

Along the WaterFront

August, 2024

Santa Fe Lake Dwellers Association, Inc.

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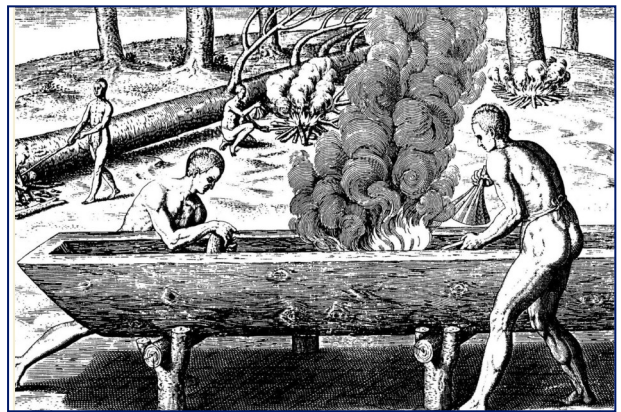
Santa Fe Lake Dwellers Association Inc. is a non-profit, grassroots organization dedicated to the protection of Lake Santa Fe as designated by the State of Florida as an Outstanding Florida Water.

The Santa Fe Lake Dwellers Association is pleased to invite you to our **Annual Membership Meeting on August 24th, 2024 at Trinity Episcopal Church in Melrose**. Join us at **noon** for a light picnic snack and learn about **Dugout Canoes** and early Floridians.

Canoes are one of Florida's most unique and under-researched archaeological resources. There are over 400 canoes recorded from Florida – the largest number in the world. This fantastic preservation is in part due to Florida's prolific waterways. Lake Santa Fe is in a unique position, at the edge of two different drainage networks. The Bureau of Archaeological Research (BAR) began researching this lake to test the idea that canoes were cached at the edges of drainage systems in Florida rather than portaged, leading to the occasional abandonment and preservation of canoe groups in water bodies at the edges of these drainage systems – like Lake Santa Fe. This presentation will discuss the progress of this research and the network of time and space represented by Florida's archaeological canoes.



Amy Socha, MS



Engraving originally published by Theodor de Bry in 1590, based on a painting by John White in 1585.

Amy Socha is a senior archaeologist at the at BAR and manages the Canoe Program, is a member of the Underwater Archaeology Program, and is a specialty geoarchaeologist. Amy earned her master's degree in Anthropology from Florida State University in 2023, where she studied site formation processes at submerged archaeological sites in Florida. Amy's current research focuses on Florida's canoes and their environmental contexts, connecting object to place and time with a focus on Florida's waterways.

Black Lake Preserve

The **Alachua County Forever Program** is continuing to work towards opening Black Lake Preserve near the end of 2024, or in the first half of 2025. Current updates include planning for a timber harvest operation to help restore the pine stands on the preserve to a healthier density. The harvest will target unhealthy and undesirable trees including loblolly pines, while providing more space and less competition for mature and healthy longleaf and slash pines. This harvest is expected to take place this fall. Other near-term projects include building on two years of successful efforts treating invasive plants with additional follow up efforts, removing solid waste left on the property from previous owners, and developing a trailhead and trail system.

In total, the **ACF Program** has purchased more than **37,000 acres of conservation** lands across Alachua County, including over 2,000 acres around Lake Santa Fe and Lake Alto. Most recently, this includes the 320-acre Dinh property which was purchased in October of 2023 in coordination with the **Alachua Conservation Trust** and adds to the Lake Alto Preserve footprint. With this acquisition, more than 50% of Lake Alto's shoreline is now protected conservation land!

- Ryan Kennelly, Senior Environmental Specialist, Environmental Protection Department, 352-264-6846

Florida Springs Council

I have a feeling you've experienced this too: At some point you drove to a favorite spring, one you'd fallen in love with because of its beauty or the way being in or on that water made you feel. And during one of those visits, you looked around at the increasing algae and dwindling fish population with alarm, wondering what was happening. And if you have hope that we can save the wild places of Florida, you immediately wanted to know what we do about it.

That's where the Florida Springs Council (FSC) comes in. FSC is the only statewide advocacy organization focused solely on the long-term protection of Florida's springs, spring-fed waterways, and the aquifer that extends far below the spring vents.

Under the leadership of executive director Ryan Smart, dedicated people - science, legal, and policy experts - work together to correct the failures of policy that have caused so much harm. FSC works through legislative action, legal challenges, public education, coordinated advocacy, and grassroots activism to stop and reverse the destruction of Florida's springs.

In one of the most important environmental legal victories in decades, FSC coordinated a successful legal challenge against the Florida Department of Environmental Protection over deeply flawed Basin Management Action Plans (BMAPs - springs pollution cleanup plans), crucial for reducing nitrogen pollution in springs across Florida.

FSC continues to lead statewide and regional campaigns to shield Florida's springs from threats such as overdevelopment, pollution, excessive water withdrawals, and irresponsible recreation. FSC's staff provides expert policy and legal analyses to the public, agency staff, elected officials, decision-makers, and the press. A robust communications strategy educates tens of thousands of Floridians about springs policy, the threats to our water resources, and the actions needed to preserve them.

FSC's greatest hope is to secure the necessary funding for much needed advocacy campaigns and legal challenges. The growing voice of the springs conservation movement makes it clear that Floridians want to restore and protect these beautiful and vulnerable places - FSC is determined to continue that essential work.

For more information: www.floridaspringscouncil.org



2 Town Girls and the Big Fish

-as told to Ruth Berkelman on 12/6/23 by Pat Preston Haaglund

When they were young, Reda Robinson and Pat Preston were free to roam the streets of Melrose, and roam they did. They were "town children" and the town took care of them. Reda's mother, Mrs. Robinson, ran the grocery store (where the slab of cement is at the corner of Hampton and Park St) and worked until 7 pm. Pat's dad also worked late. So after school and in the summers, Reda and Pat roamed the streets and were in and out of almost every home around. Everyone knew them, even those that were a bit reclusive, like the Lee sisters, were kind to them.

Reda and Pat knew a lot of things about a lot of people. For example, they knew that Judge Tolles, who lived with his second wife Virginia where the Ameris bank is now, also owned some property on Melrose Bay. There was a boathouse on his property but no house yet. (The boathouse is now owned by the Chiappinis and is next to the Melrose Bay boat ramp). Reda and Pat also knew that Judge Tolles did not want anyone to go inside his boathouse. Yet on one very hot and sunny day in the summertime, Reda and Pat wanted to cool off. It was lunchtime and they had just gotten some hot dogs. There were no picnic tables at the beach or anyplace really to get out of the sun and eat their lunch. So they snuck inside Judge Tolles' boathouse.

Dangling their feet off the decking in the water inside the boathouse, they ate most of their hot dogs. As Reda and Pat looked around, they spotted some fishing poles and decided to use the rest of their hot dogs to go fishing. Holy smokes! They caught a huge bass - estimated at 12 pounds. It is likely that Judge Tolles fed the fish. But now what? They could not get the fish off the hook. They ran to Nancy Bigelow's house on Quail Street. Now Nancy was a fisherwoman supreme. She was on the lake by 5 am most days and she pretty much kept to herself. She wore big black boots and a long dress and always an apron too. Now Nancy knew the girls (Pretty much everyone in town knew the girls) and Nancy saw the girls and asked what was wrong. Between their tears, they said they had gone into Judge Tolles boathouse and used his fishing poles and they did not know what to do. Miss Bigelow asked if they knew they were not supposed to be in there. They nodded yes. Then she faced them and said, "I will handle it."

And handle it she did. Miss Bigelow returned to Judge Tolles' boathouse and took that fish off the hook. She returned the poles and then cleaned the fish in expert fashion. She then went to the Tolles home and presented the fish to Virginia Tolles (Judge Tolles' wife). Virginia was amazed because Miss Bigelow was known for NEVER giving anything to anyone. So when Miss Bigelow presented that beautifully cleaned fish to Mrs. Tolles, the word got around fast. That night, Reda's mother shared that Miss Bigelow had given a beautiful fish to Mrs. Tolles, and had even cleaned it. She said it was a secret.

And Reda nodded, yes, she would keep it secret. All these years, Reda and Pat kept their own secrets.

Although this is a fish story, it is a true one!

LAKEWATCH volunteers celebrate 34 years of water sampling

-Liz Moreau, UF/IFAS

Tom and Peggy Prevost adore Lake Santa Fe and its smaller basins, Melrose Bay and Little Santa Fe Lake.

“When I look out, you never know what you’re going to see in the mornings,” says Tom. “It’s a blessing. The natural beauty that we’re able to see...so you have an interest in keeping the lake and water quality good.”

That interest in water quality led Tom and Peggy to become volunteers for Florida LAKEWATCH 34 years ago. LAKEWATCH is a citizen volunteer lake monitoring program that facilitates “hands-on” citizen participation in the management of Florida lakes, estuaries, rivers and springs through monthly monitoring activities. Coordinated through the University of Florida’s Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) and UF’s School of Forest, Fisheries, and Geomatics Sciences (FFGS) Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences, the program has been in existence since 1986.

Volunteers throughout Florida

In 1991, the Florida Legislature recognized the importance of the program and established Florida LAKEWATCH in the state statutes (Florida Statute 1004.49). LAKEWATCH is now one of the largest water monitoring programs in the nation with over 1,800 trained citizens currently monitoring 525 lakes, 175 estuary stations, 125 river stations, 20 coastal dune lakes, and 10 spring runs in 57 counties.

The Florida LAKEWATCH program all starts with volunteers. After being trained by one of the program’s coordinators, people like Tom and Peggy take monthly water samples and other readings at thirteen stations on their lake.

Those samples are frozen and dropped off at one of the program’s collection centers around the state. LAKEWATCH coordinators retrieve these samples and bring them to their analytical labs at UF’s Millhopper campus in Gainesville. A team of seven lab staff then analyze the samples for nutrients (total nitrogen and phosphorus), algae proxies (chlorophyll a), color, and conductivity, all of which can help lake managers and scientists better understand our waterbodies.

After going through rigorous quality control and assurance checks, the data are sent to the LAKEWATCH data manager, who incorporates them into the program’s databases and uploads them to Department of Environmental Protection’s Watershed Information Network.



Sharing results

All the data are also given back to the volunteers, usually at one of the many annual meetings that Florida LAKEWATCH holds around the state. These meetings are one of the way the program gives back to its volunteers, offering information, food, and the sharing of ideas around waterbody management and conservation.

In the more than three decades of volunteering, the Prevosts have only missed a handful of samples, racking up 433 months of sampling from their beloved 24-foot Sea Auk, “The Big Easy.” The boat’s name harkens back to Tom’s childhood in New Orleans, but he spent his summers in Melrose with his grandparents, who built the house that Tom and Peggy now live in on Melrose Bay.

Tom fell in love with his lake at a young age and moved to the area upon graduating from high school. He soon met Peggy and they grew their family, raising three daughters who love the lake as well. They spend as much time as possible on the lake fishing, bird watching, and water skiing.

Tom claims that their impressive sampling record is simply because their schedules and abilities allow it, though it’s clear there is also deep passion for conserving the beauty and function of this precious natural resource. In addition to the regular monthly LAKEWATCH sampling, Tom and Peggy have participated in various research projects over the years.

One such project involved sampling of 36 stations to assess whether nearby farmland was adding fecal coliforms to the lake water. Recently, the Prevost’s local lake association honored their work by presenting them with a plaque.

“Dedicated volunteers, like Tom and Peggy, are the heart of the Florida LAKEWATCH program,” said Florida LAKEWATCH Director and FFGS Assistant Professor Gretchen Lescord. Their collective time and energy have translated to over 2 million data points across approximately 22 percent of Florida’s lakes since 1986. But they don’t stop there – volunteers like Tom and Peggy know their lakes better than anyone and their insights help us understand our data and the broader ecosystem ecology and chemistry.”

Septic System Rebate Increased

EPD has received funding from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) to provide qualifying Alachua County property owners with 50% rebates, up to \$10,000, to upgrade existing septic systems to enhanced nutrient reducing systems.

The goal of the program is to improve water quality because traditional septic systems are not designed to remove harmful nutrients that contribute to algal outbreaks.

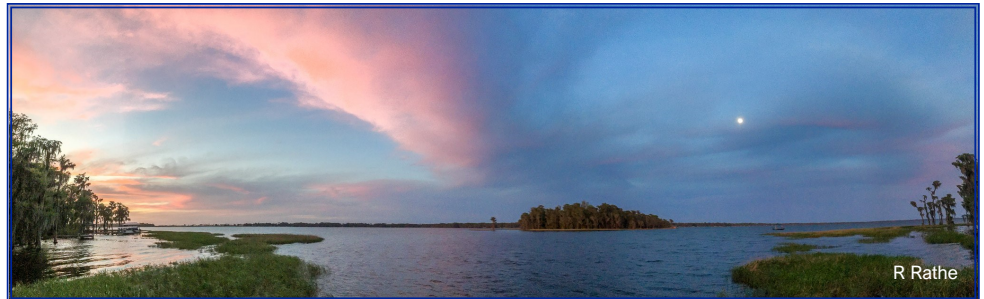
To view a fact sheet or to express your interest in the program or to complete an online form go to

alachuacounty.us/Depts/epd/WaterResources/Pages/Wastewater

for additional information contact Stacie Greco at 352-264-6829

Alachua Conservation Trust

Alachua Conservation Trust (ACT) is a 36- year-old accredited non-profit land trust with a mission to protect the natural, historic, scenic and recreational resources in 22 counties across North Central Florida. Over three and a half decades we are proud to have facilitated the conservation of more than 60,000 acres of environmentally fragile and ecologically sensitive forests, springs, wetlands and agricultural landscapes.



We achieve this through fee simple purchase, donation and conservation easements. To date, we own, operate, and maintain 14 separate nature preserves that are open to the public and invite passive, year-round recreation.

In addition, ACT champions environmental education programming for local underserved elementary school children and supports an ever-expanding land resource management team that is supported by a semester-based intern program. Through land acquisition, invasive species remediation, prescribed fire and longleaf seedling planting, ACT works daily towards a goal of historic land restoration.

Conserve Land and Mitigate Negative

Impacts: ACT worked closely with the owners of the 561-acre, Gilchrist County based Watson Farm to put their multi-generational family land into conservation and begin steps to reduce land use impacts through an innovative conversion process.

Safeguard Critical Springs Habitat: ACT was able to secure 288 acres of land adjacent to Manatee Springs State Park which buffers existing state park lands along the southeast boundary and features multiple sinkholes that directly connect to one of the largest known cave systems in Florida with over 20,000 feet of explored and mapped underground conduits. The land transferred to the state of Florida earlier this year.

Expand Existing Conservation Areas: ACT helped facilitate the acquisition of the 290-acre "Goethe Addition" property by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection

(DEP). The addition is located in the heart of the Watermelon Pond conservation area, which spans southwest Alachua County and northeast Levy County and contains one of the last remaining native longleaf pine landscapes in North Florida.

In fact, ACT has over 70 active conservation projects across our entire region, including conservation efforts to protect land along the Santa Fe River and its tributaries. With the outstanding support of our community, ACT has been busy conserving the lands that define our region and add substantial value to our lives here in North Central Florida.

To learn more visit AlachuaConservationTrust.org



To discover the hidden beauty of "weeds" in your yards Alachua County launched a new initiative on **iNaturalist**, a global database where anyone can document their observations of the natural world.

Here's how you can participate:

1. Create a free account on iNaturalist, and download the app for access on your phone.

2. Join the project

"Weeds Feed Bees, Alachua County!"

Protecting Our Jewel

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 waterfowl 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.

The Lake Dwellers Association originally organized over forty years ago in response to plans to strip mine thousands of acres of the Santa Fe Swamp for peat to be used as a low grade fuel.

Threats to the health of the lakes and our area's quality of life have been innumerable over the years. Some of these include ill-advised large commercial and lodging facilities, a regional landfill, multi-level boat storage facilities planned in sensitive wetlands, developments without adequate sewage treatment infrastructure, hundreds of truckloads of illegally placed fill, impermissible dredging, commercial requests for excessive consumptive water use permits, and deforestation of native species. Less obvious but equally threatening dangers come from ineffec-

tive or leaking septic systems, improper use of fertilizers, and poor stormwater controls.

The Lake Dwellers strive to preserve the unique quality of the Lake Area by illustrating the risks, educating stakeholders and policy makers, and collaborating with like-minded organizations.

When necessary, money received from the dues and contributions that our members have provided allows us to employ environmental consultants, civil engineers, and attorneys to effectively fulfill our charter for "... *the defense, protection and preservation of lakes, swamps, wetlands, rivers, water recharge areas and all natural resources and wildlife from ecological and environmental pollution, deterioration damage or exploitation.*"

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

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

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 ☐ Committee Chair ☐ Newsletter ☐ Website ☐ Please Contact me

Name: _____

Mailing 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.



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
**Saturday
August 24th
Noon to 1:30 pm**

Parish Hall at
Trinity Episcopal
204 State Road 26
Melrose

Program:
Dugout Canoes
presented by

Amy Socha

Senior Archaeologist

Bureau of Archaeological
Research

SANTA FE AUDUBON SOCIETY

We are pleased to announce our first Speaker Series Program, for our 2024-2025 season, will be "BATS" (speaker Donna Bear from the Jacksonville Zoo and Gardens) on Tuesday, October 8, 6:45 PM at Trinity Episcopal Parish Hall.

You do not need to be a Santa Fe Audubon Society chapter member to attend our Speaker Series programs, all are welcome.

For complete information about our Speaker Series Programs, Field Trips and Activities visit our website

www.santafeaudubon.org

or our Facebook page
Santa Fe Audubon Society - Florida

To be on our mailing list for our monthly newsletter, [The Kite](#), email us at santafeaudubonfl@aol.com

Florida Fish & Wildlife

Kyle Williams is the Fisheries Biologist with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission that manages Lake Santa Fe. Kyle reports that in their samplings over the last year, the fish populations have appeared healthy and productive, and did see quite a few 5 to 7 pound Florida Bass, which is now recognized as a genealogically distinct species from Black or Largemouth Bass. *TrophyCatch* is FWC's citizen-science program that rewards anglers for documenting and releasing trophy bass 8 pounds or larger. *TrophyCatch* bass have been submitted from Santa Fe:

Lunker Club (8 to 9.9 pounds): 36
Trophy Club (10 to 12.9 pounds): 8

For more information see

[myfwc.com/fishing/freshwater/
sites-forecasts/nc/lake-santa-fe](http://myfwc.com/fishing/freshwater/sites-forecasts/nc/lake-santa-fe)
or call

Kyle at his office: 386-754-6252

Hattie's Boat Club is a free organization to promote sailing and boating on Lake Santa Fe. The Club currently operates a fleet of 3 Laser sailboats, club 420s, Sunfish, optimist prams, Hobie Cats and other boats. Membership is free and requires only an orientation visit. To join the club email listserv. The Club normally coordinates a group sailing day on Lake Santa Fe for the 1st weekend of each month (frequently excluding the hot summer with little wind).

The boat club is operated from Hattie's Marina at Santa Fe Lakeside Landing on the Eastern shore of the lake. Run by the late Harriet McKinney since 1981 and now by her surviving son. Hattie's offers boat slips, a ramp, bathrooms and other seasonal services.

For more information about Hattie's please call:
(352) 281-6060