

Friends of Lake Apopka Position Paper

Water Withdrawal from Lake Apopka

Recent intense development pressures in the Lake Apopka basin have created demands for increased water usage. Decreased spring flows have been well documented as a result, and a recent long-term drought followed by record rainfall created major surface water quality problems.

Proposals for withdrawal from Lake Apopka create major concerns. However, potential solutions must consider the alternative: the negative effects of groundwater use. The following are recommendations and concerns expressed by the Friends of Lake Apopka:

1. Lake Apopka is a shallow lake with an average depth of 5.5 feet. Major withdrawals could lower water levels to a point where boating and fishing would be reduced, phosphorous concentrations would be increased and shoreline wetlands would be dry up increasing invasion by noxious species such as cattails. If withdrawals are considered, they should be regulated by the determination of minimal levels and flows.
2. Existing Consumptive Use Permits have already reduced flow in Gourd Neck Springs and will undoubtedly continue to do so. More data should be available prior to issuance of more CUP's and greater enforcement of restrictions should be imposed on existing permits.
3. Since 90% of lake waters are derived from rainfall and groundwater flow, no withdrawals should be discharged from the Apopka basin.
4. If withdrawal permits are issued, there will be a problem determining who will receive them and who will be denied. Enforcement will be an ongoing problem.
5. Utilization of wet detention ponds for supplies of irrigation water should be encouraged in lieu of direct withdrawals from the lake.
6. One possible compromise solution could be the construction of storage reservoirs in the north

shore restoration area. Possibilities could include the northern areas of the restoration areas and the acreage immediately north of the flow-way. Design of a reservoir could maximize habitat value.

7. St. Johns River Water Management District should continue to expand their current educational programs on water conservation, xeriscaping and other water-related programs.

In summary, Friends of Lake Apopka has concerns about approvals for withdrawals from the lake because of potential impacts to the lake ecosystem and the difficulty of controlling these withdrawals once begun.

St. Johns River Water Management District and local governments should strengthen rules and regulations governing water use and before lake withdrawals are considered, a more efficient use should be made of existing water resources within each jurisdiction.



Black Bellied Whistling Ducks are seen regularly at Clay Island. Early morning and evening are generally good times to view them. They fly in circular patterns, looking for places to feed and they call constantly while in flight.

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