



Along the WaterFront

Summer, 2021

Santa Fe Lake Dwellers Association, Inc.

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Santa Fe Lake Dwellers Association Inc. is a non-profit, grassroots organization dedicated to the protection of Lake Santa Fe as designated by the State of Florida as an Outstanding Florida Water.

Letter from our President

Greetings Lake Dwellers and Friends,

After another wet summer our lake levels are again high, close to our Ordinary High Water mark, and very accessible to all. Even more than last year, Lake Santa Fe has been extremely popular for lake lovers. We hope you have made many happy memories this summer with family and friends.

Unfortunately, the Covid-19 virus, which seemed to be finally abating, has again surged to dangerous levels with the Delta variant spreading rapidly. Because of this, your association has taken the difficult decision to cancel yet another SFLDA Annual Membership meeting. We have agreed that the risks of a large meeting at this time are just too great, so we will again have to bring our election and area news to you in this newsletter.

The focus of our Annual Meeting this year was to have been "The Health of Lake Santa Fe". We had planned to have speakers to inform us about where we stand currently in water quality; what are the factors and activities that threaten the health of our lake; and what are the steps we can take to ensure that our lake continues to be one of the best lakes in Florida for a large variety of water uses.

Instead of in-person talks, we are pleased to bring you a variety of informative articles that will touch on these subjects. Thanks go to Emily Rodriguez from Alachua County Environmental Protection Dept., and to Chris Boever of Florida Fish and Wildlife for educating us on some important issues, and for always being available to help us in our goal to become better lake stewards.

Regardless of the challenges of the last year and a half, your association continues to work on issues that threaten our long-term goals of ensuring a healthy Lake Santa Fe for the generations to come.

Please do your part by renewing your membership today.

We hope to see you in January for our Chili Supper!

- Jill McGuire, President

An update from the Alachua County Environmental Protection Department

Many of you may be aware of recent activity on Melrose Bay that occurred in violation of the Alachua County Surface Waters and Wetlands Protection Code. Vegetation was removed and sand was dumped along the lake shore to create a beach, without proper authorization. These property owners have been working with the Alachua County Environmental Protection Department and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) to remove the sand from within the ordinary high water

line of the lake and stabilize this area with native plantings. As of the time of this writing, full compliance has not been achieved and additional enforcement action may be taken if the violations are not resolved soon.

Before altering the shoreline anywhere on Lake Santa Fe, or any natural areas within 200 feet of the lake in Alachua County, it is best to check with the Alachua County Environmental Protection Department at 352-264-6800. Staff are happy to respond to inquiries and provide



Update from Environmental Protection Department, continued from page 1

guidance on relevant regulations in a timely fashion. As development around the lake continues, it is more important than ever to preserve natural, vegetated buffers along the lake shore. This helps to protect properties from erosion, maintain water quality, and provide habitat for wildlife. Native vegetation that requires little care is best and recommended for new plantings, but even existing exotic vegetation can provide benefits to the lake. The application of fertilizer with nitrogen is prohibited within 10 feet of wetlands around the entire lake, is prohibited from July through February in Alachua County, and is recommended to be eliminated entirely to protect water quality.

Lake Santa Fe is not considered "impaired" for nutrients by FDEP. However, Alachua County is still concerned

about nutrient pollution and is currently working with an environmental consulting firm to identify nutrient sources in the watershed and to identify potential projects and solutions to reduce nutrient concentrations. Staff would be happy to share the findings at a future Lake Dwellers meeting. For more information on how lake dwellers can protect the water, see excerpts from the **Waterfront Living** brochure below and on the back cover.

Emily Rodriguez
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Not so good



- 1) Bare shoreline or boat ramp -subject to erosion which can be serious and affect your property value.
- 2) Fertilizer spills, chemical run-off, and pet waste can damage water quality.
- 3) Paved driveway - pollution laden runoff, including oil and antifreeze leaks from your car, flows to water.
- 4) No shade trees - overworked air conditioner adds to electric bill.
- 5) Removal of natural vegetation - more work for you and more runoff.
- 6) Collecting lawn clippings - deprives soil of nutrients; try mulching.
- 7) Ornamental shrubs - require chemicals and extra work.
- 8) Poor fuel management - gas and oil spills from cans, tanks, and leaky boat motors are deadly.
- 9) Seawall - eliminates "natural filter", degrades water quality and blocks wildlife access.

Much better!



- 1) Natural shoreline - great wildlife habitat.
- 2) Small dock - low impact; deck located above high water mark.
- 3) Septic system far from shore - reduces water pollution.
- 4) Narrow, winding or diagonal gravelled footpath - less chance of erosion.
- 5) Trimmed trees and adjustable awnings - natural air conditioning with view maintained.
- 6) Natural Florida yard - you work less, relax more!
- 7) Compost pile - improves your soil's quality.
- 8) Low-maintenance native plants - provide shoreline buffer.
- 9) Building set back from shore and in character with setting.
- 10) Well maintained motor - electric, or modern 4-stroke outboard, operated with low wake near shore.

Benefits of Shoreline Care

Caring for your shoreline means less work, not more! You will help preserve water quality and safeguard your family's health. You will also help protect the beauty of your paradise, maintaining its investment value. Extra benefits include more time to relax and enjoy!

Aquatic Weed summary of Lake Santa Fe by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

Aquatic plants are a natural part of all Florida freshwater systems and serve numerous important functions in protecting water quality, providing shoreline stabilization, and ensuring balanced fish and wildlife populations. A healthy waterbody should have a variety of native aquatic plants, including submersed, emergent, and floating-leaved plants. At times, invasive and/or noxious aquatic plants may reduce desirable native plant growth and impede the uses and functions of the waterbody.

Water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*) and water lettuce (*Pistia stratiotes*) are the top two, invasive plants that infest Florida waters and, in near shore areas, they can completely cover the water surface creating an anoxic environment beneath them (Image 1). During our last fiscal year, from July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021, we treated 6 acres of Hyacinth/Lettuce on Lake Santa Fe.



Water Hyacinth (top two images) & Water lettuce (bottom) can completely cover open water areas when left unmanaged.

4.5 acres of Burhead sedge (*Cyperus blepharoleptos*) were treated over the same timeframe (see figure 1 for treatment history on Lake Santa Fe). This invasive plant can quickly become the dominant vegetation along lake margins or in canals. Burhead sedge is scattered around the perimeter of Lake Santa Fe including Melrose Bay. It is also called

Cuban bulrush but is a member of the sedge family, Cyperaceae, and is usually mixed in amongst the maidencane and may be mistaken for another grass species.



Burhead sedge overtaking a canal in the NW part of Little Lake Santa Fe. Photo taken by Chris Boever on August 22, 2019.



Canal from photo above following herbicide treatment. Photo taken by Chris Boever on April 4, 2020.

Maintaining these invasive plants at low levels promotes a healthy native plant community. Information on all three of these species can be obtained on the UF IFAS Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants website <https://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/plant-directory/>.

While we generally do not treat all exotic species or native vegetation unless they negatively impact public access and navigation, we do have a permit program that allows riparian property owners to manage a portion of the vegetation on their shorelines for lake access. Invasive species such as Wild Taro (*Colocasia esculenta*; Image 6) are commonly included on permits written for lakefront property owners on Lake Santa Fe. Please visit the FWC Invasive Plant Management website for information on our invasive plant and permitting programs <https://myfwc.com/wildlifehabitats/habitat/invasive-plants/>.

Aquatic Weed summary FWC



Burhead sedge observed just below the shrubs at the lake edge with Maidencane in the foreground.

Photo taken by Chris Boever on June 11, 2021.



Close up of Burhead sedge inflorescence.
Cyperus blepharoleptos photo by Betty Wargo.

These programs are designed to ensure that while allowing users access, the beneficial native aquatic plants are protected, and the activities conducted under a permit do not cause adverse impacts to Florida's freshwater systems. Further, they are designed to balance recreational use and aesthetics while protecting water quality and maintaining quality habitat for fish and wildlife.

In addition to aquatic invaders, there was recently an infestation of Old World Climbing Fern (*Lygodium microphyllum*) found near Bonnet Lake (SW side of Lake Santa Fe). This upland invader can quickly grow up and over shrubs and trees. Learn more about this species at the following link:

<https://myfwc.com/wildlifehabitats/habitat/invasive-plants/weed-alerts/old-world-climbing-fern/>

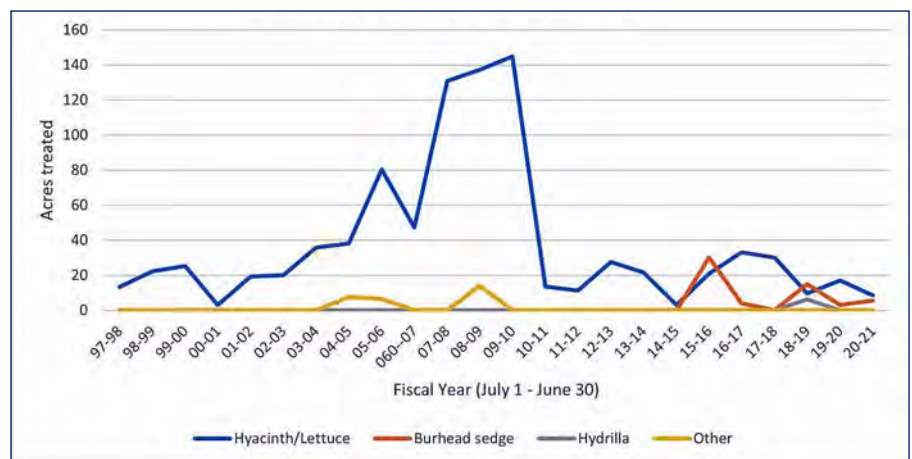
Old World climbing fern is a major threat to the tree islands of the Everglades and is slowly moving northward. It has Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR) status within North Central Florida's Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA). Learn more about the CISMA here: <https://www.floridainvasives.org/northcentral/>



Wild taro (*Colocasia esculenta*) easily spreads along lake margins and does not observe property lines which makes it difficult to eradicate.
Photo by Ann Murray Copyright 1999 University of Florida.

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Historical treatment acres on Lake Santa Fe including Little Lake Santa Fe, from 1997-2021.

Still Here! Still Working!

by Wiley Dixon

At the July board meeting of Santa Fe Lake Dwellers Association, members of the board reluctantly decided to cancel our annual general meeting that was planned for August. The coronavirus is having a huge resurgence in our area, and we didn't want to risk anyone's health.

Our annual August meeting gives the opportunity for members to reconnect with one another, hear speakers enlighten us about topics related to the lake, and gain information regarding events around our area. With the meeting's cancellation, all of that was lost, another victim of COVID.

After the board meeting, though it was almost dark, I walked out onto the dock. On the way, I spooked a great egret and watched his white form contrasted against the dark sky.

There was a cool breeze off the lake, and waves lapped gently against the dock pilings. The last of the sun's rays made the skyline to the west a bright orange. Altogether it was a beautiful Lake Santa Fe evening.

Sitting on the dock that evening, I was again struck by the thought of how lucky we are to have this beautiful lake to enjoy. Open space, clean water and air, magnificent views, and abundant wildlife are all part of this wonderful gem we call Lake Santa Fe. This healthy, beautiful place is truly something to treasure and protect.

While Santa Fe Lake Dwellers has not been able to meet together in over a year, the association is still working to protect the lake. We have been lobbying for almost 20 years for Alachua County or Florida Forever to purchase

and protect the land on the south end of the lake (the Johnson/Black Lake property) which is being converted to a public area for hiking, biking, canoeing, and kayaking. We successfully lobbied for improvements made to the park at the Melrose boat ramp. Presently, we are working to see that the damage done to Melrose Bay through vegetation removal and sand fill is repaired.

We're sorry we can't bring all of our members together this fall, but Santa Fe Lake Dwellers Association is still here and still working to protect the lake we all love. Please continue to support our work by joining or continuing your membership in our association.

The lake needs you!

Your Own Lake Santa Fe Legacy

You can help preserve and protect Santa Fe lake and our region's natural assets through tax deductible donations. You can also support our mission by including Santa Fe Lake Dwellers Association in your will. Santa Fe Lake Dwellers Association is a registered charitable 501(c)(3) organization recognized by the IRS since 1989. Donations of money or property (market value) are fully tax deductible. For more information contact SFLDA at lakesantafe@gmail.com.

Along the WaterFront is a publication of the Santa Fe Lake Dwellers Association, Inc.

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Yes, I/we accept this invitation to support the Santa Fe Lake Dwellers Association in 2021

Please check: ☐ \$35 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ Additional contribution ☐ What I can contribute: \$ _____

☐ I would like to become a New Member ☐ I am a member renewing my membership ☐ Contribution Only ☐ Add me to the e-mailing list

My/Our Interests: ☐ Political Action ☐ Social ☐ Water Quality ☐ Board Member ☐ Newsletter ☐ Website ☐ Please Contact me

Name: _____

Address changes if any: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ e-mail: _____

Please make your tax-deductible payment payable to SFLDA, Inc.,
or mail to Santa Fe Lake Dwellers Association, P.O. Box 1268, Melrose, FL 32666 www.lakesantafe.org
The Santa Fe Lake Dwellers Association, Inc. is a 501 (c) (3) organization and all contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

“Most Alachua County residents (55%) say they don’t use fertilizer at all year-round.”



In Florida, we are surrounded by water, even under our feet in the aquifer. The water that comes out of your tap for drinking and other household uses comes from our underground aquifer (also called groundwater). Regardless of where you live in Florida, you likely live close to an “impaired” waterway. Nitrogen and/or phosphorus from yards, farms, and septic systems are the most common sources of pollution. Here in Alachua County, we contribute to the nutrient pollution on the Santa Fe River and its springs, Lake Santa Fe, the Silver River, and the Orange Creek Basin (Hogtown Creek and its tributaries, Sweetwater Branch, Tumblin Creek, Paynes Prairie, Newnans, Orange and Lochloosa lakes).



Over-manicured yards are particularly hard on our waterways. Irrigation depletes groundwater supplies, while fertilizers contribute to nutrient pollution and algal outbreaks. Irrigation and heavy rain can push nutrients from landscape fertilizers past plant roots and into the groundwater or can wash fertilizer off as stormwater into our surface waters (creeks, lakes, rivers, etc.). Rainfall is the greatest during summer, so fertilizing during these months has a high potential to pollute waterways. Additionally plants don’t need as many nutrients in the cooler months. When we fertilize in the winter, polluting nutrients can move past the root zone and into our drinking water and springs.

For these reasons, fertilizer containing nitrogen is banned in Alachua County from July through February. Most Alachua County residents (55%) say they don’t use fertilizer at all year-round. Thank you! Join the 55% and skip the fertilizer this year. See what happens. Even if you live in an HOA, your yard can still look great if you cut back or eliminate the fertilizer.

Remember, having a nice yard is, well, nice. But having clean water to drink, swim in, and for the future is pretty important. We can have it all! We may have to shift our expectations a bit and let go of the bright green monoculture carpet look year-round. It is normal for grass to turn a little yellow or brown in the winter and during droughts. Having a few weeds or multiple species in your yard does not make you a bad neighbor, it actually makes you a good neighbor to our springs and pollinators! Our beloved animals, our kids and our springs will benefit if you don’t use fertilizer. **Join the 55% today and skip the fertilizer!**

Learn more from the Alachua County Environmental Protection Department at MyYardOurWater.org.



Please find my/our contribution to the Santa Fe Lake Dwellers enclosed.

☐ I / we approve the current board of directors to serve through the 2021 - 2022 term. Your board members are Carl Bennett, Mary Bennett, Ruth Berkelman, Terry Brant, Sally Chesrown, Wiley Dixon, Gary Faircloth, Tom Germano, Mark Goldstein, Jill McGuire, Jim Reid, and Joe Rush.



Santa Fe Lake Dwellers Association, Inc.
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The Ribbon of Life

The shoreline, where land, water, and air meet, is a vital edge. Here, plants and wildlife find in abundance the resources they need for life. We, too, rely on shorelines for sustenance. Communities have grown up along the water's edge, and we go to the shore to rest and restore our spirits. Those of us who live by water experience its magic every day. Our health, our children's health, and the long term value of our waterfront property depend on how we care for the shore - the "ribbon of life".

Twelve Simple Steps to Keep Your Paradise Intact

- Keep the lot well-treed - never clearcut.
 - Protect shoreline vegetation; replant areas lacking shrubs and trees with native species.
 - Start a buffer strip by leaving some grass uncut near the water.
 - Build at least 100 feet away from the shore.
- Give clear instructions to your contractors and monitor their work.
- Avoid spilling fuels, antifreeze, paint thinner or other chemicals on land or water - clean up fast!
 - Don't use fertilizers, pesticides, or herbicides near the water.
 - Use only phosphate-free soaps, detergents, and cleaners in your home.
 - Pump out your septic tank regularly - every two to three years.
 - Extend the life of your septic system by avoiding tank additives and minimizing water consumption.
 - Refuel your boat with care - don't spill a drop.
 - Watch your boat's wake - it causes erosion!

**Always check local regulations
before building or making changes
to your shoreline.**

Supported by the
Alachua County Board of County Commissioner's
Community Agency Partnership Program



**Current
Problems**
*Adapted & Edited
Kathleen J. Skene*

www.currentproblems.org
(352) 264-6827

Waterfront Living

Simple Tips, Lasting Benefits

Adapted from the Waterfront Living brochure with
permission of The Living By Water Project.