

Along the WaterFront

Santa Fe Lake Dwellers Association, Inc.

www.lakesantafe.org

March, 2012

Letter from our president

Greetings Lake Lovers,

A belated Happy New Year to you all. It appears that Spring has sprung on Lake Santa Fe, with only a few minor examples this year that Winter can be cold here in the Sunshine State. We are looking ahead to another eventful year, with hopes for badly needed rainfall and with fingers crossed that no late frosts damage all the beautiful blooms on our trees and shrubs.

Many of you have wondered what happened to our usual Winter Social/ Chili Supper, held in January for the last ten years. A decision was reluctantly made to forego that gathering this year for two main reasons. The first was the time demands of the many water meetings your board members have been attending, along with the need to address related harmful legislation that has been cropping up in Tallahassee this year.

The second reason was the need to focus efforts on planning for our **13th Annual LakeFest** on March 31st. Fritzi Olson of Current Problems, originator of our LakeFest event, suggested that we bring back the Clean-up, which was eliminated the last two years because of a lack of participation on the part of lake residents. Although we are all painfully aware of the low lake levels, we also know from past clean-ups that this low water gives us the opportunity to clean in areas that are usually inaccessible. See Fritzi's article which gives guidance on how YOU can get involved in this spring cleaning of our lake. We are confident that this year will bring renewed enthusiasm among our Lake Dwellers to take an active role in the stewardship of our watery home. Please encourage your friends and neighbors to join you in our clean-up, and then come down to Melrose Bay for some festival fun.

Our LakeFest will be held as always at the **Melrose Bay Park from 11AM to 3PM**, with the **Clean-up from 9AM to 12**. Our lakeside event is a fun day of hands-on activities and nature-oriented displays, kayaks to try out on the Bay, gardening and composting advice, and free pontoon boat rides. Some of our area's most talented singer-songwriters will entertain and inspire with their original music celebrating our unique part of Florida.

As always, there will be face painting and art activities for the kids' enjoyment.

We're so pleased to have **Keystone Heights Culinary Arts** students cooking up burgers and hot dogs again this year, with their luscious strawberry shortcake for dessert! All are welcome, so invite your friends and neighbors.

Last year we chose the threat of exotic plants as the theme for our LakeFest. This year we will focus on our endangered water supply, and on much needed water conservation initiatives.

Come out and talk to some of the folks who have been working to protect this most basic of our natural resources, and learn how you can stay current on the latest developments on this issue. This could be your opportunity to ask yourself, "Am I part of the problem, or part of the solution?"

Your lake organization has for years taken an active role in water supply planning meetings with our water management districts. As the current drought and subsequent aquifer drawdowns have worsened, more groups have formed to address this alarming trend. Area lakes in some cases have exceeded historic lows, while the number of failed private wells are at an all time high, according to local well drillers. All of us have for too long taken for granted our abundant water resources, but the well is literally running dry all across North Central Florida. Some refute the claim that huge Consumptive Use Permits (CUPs) are part of the problem, still clinging to the "it's just rainfall" argument we have heard for so long. These questions are not going to be answered quickly, and the struggle to protect and conserve our most primary need, our water, is going to be a long one.

Following are some of the groups and coalitions that SFLD is working with, along with links for further information

1. **Clay-Putnam MFLs Prevention/ Recovery Strategy Technical Work Group** (<http://floridaswater.com/minimumflowsandlevels/Clay-Putnam.html>) Your lake association is a stakeholder on this working group which has been meeting since last June. SJRWMD is preparing for a field-scale pilot test to evaluate Etonia Creek basin hydrologic response to replenishment (first phase of the North Florida Aquifer

Replenishment Initiative) if Governing Board grants funding.

2. **Lake Area Water Alliance** (<http://www.lakeareawateralliance.blogspot.com/>) This local coalition based in Keystone represents 13 local groups. Come to LakeFest and talk to LAWA President Jackie Host who spearheaded this "grassroots alliance dedicated solely to the restoration, preservation and protection of our threatened area lakes and declining aquifer levels." We have been working closely with LAWA in the MFL stakeholder meetings mentioned above.

3. **North Florida Southeast Georgia (NFSEG) Groundwater Flow Model Development Project** (http://northfloridawater.com/pdfs/NFSEG/work_plan.pdf) SFLD has a seat on the Steering Team of this important, long term project between both SJRWMD, SRWMD and stakeholders to develop a north Florida model.

4. **Florida Conservation Coalition** (floridaconservationcoalition.org) The FCC is a bipartisan coalition which originated just last year, mainly in response to the Legislature's attempts to take control of our state water resources. Former Sen Bob Graham formed the FCC to help Floridans have a voice in fighting for equitable water rights for ALL. Check out their website, check back often, and sign up for alerts.

5. **Florida Leaders Organized for Water (FLOW)** (<http://www.columbiacountyfla.com/MeetingDocuments/2012/02-February/13/WSP-02132012%20942%20AM-WGM%28ATTACHMENT%29.pdf>) This pdf is the Interlocal Agreement which creates FLOW; they are still organizing and do not yet have a website. We are very supportive of their efforts to become active participants in the protection and allocation of our waters.

And finally, don't forget the SFLDA website, www.lakesantafe.org Check in often for info about upcoming meetings; these are always open to the public. You can also contact us at lakesantafeorg@gmail.com to give us your email address if you would like to receive occasional updates and action alerts from us.

We hope you will show your support for YOUR lake organization through active membership in Santa Fe Lake Dwellers.

Sincerely,

Jill McGuire,
President



Water Lettuce

Hello Lake Residents!

It's festival and cleanup time again! March 31st is this year's date. We have decided to resurrect the cleanup after a 2 year hiatus. The opportunity that low water levels presents is too good to pass up. You may wish to do your part on an earlier date.

Please separate trash, recyclables, and exotics and bag each separately. If you don't separate them, we must do it in Melrose. If you are using your own boat to bring in your haul, come to the Melrose Bay Ramp by 11:00. Otherwise you can bring your bags to the Trout Street Boat Ramp (Melrose Bay) or weigh your bags and send me the total pounds collected. (aar@currentproblems.org)

The wetlands and grass beds need our help. The low water levels will allow us to make a real effort toward removing trash from them. Focus on a wetland area near you to clean up or work in the grass beds near your house.

Litter is one important target; invasive exotics are the other. We are asking that residents remove **water hyacinth**, **wild taro**, and **Chinese tallow** from the lake, swamps and yards. **Coral ardisia** needs to be eradicated from our yards. Ardisia is a plant that completely takes over, growing so thick one cannot walk through it, and it is spreading in the swamps and woods. **Japanese climbing fern** is yet another species to watch for and remove. Please let us know if you see any **water lettuce** on the lake! We think FWC's efforts last year and the exceptionally cold weather got it all, though we are not sure.

Following the cleanup come to the festival from 11:00 to 3:00. Come hear music, paddle kayaks, visit the many exhibits, and eat lunch.

The Santa Fe Lake Dwellers and Current Problems both look forward to seeing you on Saturday, March 31. Call 264-6827 or 475-1567 for more information or e-mail aar@currentproblems.org.

- Fritzi Olson



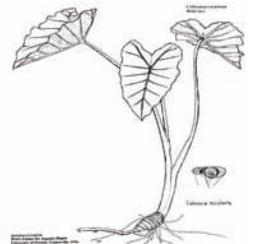
Water Hyacinth



Japanese Climbing Fern



Coral Ardisia



Wild Taro

LAKE DWELLERS MEMBERSHIP FORM:

Please check:

- Membership renewal New Member

Membership category:

- \$25 annual dues Additional contribution What I can contribute

My / Our Interests:

- I would like to be actively involved Clean-Up Political Action
 Social Water Quality Board Member Newsletter Website

Please Print:

Name: _____

Street: _____ City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: _____ 2nd Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

13th Annual
Santa Fe LakeFest
 and
Lake Clean-UP
 Saturday, March 31st
 Clean-up 9am to noon
 Festival: 11:00 am to 3 pm

Melrose Bay Beach
 Educational Displays
 Food & Entertainment
 Pontoon Boat Rides
 Face Painting
 Demonstration Kayaks



THE SANTA FE LAKE DWELLERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

P.O. Box 1268
 Melrose, FL 32666

www.lakesantafe.org

NONPROFIT ORG
 U.S. POSTAGE
 PAID
 GAINESVILLE, FL
 PERMIT NO 1