

Along the WaterFront

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Santa Fe Lake Dwellers Association, Inc.

October, 2022

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



The Santa Fe Lake Dwellers Association is pleased to invite you to our **Annual Membership Meeting on October 14, 2022**, the first since August, 2019. We had planned to meet in August, but a late summer surge in virus transmission numbers made a postponement necessary.

After a two year hiatus of in-person meetings, nearly a hundred friends of Lake Santa Fe met at Dr. Joe Rush's home on March 26, 2022 for a SFLDA "Hot Dogs And More" Picnic. We hope you were able to join us for that terrific event, but if not, you can catch up about our activities through our website lakesantafe.org. There you'll find posts and newsletters with lots of information about what your association has been doing during the long gap in our meetings.

Our meeting this year will focus on our **water quality**, a topic we have addressed in the past numerous times. This year we are much more aware of the dangers of excessive nutrients after having experienced an unprecedented algae bloom in early 2022. Our faithful **Lakewatch volunteers, Tom and Peggy Prevost**, were on the job taking water samples and in constant contact with the Florida DEP to determine the severity and toxic potential of the bloom which covered all of both lakes, a first time event for Lakes Santa Fe.

With that in mind, we have asked the Alachua County Environmental Protection Department (EPD) to do a program for us this year. Our speaker will be **Haley Cox, an Environmental Specialist with the Water Resources team at (EPD)**. Haley's main focus is environmental education, but she also helps with water quality monitoring efforts. She will give a presentation on water quality issues and solutions with a focus on Lake Santa Fe during our meeting on October 14. Please see more info on Haley's program on page 2.

As we work on finalizing our newsletter, Hurricane Ian is looming on the horizon. We wish you all the best and are hoping that we dodge the worst effects from the storm.

We look forward to meeting with you on **Friday, Oct 14, from 7 pm to 9 pm**. Tell a friend. Bring your neighbors. And don't forget to renew your membership!

- Jill McGuire, President

Status of Conservation Lands in Lake Santa Fe Area:

The Alachua County Forever (ACF) Program manages three Preserves in the Lake Santa Fe and Lake Alto area including Black Lake Preserve, Lake Alto Preserve, and Little Lake Santa Fe Preserve totaling 1,630 acres. These Preserves help protect local water resources, listed plant and animal species, and critical wildlife habitat within the Florida Wildlife Corridor. Altogether, ACF Preserves and partner organizations protect a total of 11,400 acres of public and private conservation land in the greater Lake Santa Fe area.

- Ryan Kennelly, Senior Environmental Specialist
Environmental Protection Department
352-264-6846 (office) • 352-727-0432 (mobile)

Water Quality Issues and Solutions with a focus on Lake Santa Fe presented by Haley Cox to present at October 14 Meeting

EPD monitors water quality on Lake Santa Fe along with the Suwannee River Water Management District and Lake Watch volunteers. While the Lake is not considered “Impaired” by the State, there is still concern over nutrient (phosphorus and nitrogen) concentrations. EPD recently contracted DB Environmental to conduct a nutrient assessment of Lake Santa Fe to identify future projects and programs to reduce nutrient pollution. Haley will go over some of the key findings and next steps from this report.

The presentation will also include information on EPD’s efforts to reduce landscape fertilizer use and irrigation throughout Alachua County. Haley will discuss a recent grant application for funding rebates to help interested property owners upgrade traditional septic systems to ones that reduce nutrient pollution. Finally, the presentation will include updates on the Alachua County Dock Code and vegetated buffers. There will be time for your questions during the presentation and Haley will have handouts to share.

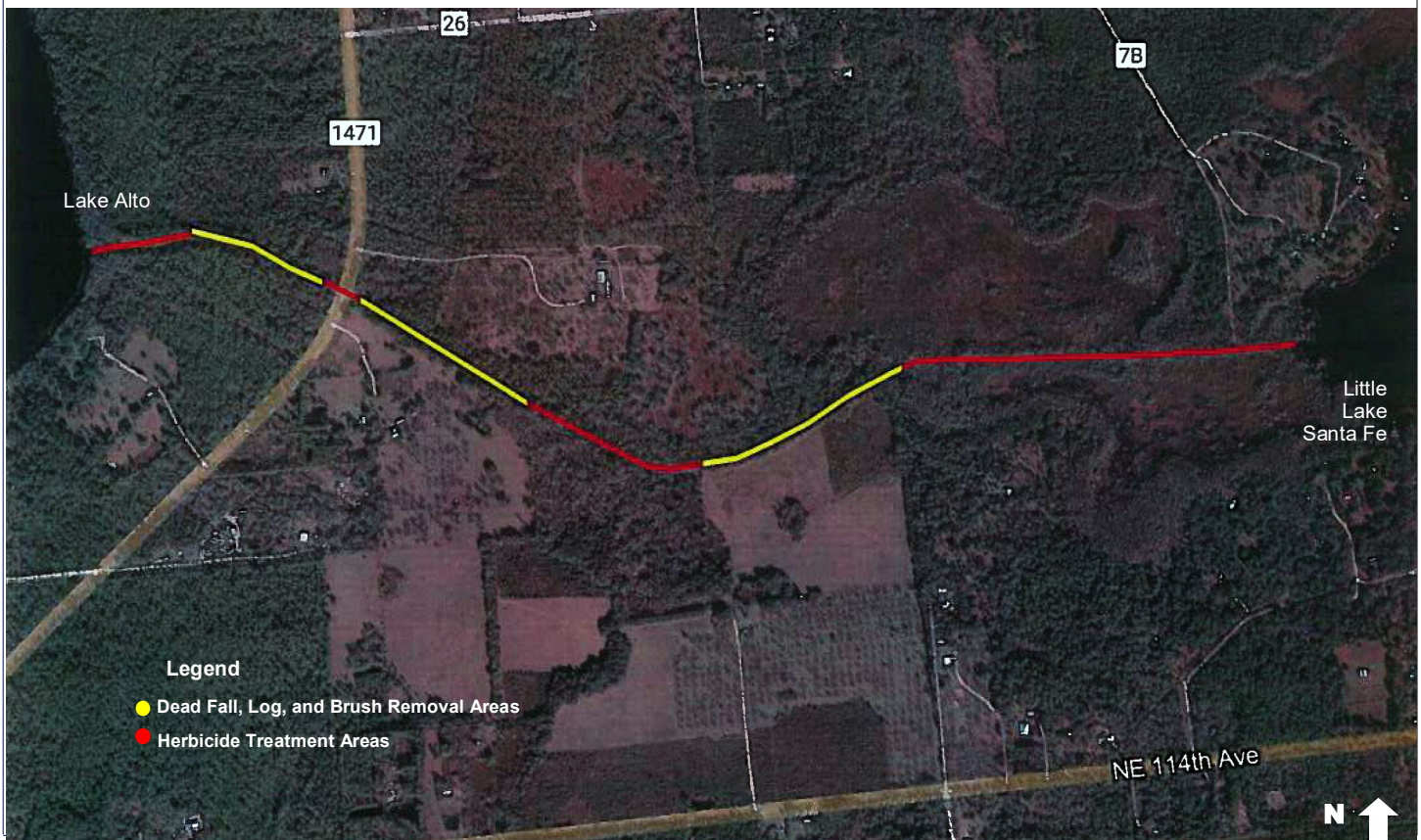
Update on Alto Canal Exotic Plant Removal

The Alachua County EPD reports that the canal was sprayed by Future Horizons, the county’s contractor, on August 15, 2022 to get the canal in a condition to allow it to be maintained with hand clearing events in the future. The map below and the following sentence was provided by the contractor: “We treated approximately 5.8 acres of vegetation – if you will view the attached map, all areas in red were treated, in addition to several new infestations of vegetation found in the yellow stretches of the canal on the attached map”.

A follow up treatment occurred on September 22. The non-profit *Current Problems* is organizing a clean up event that is tentatively scheduled for October 22nd to remove exotics and possibly some of the dead vegetation left from the spraying.

In addition, Alachua County added the Blueway to our Draft Parks Master Plan which should help our Parks Department with future management needs and grants to maintain this paddling trail.

The Director of EPD, Steven Hofstetter, plans to join us at our meeting to explain further about this ongoing project.



Improving and Maintaining Buffers

Whether they're referred to as "upland buffers," "riparian buffers," or "wetland buffers," buffer zones provide valuable protection for our lakes and wetlands by minimizing pollution, stabilizing the shoreline, providing critical wildlife habitat, and storing and mitigating the effects of floodwaters. However, many homes were built prior to the County's regulations for buffer distance. The good news is, regardless of how much buffer you have, you can always improve it.

Here are some ways to improve or create a buffer:

* Plant more native plants! Ideally, the buffer should contain a mix of

groundcovers, shrubs, and trees. EPD staff can provide a list of local native nurseries and suggestions for plant species that would suit a particular site. Many native plants have colorful flowers that enhance the beauty of the shoreline while attracting butterflies, hummingbirds, and other pollinators.

* Reduce mowing in the buffer. Not everyone likes the "messy" look of an unmown yard; however, this is an excellent way to improve natural habitat (unless you have exotic invasive species). Some residents compromise by planting native vegetation and leaving the area closest to the lake unmown.

* Only mow a single, narrow path a

few feet in width through the buffer for lake access.

* Don't fertilize your yard on the lake side of the house or spread fertilizer in the buffer zone you create. Fertilizer can only be applied March through June in Alachua County and nowhere is it allowed within 10 feet of the water. Reduce or eliminate the use of landscape fertilizers wherever possible, as runoff from fertilizers often makes its way into the lake and contributes to algal growth.

If you have any questions about maintaining a buffer, feel free to contact EPD staff at 352-264-6800

Algae bloom report:

Tom & Peggy Prevost's May 10th Lakewatch sampling reflected normal nutrient counts in phosphorus, nitrogen and chlorophyll indicating the dissipation of the algae bloom. FDEP has reported the continued presence of the cyanobacteria but at lower levels. Their monitoring will hopefully continue.

Yes, I/we accept this invitation to support the Santa Fe Lake Dwellers Association in 2022

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.*

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

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Santa Fe Lake Dwellers Association, Inc.
Post Office Box 1268
Melrose, Florida 32666-1268

All Friends of
Lake Santa Fe
are invited to attend the
Annual Meeting of the
**Santa Fe Lake Dwellers
Association**

on
**Friday
October 14
7:00 to 9:00 pm**

Parish Hall at
Trinity Episcopal
204 State Road 26
Melrose

Program:

Water Quality Issues

presented by

Haley Cox

Environmental Specialist
with the Water Resources
team at the Environmental
Protection Department

Protecting Our Jewel

by Wiley Dixon

A quick internet search of Lake Santa Fe yields the following partial description:

Lake Santa Fe is a 5,850-acre lake that is fed by seepage from the Florida Aquifer in Northeast Alachua County...

Lake Santa Fe is the third most stable of 120 lakes studied in Florida, as well as one of the clearest. It is designated by the State of Florida as an Outstanding Florida Water.

It is supported by water flowing in at the southern extremity of the intermediate aquifer that outcrops in the lake bottom. Also, it is a rather deep example of a karstic lake, with several spots that are 30 feet or more.

While this rather clinical description of Lake Santa Fe may be accurate,

those of us who enjoy the lake know it is so much more. It is very likely the best all-around lake in Florida, great for fishing, boating, skiing, swimming, birding and any other sport that can be enjoyed on the water. Santa Fe is the home to a wide variety of water fowl that thrive on its shoreline. It supports a healthy fish population including game fish like bass, blue gill, and crappie (or as we Floridians call them, speckled perch). It is probably no exaggeration to say that the communities of Melrose and Earleton would not exist without Lake Santa Fe.

Santa Fe is often referred to as the "Jewel of North Central Florida". While it is a fitting moniker, it is a jewel that must be protected. Santa Fe has been threatened in the past by peat mining and landfills.

Probably the most immediate threat is over-development of areas around the lake.

The recent development of the large R.V. park immediately adjacent to the Santa Fe swamp will have detrimental effects on the lake and water that flow from the swamp, i.e. the Santa Fe River.

Using money that we received from the dues and contributions that our members have provided over the years, Santa Fe Lake Dwellers hired environmental consultants and lawyers to try to stop the R.V. park from being developed. While we were able to delay the park for over two years, we ultimately lost the battle. Only time will tell how the R.V. park will impact the lake and surrounding areas.

Santa Fe Lake Dwellers will continue to do everything possible to protect our lake. To do that we need the financial resources and political clout that is provided by a large membership. Please help us protect Lake Santa Fe by joining or renewing your membership now.