treasurer's report was accepted as read subject to an audit.

Jim Bitter reported that each year the Homosassa River Alliance declares an Environmental Warrior of the Year. He is recommending that TOO FAR receive the award. TOO FAR will receive the award at their April 16, 2008 meeting after Board approval.

Al reported that the TOO FAR Board voted a policy change allowing TOO FAR to support candidates running for election. The TOO FAR Board voted to support Joyce Valentino, Vicki Phillips, Bernie Levin, Charlie Dean, and Ron Schulz. Support is based on the candidates' record of supporting TOO FAR's goals and objectives.

Al introduced our speaker Dave Moore, Executive Director SWFWMD and noted that we have not always agreed with Mr. Moore or with Swiftmud but we appreciate that he listens to us. Mr. Moore said that Swiftmud is still very concerned about water. The recent rains have raised the lakes some, but we still need to conserve. The work on Lake Panasoffkee continues and Swiftmud is trying to keep the water up in that lake so dredging may continue. Not out of the woods yet. We still have 2-3 months of dry season and we all hope for normal summer rain fall.

Dave talked about several issues and two that Al raised regarding land use changes. They don't automatically transfer the water permits. Criteria used to evaluate a request is whether or not the impact changes.

Regarding the berm repair in Little Lake Henderson, Dave asked that we remember that sink holes are a natural process. The reason we have springs is that we have sink holes. There are thousands under these lakes. Porous topography is Florida. A lengthy discussion followed with members split on their support for the berm repair.

Additional discussion items included the following: Morrison Pond and the sinkhole, Two Mile Prairie sink hole, aquifer recharge, Inverness city well, sink holes as natural ways to flush the toxins from the lake, the need to conserve water, continued growth, reservoirs, local sources first, flood protection, desalination and the Parkway.

Dave Starnes gave an update on Lake Panasoffkee with photos of the progress. Work should be completed by October.

Public officials and candidates for political office may address the membership by registering at the sign up desk at the start of our meetings. Sign up cards will be developed and kept at the desk. Officials and candidates may also call the office at 352-726-5004.

The Bullfrog Drawing was followed by the Chinese Auction. Meeting adjourned.

TOO FAR Mission Statement

TOO FAR is a grassroots organization dedicated to the best management and conservation of natural resources for present and future generations through public education and interaction with all entities charged with these responsibilities.

Meeting Notices

TOO FAR Board Meeting
Thursday April 24 at 5 pm
East Citrus Community Center

TOO FAR General Meeting
Thursday April 24 at 7 pm
East Citrus Community Center

Citrus County Task Force
April Meeting: Cancelled
May 12 at 3 pm
Lecanto Government Bldg.

SWFWMD Governing Board
April 29 at 9 am

Withlacoochee River Basin Board
April 10 at 9 am Brooksville

SWFWMD Governing Board
April 29 at 9 am Brooksville

Citrus County Commissioners
April 8 & 22 and May 13 & 27
at 1 pm Courthouse

Sumter County Commissioners
April 8 at 5 pm Gov't. Annex
April 22 at 5 pm
Colony Cottage

Lake Levels as of March 24, 2008

Structure:	Current
Floral City	39.76
Inverness	36.36
Hernando	34.99
Panasoffkee	39.69
Wysong Upstream	39.49
Wysong Downstream	36.28
Leslie Heifner Outside	40.00
Leslie Heifner Inside	40.00

All levels are in ft. above sea level.

Wysong Main Gate raised to 39 ft.
Low Flow Gate at 38.7 ft.
221 cfs total flow

Floral City Pool: Leslie Heifner, Floral City, Golf Course and Moccasin slough are open.

Inverness and Hernando Pools structures are closed.

Please call Mike Bartlett, SWFWMD at 800-423-1476 ext. 4515 for more information regarding lake levels and structures.

Mike is speaking at our April 24th meeting. Don't miss his presentation. He will talk about how Tsala Apopka gets and keeps her water. See you there.

Performance and Promise

The TOO FAR Board has voted to support local candidates that have demonstrated performance and potential performance to support the mission, principles and objectives of TOO FAR. Support is subject to change and additional candidates will be considered.

The following candidates were selected;

- Senator Charles Dean – Candidate for reelection
- Representative Ron Schultz – Candidate for reelection
- County Commissioner Joyce Valentino – Candidate for reelection
- County Commissioner Vickie Phillips – Candidate for reelection
- Bernie Leven – Candidate for County Commissioner

This is part of our way to fight for accountable representation and prevail over the other side. On the other side are the forces financing candidates to back rampant, destructive growth and avoid protection of our waters.

Members' comments and suggestions are solicited.

Florida Hometown Democracy Update

Joyce Tarnow, President of Floridians for a Sustainable Population and Editor of their quarterly publication entitled Florida Population Forum asked for TOO FAR's help. As cited in their publication, Florida Hometown Democracy was sabotaged by builders and the legislature. The following is taken directly from their publication. "Despite collecting and submitting 814,000 signatures by the February 1, 2008 deadline, the Secretary of State, Kurt Browning, only credited 564,558 signatures of the registered voters who signed the petitions. In our follow up we learned that a number of signatures were rejected erroneously." The opposition, a building industry group, "called themselves Florida Smart Growth and started a

petition effort to compete with Florida Hometown Democracy. The (their) gatherers in some places claimed they were the 'good guys with the green petition', others misrepresented the objectives of the Smart Growth petition."

Joyce asked that TOO FAR members consider donations to Hometown Democracy to help them fund a lawsuit challenging the state's decision. To enable donations to fund a lawsuit, Floridians for Sustainable Population (FSP) has agreed to make the Florida Hometown Democracy Legal Fund a project of FSP so that contributions can be tax deductible." If you would like to contribute you can make a check out to FSP, earmarked for the FHD Legal Fund and mail it to FSP, P.O. Box 2641, Cross City, Florida 32628. Joyce sends her thanks for any contribution you are able to make.

Did You Know?

The Southwest Florida Water Management District, commonly referred to as Swiftmud, has an e-Resource that is available to the public. If you'd like to know more about Swiftmud and its programs you can subscribe to the e-Resource. This is a monthly/bimonthly electronic publication to keep you up to date on the community and legislative work done by Swiftmud. Also, it provides information on important water issues. To subscribe email Swiftmud at CommunityAffairs@WaterMatters.org Or, you can call 1-800-423-1476 to get on their list.

The February 2008 issue describes the opening of the Tampa Bay Seawater Desalination Plant in Apollo Beach. As cited in the publication, this plant is the largest seawater desalination plant in North America. At 25 mgd, the plant provides 10 percent of the Tampa Bay region's drinking water supply. The plant is operated by American Water and Acciona Agua through their joint venture subsidiary American Water-Pridesa.

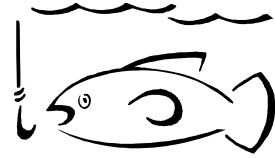
Also this issue talks about the West-Central Florida Water Restoration Action Plan that was included in Governor Crist's proposed budget. Crist's 2008-2009 budget includes \$300 million to protect and preserve Florida's environment through Florida Forever, adding to the nearly 3.6 million acres of land already in conservation.

So, if you would like to know more check out this resource.

Mea Culpa or It's All My Fault

Two errors in our March Newsletter: Norm Provencal is TOO FAR's new board member and Al Grubman's email is grubman1@gmail.com We fired our newsletter staff, but she just keeps coming back!

THE CATCHING REPORT
by Jerry Schneider



Hello fellow fishermen, as always I hope these words find you healthy and happy.

The drought is far from over but things are looking better. The cold fronts that are passing through seem to be producing more rain than usual. The lakes and river are slowly beginning to rise. SWFWMD has opened the structures at Leslie Heffner, Floral City, Sandpiper, and Moccasin Slough to help raise our lake levels and the water is flowing.

On the salt: Warmer water temps have improved the fishing in the Gulf. The milder weather fronts have brought the Gulf temps up to seventy degree mark. Trout season opened March first with plenty of them being caught. Most are just below or above the low end of the slot. This means there should be plenty of keepers later in the season. Some larger trout and reds are being boated at the spoil banks and the Progress Energy canal. The Withlacoochee river is giving up some nice Mangrove snapper. Snook season also opened the first of March. The warmer water should heat up the "lineside" bite. Think structure.

Getting' fresh: Our lakes are looking better every day. The water and the water temps are rising every day and the bass are hungry. Mike Steele of Molly McGee's deli and bait shop said his shiner customers are catching plenty of bigger bass but the crappie bite has taken a dive. Fishing must be good, the boat ramp at Hwy. 44 is always full. Greg and June Schumkal rate their fishing as fair. "We are catching fish every trip but none are in the trophy range" says Greg. Al Grubman has been landing some fair size bass while fishing with visiting family. Richard "Cookie" Cooke is the only one reporting big fish this month. While shiner fishing the river near Dunnellon with a neighbor they boated several large bass with one over ten pounds.

Well folks that's all there is for now. I wish you blue skies and tight lines.

Jerry's gone fishin'

Fish Camp Philosophy: The contentment which fills the mind of the angler at the close of a days sport is one of the chiefest charms in his life."

Rev. William Cowper Prime

Is it time for your summer vacation?

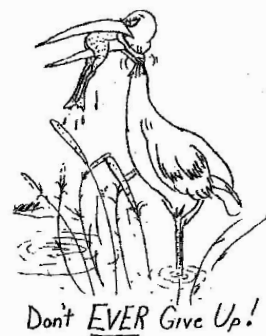
Don't forget to let TOO FAR know where to send your newsletter. It would be a shame to miss one single issue. So, make that call today. Call us at 352-726-5004 and let TOO FAR know. Happy Trails to You!

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In Memory of Jim Adkison

Long-time TOO FAR member Jim Adkison passed away.
He was much loved by family and friends.
Join us in our prayers for Lolly and the family.
May he rest in peace.

**NEXT GENERAL MEETING - THURSDAY - APRIL 24, 2008
7 pm at the East Citrus Community Center
Speaker: Mr. Mike Bartlett, Structure Control Supervisor
Southwest Florida Water Management District**

**Last Chance to buy Super Raffle Tickets
Drawing on April 24 at the General Meeting
Win a four person fishing trip
Donated by Texas Aquatic Harvesting, Inc.**