

TOO FAR NEWS



Protecting & Conserving Our Water

September 2009 Volume 214

President's Message

Times, They Are Changing

About 21 years ago, 1988, the Wysong dam was removed precipitating the formation of TOO FAR (Taxpayers Outraged Organization For Accountable Representation). The original and primary focus was replacement of the Wysong Dam, starting a long battle. It was 14 years of struggle until the dam was rebuilt and rededicated in 2002 as the Wysong-Coogler Dam honoring Al Coogler, the SWFWMD Governor who was our ally.

You can get to and see the dam by car, boat or airboat. It is an interesting structure that is unique in my experience, either in my engineering studies or my time with the Army Corps of Engineers. It is an adjustable dam designed to support the levels of Lake Panasoffkee and the Withlacoochee River but be lowered as needed to allow required flows downstream in the river. When raised the dam backs up some of the Withlacoochee water to the Leslie-Heifner and Orange State Canals which flow into the Tsala Apopka Lakes at the Floral City Pool. In the present system those are the only places river water enters the Tsala Apopka Lakes.

We are fortunate to have some of our founders around as we strive to learn and keep up our important work. Our work encompasses the lakes, the rivers, the aquifer, the springs and our other natural resources. We mourn those who are gone and honor them for all they have done.

The top three resources we work on are the Withlacoochee River, the Tsala Apopka Lakes and the aquifer. We continue working to protect the Withlacoochee River and our ground water from the WRWSA (Withlacoochee Regional Water Supply Authority) and their consultant, our old "friend" Pete Hubbell.

The River feeds the lakes which are the historical overflow basin for the river. The lakes and the marshes feed the aquifer which feeds the springs. It all works together.

Our working relationships have expanded. We work with many others to support and advance our work. We are part of or work closely with: Withlacoochee River Alliance, Homosassa River Alliance, Citrus County Council, Gulf Restoration Network, Citrus 20/20 and their Save Our Waters Week. None of these relationships limit our ability to work on issues important to us or require us to work on issues that are not important to us. The cost is negligible.

Our relationship with SWFWMD (South West Florida Water Management District) or "Swiftmud" has also changed. We are not enemies at each others throats. Dave Moore, the Executive Director, has welcomed our input and participated in 2-way communication. Dave agreed to install 10 two foot by three foot oval culverts through the Flying Eagle North-South dike to confirm the actual effects of removing the dikes. The answer won't be in until we can see what happens when the Floral City Pool is high, about 42.5 feet or higher, and the river is lower than 42 feet. Until then we are working on more possibilities. Bruce Wirth, Deputy Executive Director of SWFWMD, has not historically been considered a friend of TOO FAR but now he says "Looking at the river is now part of my morning routine." He is moving the organization to get more river water into the lakes when available and appropriate. We still have a long way to go in fixing our lakes and filling them sooner and faster but we can work with SWFWMD, be heard and have a chance.

Your comments and participation are welcome (and needed).

Al

Lake Levels as of September 5, 2009

Structure	Current Level	
Floral City	40.48	Leslie Heifner open
Inverness	38.32	Golf Course all gates open
Hernando	35.11	Moccasin Slough open
Panasoffkee	40.14	Brogden Bridge open
		Van Ness & S-353 closed
Wysong Upstream	39.51	
Wysong Downstream	37.29	All levels are in feet above sea level
Leslie Heifner Upstream	39.51	Additional information at SWFWMD at
Leslie Heifner Downstream	37.29	http://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/hydrology

Real time data available at SWFWMD site <http://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/data/scada/>

Board of County Commissioners' Meetings

Citrus County Board of County Commissioners' Meetings are found at http://www.citruscountyfl.org/commissioners/agenda/agenda_deadlines.htm

Sumter County Board of County Commissioners' Meetings are found at
More info: <http://sumtercountyfl.gov/CurrentEvents.aspx#CID26>

Save Our Waters Week by Al Grubman

For the 14th year Citrus 20/20 is sponsoring Save-Our-Waters-Week. We of TOO FAR (Taxpayers Outraged Organization For Accountable Representation) salute Citrus 20/20 and are proud to be participating.

Of all the activities during the week (September 18 – 26) the closest to my heart is the Adopt-A-Shore Cleanup. For a few hours during the morning of September 19, 2009 volunteers in Citrus County and all over the world will be cleaning up the shorelines and waterways. They will be on foot, in diving gear, in kayaks, canoes, air boats, bass boats, pontoon boats, and many other land and marine conveyances. We will be picking up cans, bottles, plastic bags, hazards, umbrellas and all kinds of other things. When we finish we will be able to see the difference. Then we can go to an appreciation cookout; either at the East county or West county location. Please volunteer as a team, a couple or an individual, with or without a boat. You will be provided with a hat, a T-shirt, garbage bags, water and soda. All persons on the sign-up sheet will be covered by Citrus County Workers' Comp. To volunteer call Citrus County Aquatic Services at 352/527-7620.

Other thoughts on water as we recover from the drought:

The drought is not over until the aquifer and the surface waters fully recover.

Conservation of water is always appropriate whether or not water is being wasted by your neighbor or developers. When water starts running out, we pay. The more we conserve the less we pay and the further into the future we push the costs of new water supplies.

Fish, swim, boat, enjoy our waters but cherish and respect them. Don't be careless with trash or fertilizer.

HILITES AUGUST MEETING

By Pat Brady

Call to Order, Pledge– AI Invocation - Larry

Secretary's minutes are available from Jerri or Pat by email request

Treasurer's Report - Greg gave the report.

Announcements: Thanks to Jerri for the ice cream. Jan Grubman gave an ads report. Scoor's is moving to the location of Helen's Consignment shop in September. They will open Sep. 9th. Remember the dogs and cats and bring the pet food.

Tonight in the group, former Commission Joyce Valentino, and Homosassa River Alliance leader, Jim Bitter.

AI took his first air boat rides on the lakes this past month and enjoyed it immensely. Now he has a better idea of areas he talked about.

Speaker: Bernadine Flood-Nichols – Water Conservation and Outreach Coordinator for Citrus County, Chairperson of Save Our Waters Week. Some of this responsibility covers providing tap water to the area through our water treatment plants. (Greg Schmulak represents our organization on this event.) Her presentation included the location of water treatment plants, plan to combine some of the plants, and to eliminate outdated ones. She included information about the number of lines, wells, plants and how much water is permitted and storage capacity. Pumping 2 billion gallons for customers. Serving about 22,000 properties. 70% is used for irrigation.

In her position, she deals with rebate programs, education, events and partnerships to promote conservation. They have many give aways for customers, low flow faucet aerators, leak checkers, measurement devices, devices to display water in tanks so not flushing as much water away. Also has an irrigation maintenance work sheet. These systems should be checked yearly. Also provide rain sensors to eliminate unnecessary watering and timers for hoses.

Even water conservation playing cards. Can request these items by email at Bernadine.Flood@bocc.citrus.fl.us

14th year for the Save Our Waters event. Her 4th year with the event. Also a board member of Citrus 20/20 who sponsors the event. Theme is "Water, A Resource in Crisis."

Presented a slide on the event history going back to 1995 with the event taking on the current name in 1996. They were projecting to what would happen to water by the year 2020. Volunteers are very committed. It takes the whole year to pull the event together and many volunteers. The planned activities include: Scholarships, Photo Contest, Poster & Essays Guest Commentaries, and Guest Speaker Program.

SOWW starts Friday Sept 18th and runs to the following Saturday. 12 events beginning with a fund raiser dinner at the Key training center. Will feature an adult Jeopardy Game on the 18th. \$35 per ticket. Also a raffle.

September 19th at 8 a.m is Adopt-a-Shore clean up on both East and West sides of the county and a picnic at Lake Hernando Beach Park, At Crystal River State Park they will be showing movies with surround sound. Must sign up in advance and you are covered by County insurance. Can't sign up that morning. Schedule is on the Citrus 20/20 website and will be in the paper. Bernadine encourages us all to participate in as many events as we can during the week. Would also like to have more volunteers to help. AI – last summer we had a kid's fishing class which Bernadine supported. There were goody bags for each kid. Thanks very much for that help.

A Q&A session followed the presentation. Issues covered: Water service in Citrus County, connecting water systems, aging infrastructure, protests to chlorinated water, suits against the county over aging water and sewer systems, the importance of the lakes and their ability to recharge the system.

HILITES AUGUST MEETING continued

AI – terrible shame that 70% of our water goes for grass! We really need to outlaw St. Augustine grass!

Jim Bitter – 20/20 has a lot of developers who should put their money where their mouth is by not putting in this St Augustine. Go green development. They think this type is what people want, but it really isn't. Joyce commented on offering rewards to builders who go green. Builders refused to go to educational classes on going green and they had to be canceled. Larry mentioned the cisterns that everyone used to have. Couldn't we reward people who build these into their new houses? Some people are holding run off on there property in green develops. Citrus Hills put rubber linings in their retention ponds so they are now evaporation ponds. Nothing now recharges from these areas.

County is considering putting the water department into private hands (for profit). Citrus County Council has done some research on this and found where this has taken place there has been few successes and some major catastrophes such as in Atlanta. The Council is going to oppose this. Pressure on rates will be upward, but in public hands pressure is downward. Will be a disaster to turn our system over to private enterprise. County would retain ownership but create a new layer of bureaucracy for complaints. No accountability to the county commissioners. Can only act when complaints but then damage has been done.

Jim says they will prepare a presentation on this to present to us.

Adopt a Shore is one of the most interesting parts of Save Our Water week. Need volunteers. Our treasurer is in charge of ½ the county. Big side at 44 ramp that gives TOO FAR credit for clean up in the past. So please if you have time that Saturday join in the project. Amazing how much junk is in the lake. Not particularly strenuous work.

When the Inverness pool comes up 6 more inches water will begin to go into the Hernando Pool. Water came up in Inverness quickly when they fully opened the gates. Water is puddling on both sides of Flying Eagle culverts but not flowing through the new pipes. But water is flowing through Moccasin Slough.

The Restoration Task Force has decided to have a technical advisory board meeting after much urgency. There have been complaints that this group gets nothing done, doesn't meet often and doesn't take advantage of expertise available. AI mentioned this is a Sunshine group that must publish its meetings. They have put out a notice somewhere but can't find it in the Chronicle. Meeting is Friday at the Lecanto Government center at 2 p.m. Come if you can.

Director's Reports:

Frank – write letters, call your congressman, etc. about our issues and bills.

AI – The Too Far Foundation and Too Far Inc are looking at formalizing their relationship. It looks like something that would be good for the organization. We have to learn enough to decide how to intelligently do this.

Bullfrog Drawing of \$20 was won by Larry Hartman.

Motion to adjourn, 2nd passed.

Get involved. See what's going on in your own backyard. Check it out.

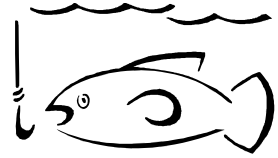
The SWFWMD Basin Board and Governing Board schedules, agendas and minutes are in alphabetical order on web site <http://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us> under boards.

The two of most interest in Citrus County are Withlacoochee Basin Board and the Coastal Basin Board.

Citrus-Hernando Waterways Restoration Council, Citrus County Task Force meetings are at <http://swfwmd.state.fl.us/projects/waterways/citrus.php>

THE CATCHING REPORT

by Jerry Schneider



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

On the Salt

The summer heat is still with us and it continues to affect the fish and those that pursue them. The afternoon storms are keeping many anglers closer to a safe port. The water temp is near ninety degrees and this has moved the bigger Trout to deeper water. Look for the bigger Trout south of the Chassahowitzka river channel around Crawl Key. Smaller Trout and the Reds are still shallow but the warm water has made them slow to bite. Larger Gag Grouper and Mangrove Snapper are still on the rocks and ledges in fifteen feet of water and they are feeding with gusto. Another hungry fish is the Spanish Mackerel. Look for them around the bait pods. Chumming is another method to bring them into range. Sadly the Tarpon bite has slowed in our area along with the Cobia.

Getting Fresh

As the summer rains continue the lakes, rivers and the aquifer are slowly recovering. We are far from our normal levels so keep your fingers crossed that the rains continue. As the water level rises it opens up more areas for the fish to feed. These spots will be very shallow and the Bass will be easily spooked so fish them early and late. As the sun gets higher and the Bass move to the deeper edge of the cover try one of my favorite baits, a Chrome Bill Lewis Rat – L – Trap. (I don't know how I got through high school without one of these) Mike Steele at Molly McGee's is still ordering extra shiners every week because the Bass fishing is so good. Another tip from Mike is that some big Crappie are being caught in the river but he wasn't sure where. The Shellcracker and Blue Gill have finished their spawn and are biting again. That's all for now. Beware of the heat and don't let those storms sneak up on you. May all your fish be good old big'uns or big old good'uns.

Jerry's gone fishing

Fishcamp Philosophy; " Prepare your tackle. When you hook a big fish, it is impossible to retie a knot or change a leader " Jim Chapralis

**COME ON
NORM NEEDS YOU!
CALL NORM**

**Needed: A few good men and women Veterans to join us at the Allen-Rawls American Legion Post #77— Inverness
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IN THIS ISSUE

**President's Message
Lake Levels
BOCC Meetings
Hilites August Meeting
SWFWMD Meetings
Catching Report**



**NEXT BOARD MEETING
SEPTEMBER 24, 2009
5 pm at the East Citrus Community Center**

**NEXT GENERAL MEETING THURSDAY
SEPTEMBER 24, 2009
7 pm at the East Citrus Community Center**

**Speaker: Mike Bartlett
Structure Control**

**Taxpayers Outraged Organization For Accountable Representation
TOO FAR**

**PO Box 2709
Inverness, FL 34451
352-726-5004**

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