

Along the WaterFront

Santa Fe Lake Dwellers Association, Inc.

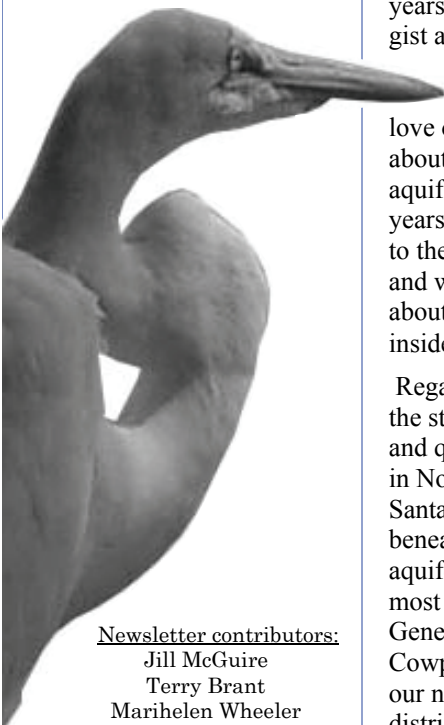
August 2013

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Lake Dwellers Meeting!

Friday, August 16th
7:00 pm
Trinity Episcopal Church,
On S.R. 26, Melrose



Newsletter contributors:

Jill McGuire
Terry Brant
Marihelen Wheeler
Alison Blakeslee

Letter from our President



Greetings Lake Dwellers and Friends,
What a summer we're having! After the rainiest July ever recorded, our lake levels are very high, hovering around, or above, our Ordinary High Water mark of 141 feet. This has made the lake accessible to a wide variety of users, making Lake Santa Fe a very popular place these days. We hope you all are busy making happy summer memories.

Summer is also the time for your lake community to come together for the Santa Fe Lake Dwellers Annual Membership Meeting, where we elect our Board of Directors for the upcoming year and catch up on the latest news in our area. We will convene at 7 PM on August 16th, at the Yerkes Parrish Hall of Trinity Episcopal Church in Melrose, our traditional meeting place for many years. Our speaker this year is local biologist and world-renowned cave diver Tom Morris. His presentation will be of keen interest to all in our area who love our lakes and would like to learn more about them. Tom's knowledge of Florida's aquifer system has been gained by many years of exploring and documenting what to the rest of us remains the great unknown, and we look forward to learning more about this mysterious world from a real inside man.

Regardless of the welcome rainfall, the state of our aquifers, both in quantity and quality, remains a critical concern to us in North Florida. Blessed as we are at Lake Santa Fe to have 'a good bottom' (clay layer beneath us), the results of the cumulative aquifer drawdowns in recent decades can most visibly be seen in local sandhill lakes Geneva, Brooklyn, Swan, and Cowpen. Our Board continues to work with our neighbors and local water management districts in an attempt to understand and alleviate this downward spiral. The health

of our lakes is directly connected to our most basic human need (and right!) for adequate, clean water. Please see Board member and Legislative Chair Terry Brant's article about Minimum Flow Levels (MFLs) and water policy. As always, Terry gives us insight into the confusing, and often infuriating, world of water management in Florida.

It is with mixed feelings that we are suspending our LakeFest and Clean-up (see article). We just did not feel that the expense was justified. It has been a labor of love for 14 years, at the same time greatly rewarding and extremely exhausting! Thanks to all for your participation, especially to those who worked so hard to make it a success ...you know who you are!

Do you realize that our mailings go out to over 700 households around the Santa Fe Lakes? Our active membership is only a fraction of that number, but we've always felt it important to keep all 'lakeys' informed. Each mailing is a big expense to our organization, and we need our lake residents' support to continue serving our huge lake family. If you haven't paid your dues for 2013, now is the time to renew your membership, or make the decision to become a new member of SFLDA!

We look forward to seeing you on August 16th. Please share your newsletter with neighbors and friends, and invite them to join us. All are welcome!
-Jill McGuire

Tom Morris to Present at Annual Meeting

By trade, Tom is a biologist whose career has been concentrated in Florida. He is also very interested in the geological aspects of the state. Tom is one of the world's top cave divers, diving places like the Bahama's Blue Holes and Mexico's cenotes, and most of the springs of North Florida. This has allowed him to see and study a part of the world most of us will never see and can only imagine. Tom will share slides with us of some of his many dive experiences.

LakeFest and Clean-Up Event Suspended Indefinitely

by Marihelen Wheeler and Jill McGuire

Just as many of us have learned that change is constant, the SFLD Board voted at its last meeting to suspend sponsoring the annual spring LakeFest and Clean-up. It was decided that due to the small number of actual lake residents coming to take advantage of the day's activities, the association would be better served by focusing our energy and resources on our other two annual events, the General Membership Meeting and the Winter Social/Chili Supper.

The inaugural Lake Santa Fe Festival and Clean-Up was held in 2000, after Fritzi Olsen of Adopt-A-River suggested it to the Board. The Clean-Up was a huge success, as nearly a ton of trash and recyclables, and a ton of water hyacinths were hauled out of the lake by many dedicated volunteers that first year. We had a few more years of excellent participation, but recently collection numbers have slowed to a trickle. We are hopeful that our past clean-ups, and residents' ongoing efforts, have really made the annual event unnecessary. Our LakeFest gathering has been a popular event, as many folks from our area came to Melrose Beach

Park to welcome Spring on the lake. The educational exhibits, focused on lake ecology and stewardship, along with water activities, good food, and great music made this a different kind of spring festival; many people said it was their favorite of all the festivals. We are forever grateful to the generous folks who gave us their Saturday, year after year, as they set tables and exhibits, cooked food, and made beautiful music.

Since the purpose of the LakeFest was to educate and celebrate the unique and important place of Lake Santa Fe in North Florida, it was agreed that we should spend our energies to engage a wider audience. With the conservation of our water resources at the forefront of our efforts and particularly the protection of the lake areas of our region, we will continue to participate and support the events of like-minded groups. Perhaps at a later date we will resume this event with the help of additional members of Santa Fe Lake Dwellers and the area communities' organizations, but for the time being, the LakeFest will not take place in 2014. Do look for us at other events as the protection of our lake and our water supply is still our mission and our priority.

Board of Directors

The following slate for the Board of Directors will be presented at our Annual Meeting:

Carl Bennett
Ruth Berkelman
Terry Brant
Walter Cole
Wiley Dixon
Mark Goldstein
Judy MacLaren
Jill McGuire
Jim Reid
Phil Robinson
Marihelen Wheeler

We bid a fond, and sad, farewell to longtime Board member Knox Bagwell, who for so many years has kept a watchful eye on the west side of the big lake and was always there when needed for county meetings, phone calls, letter writing and hard work at SFLD events.

We will miss you, Knox!

Also, Sandy Fisher's very heavy work demands have made it necessary that she leave the Board. We hope that will be temporary, as her expertise and long experience with SFLDA are much-valued.



Minimum Flow Levels

by Terry Brant

Santa Fe Lake Dwellers has serious concerns regarding the future sustainability of our water resources; with most of the St. Johns Water Management District (SJRWMD) in a planned water caution area, lakes below Minimum Flow Levels (MFL), forecasts for increasing water withdrawals, and District warnings of being unable to meet or maintain MFLs over the next twenty year period, the need for expeditious action and an effective long-term and substantial regional aquifer renourishment project to protect, recover and restore our resources, and mitigate the damage caused by the adverse

effects of previous and planned consumptive use permitting, must be responsibly addressed and implemented.

SFLDA has strongly objected to St. Johns' plan to dramatically lower MFLs on Lakes Brooklyn and Geneva, in particular the new infrequent lows, which we believe will be harmful. We have made several presentations requesting that the proposed MFLs not be adopted. Recovery or prevention strategies on nearby lakes and the aquifer that ultimately affect Lake Santa Fe and the Suwannee District should be successfully implemented using current set MFLs, with a long-term

plan in place in order to give the lakes maximum protection and the opportunity to achieve recovery or prevention.

Adopting new, significantly lower MFLs that are clearly less protective, promoting longer periods of low water levels when the lakes are already endangered due to low water, appears to be absent any recognition of "public interest" or modeling recognition of the actual damage and loss of protection the proposed lowered MFLs will provoke.

Santa Fe Lake Dwellers is dedicated to protecting and restoring our endangered resources.

Rural Cluster Update

Some of you will remember the recent attempt by the Painter family to extend the current boundaries of the Rural Cluster in order to put in a development just west of Melrose. Many local groups and individuals spoke out to the Alachua County Commission (BoCC), and we succeeded in derailing this scheme for the time being.

But now this issue is back on the table, in a form that will affect all 13 of Alachua County's Rural Clusters. Briefly, the County Planning Dept. is proposing changes in the Comprehensive Plan's language which will "simplify the process for delineating more precise boundaries for Rural Clusters". You can get a detailed look at all the relevant documents by following the link at the end of this article.

Having only recently learned of these complicated rule changes, the Santa Fe Lake Dwellers Association believes that this proposal should be delayed for at least a couple of months to give people the opportunity to understand this issue. This would give time to meet with

folks from the areas to be impacted and find out if these changes in the Comp Plan are desirable to locals. Public input should be invited now, in case the rural communities to be impacted decide they do not approve of the proposed "parcel-based boundaries" system.

The BoCC will take up this issue on Aug 13th, and the SFLD Board plans to be at that meeting to request a delay in moving forward with these proposals until public informational meetings have been held. You can check our website, www.lakesantafe.org, for more exact information about the time of the BoCC meeting in case you'd like to attend and have your voice heard on this issue.

If you open the following link, you will find four attachments at the bottom with all the details:

<http://meetingdocs.alachuacounty.us/documents/bocc/agendas/2013-07-09/5E76005F-E561-4E74-B50E-9EC4F597359D-A8784B69-D515-408F-A2A7-851CEB6C8A48.HTM>.

We note with pride:

Lake Dwellers Board Member and Legislative Chair, **Terry Brant**, was chosen in May as the **Conservationist of the Year** by local Audubon chapter, **Santa Fe Audubon Society**. Their president, Joyce King, made these remarks when honoring Terry for his tireless work.

"Always the gentleman with a quick smile and sincere greeting, Dr. Brant's spirit of respect and thoughtful consideration of all points of view is his hallmark. Dr. Brant is an active participant in legislative affairs, and his skills in articulating issues are legendary. His views demonstrate a deep level of study and understanding of conservation issues. A model citizen who actively participates in the democratic process, he has inspired many others to become participants as well."

Santa Fe Lake Dwellers Assoc., Inc.
P.O. Box 1268 Melrose, FL 32666
www.santafelake.org

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Don't miss our annual

Lake Dwellers Meeting!

Friday, August 16th

7:00 pm

Trinity Parrish Hall

on S.R. 26, Melrose

“Lake Santa Fe Physiography”

Guest Speaker: Tom Morris

“A look at the physiographic setting (geology and geography) of Lake Santa Fe in comparison to the physiography of the sandhill lakes of the nearby Trail Ridge. It will include a discussion of the origins and the hydrology of the lake.”