



**GET INVOLVED IN
YOUR LAKE—
IF YOU DON'T,
WHO WILL?!**

The Newsletter of the Bear Lake Preservation Association, Inc. • May 2006

Update on the Bear Lake Road Improvements

Bowyer-Singleton & Associates, Inc. (BSA) is scheduled to submit their 60% design plans for the Bear Lake Road Drainage Improvements to Seminole County in mid-May, and a Public Information Meeting will be held on May 29th at 7:00 p.m. at St. Andrews Presbyterian Church. A notice will be mailed to the local residents and BLPA members. The design improvements are those recommendations approved from the previous study phase and presented at the Public Information Meeting held at St. Andrews Presbyterian Church on August 30, 2005.

The Spring Creek stormwater management facility is no longer being considered as a location for water quality treatment due to the small section of Bear Lake Road that could be treated there, and the cost of long-term maintenance for the facility. The portion of Bear Lake Road from the abandoned railroad tracks north of Maitland Boulevard to Pine View Way will be reconstructed to drain to the east to a proposed swale. The existing sidewalk on the east side will be removed to allow for a wider swale. Ditch bottom inlets will convey the stormwater to the existing storm sewer system between Pine View Way and Bear Lake Circle, which will be upgraded to improve conveyance and reduce the risk of clogging. A treatment pond will be constructed in the outfall ditch leading to Cub Lake by constructing an earthen berm near the downstream end (before it discharges into Cub Lake), with an outfall structure, and the outfall pipe from Bear Lake and Little Bear Lake will be piped around the proposed pond to avoid any impacts to the stages of those lakes. Additional curb inlets will be added north of Bear Lake Circle to reduce the spread of stormwater on the roadway.

The existing pond immediately north of Bunnell Road will be reconstructed to transform this facility to a wet pond with flatter side slopes. The fence will be removed to improve aesthetics. Additional curb inlets will also be added in this area to reduce the spread of stormwater on the pavement, and a portion of the existing pavement will be routed to the pond to be treated prior to being discharged to Bear Lake.

Coordination is on-going with the Ballentyne Place Home Owners Association and it appears that we will be able to route the stormwater from the portion of Bear Lake Road between Jamison Drive to Bonnie Drive to their pond for water quality treatment. Ditch bottom inlets and pipes will be installed in the existing swales to collect the stormwater. The paved ditches on either side of Bear

Lake Road between Anna Drive and Oletha Drive will be removed, and curb and curb inlets are designed to collect the stormwater and convey it to the existing outfall that discharges into Mirror Lake. Underdrain is proposed along Oletha Drive to lower the groundwater elevation in this area. This will reduce the seepage along the roadway and will protect the structural base course along Bear Lake Road, which should eliminate the pavement failure in this area. Permitting issues associated with sovereign submerged lands will prevent the installation of the proposed sheetpile wall at Mirror Lake. The reduction in impervious area from the removal of the paved ditches will reduce the runoff volume slightly, and additional curb inlets will be added between Oletha Drive and Gleaves Court to reduce the amount of water encroaching into the travel lanes.

Permitting through the SJRWMD will be initiated after the Public Information Meeting, which must be complete before construction can begin. We will also provide copies of our design plans to all the utility companies along the corridor to identify any potential conflicts, so any needed adjustments can be made. It is estimated that the design process will be complete in late 2006, and construction will begin in 2007.

It should be noted that no additional right-of-way is being proposed along Bear Lake Road, and the road is not to be widened. We encourage you to contact our Project Managers with any questions or concerns you may have. You may contact either Brett Blackadar of the Seminole County Public Works Department, 520 W. Lake Mary Boulevard, Suite 200, Sanford, Florida 32773 (407-665-5702; BBlackadar@seminolecountyfl.gov) or Barry Switzer, Bowyer-Singleton & Associates, Inc., 520 South Magnolia Avenue, Orlando, Florida 32801 (407-843-5120; BSwitzer@bsaorl.com). Updates will be published periodically in this newsletter.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

BLPA General Meeting • May 16, 2006

Guest Speaker: Our Own Ecology and

Political Committees — Update on Ongoing Projects

7:30 p.m. • St. Andrews Presbyterian Church

The mission of the Bear Lake Preservation Association is to provide environmental and civic stewardship for the Bear Lakes watershed. This is achieved through water quality monitoring, scientific understanding, public education, governmental intervention, and watershed improvements for the enhancement and preservation of the water quality and biological integrity of clean lakes.

Save the Lakes Education Continued



Free refrigerator magnets and clean lakes flyers were delivered to all lakefront residents in March. We hope everyone found the package at your front doors. The magnet has a beautiful photo of a sunrise on Little Bear Lake (photo by Paul Ihrig) along with the top four good practices of keeping our lakes clean.

Our Ecology Committee, led by Bill Houston, developed the two-sided flyer.

One side reminds us of our number one enemy...fertilizer.

If you use a lawn service company, advise them to use only “no phosphorous” fertilizer and do not fertilize near ditches, sidewalks, driveways or the street. (Anywhere the rain can convey it into the lakes)

The other side of the flyer tells us how important it is to create “berms and swales” on our properties at the edge of the water. These swales trap the pollutants carried with the first flush of each rainfall and prevents the dirty water from reaching the lakes.

The following Board of Directors and Board Supporters took time from their busy schedules to deliver the packages to 250 lakefront residents on Bear, Little Bear, Cub and Asher: Judy Ihrig (created the magnet design), Bill Houston, Bob Heideman, Bob Shields, Doug and Corrie Hungerford, Brian and Sarah Allen, Vicki Jameson, Holly Gosney, and Nancy Dunn.

For additional magnets and flyers, please call Nancy Dunn at 407-295-6335.

Lake Value IS Property Value!

By Bob Heideman

If the Bear lakes were not swimmable and skiable, would our property value be as high? Definitely not. With so many lakes to compare in central Florida we have many examples to illustrate the point.

What is the relationship of lake quality to property value? Not being a real estate professional with exact figures I'll take a stab at answering the question. In many parts of the country water front property is priced in dollars per front foot. Using that method for the Bear lakes I think it is safe to say it currently stands at something more than \$ 4,000 per lake front foot. Using round numbers, lets say there is 200 lots of 100 feet each @ \$4,000 per ft = \$80,000,000 for big Bear lake alone. If the lake did not have the reputation of being a 'clean clear' lake you could take at least 50% of that away.

So is the defense of our clean clear water worth \$40 million dollars? YES. Directly and measurably.

Now, if we agree on that, how do we get all the shareholders to start doing something to protect their assets? Should we try to have a storm water tax levied on all the

residents of the watershed? If it were a fraction of a mil for instance someone on the lake in a new house costing \$600K may pay only \$200 a year. An older lake front resident with a home valued at \$300K would pay only \$100 a year. And, someone living off the lake, with or without deeded access, would only pay \$50 on a \$150K home. (Remember that the water quality problem is caused by everyone in the watershed so everyone should pay their fair share.)

That revenue could easily come to \$100K per year! That money could be used for improved storm drains, swales and berms along the roads, alum treatments, weed control, installing retention ponds, stocking of weed eating fish, dredging, water quality studies, and other things that would directly improve or maintain the water quality of the Bear lakes.

Not only is it the right thing to do for ourselves and our children, its the smart thing to do. It's no different than taking care of your house. The only difference is that “we” have to get together to protect our investments. We need to be zealously protecting “our” lakes.



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Is Alum in Our Lakes future?

By Bob Heideman

It is now the spring of 2006, the time of year when we expect our lakes to be the cleanest due to the absence of rainfall which washes the watershed and pollutes our lakes. But, the visibility is only 10 feet. When I moved here 16 years ago we would expect to see 20 feet at this time. What the BLPA has done over these years is a valiant attempt to slow down the rate of degradation by limiting the nutrients that are carried in with each rainfall. Further degradation is inevitable, albeit slower, even if we are successful with all of our projects. There is however one thing we can do to actually restore the clarity of our lakes. The question is...do we want to spend the money?

Alum is a lake clarification tool that has been used in lakes for 40 years. The BLPA is now investigating its possible use in our lakes. Last fall I attended a one day workshop on Alum hosted by the North American Lake Management Society (NALMS) in Madison, WI. Here is what I learned:

- When properly applied, one large alum application can provide significant water clarity improvements for 10 years or more.
- It is safe. There is no danger to people, pets, wildlife, fish, mussels, etc. when applied properly.
- The food grade alum (alum is used as a food ingredient) is delivered in liquid form in tank trucks and applied under the surface by a special boat that is guided by GPS, a fathometer and computer which regulates the dose for the depth.
- The water clarity improvement is instantaneous. The alum forms a white cloud that sinks to the bottom within a couple hours and then mingles with the bottom sand and mud. The alum does two things. First it is a flocculent. This means that it causes algae and other suspended particles that cloud the water to sink to the bottom. Secondly, it selectively binds to phosphorous (P).
- Long term water quality improvements result from this permanent alum/P bond. P is taken out of the water and locked in the lake's bottom. Without P you have no algae growth.

➤ P is a "limiting nutrient" for plant growth. P comes into the lakes with stormwater runoff (lawn fertilizer and animal droppings, etc.), atmospheric deposition (dust, pollen, bird droppings, etc.), ground water (water moving horizontally through the lakes including septic system nutrients), and nutrient cycling (P diffusing back out of the bottom of the lake, especially the mud/muck.) All of these P sources are dealt with by the alum! After the alum has settled to the bottom it remains "active", ready to bind with P when it shows up.

➤ After the initial clarification alum mostly prevents P from migrating back out of the mud. Because it does not stay up in the lake water it is not available to bind with the new additions of P that come from the stormwater and atmosphere and this is why a single treatment may be limited to around 10 years of water clarity benefit.

➤ Think of it like this: Say a lake remained clean and clear for 100's of years, like they were when development started around the various lakes in Central Florida. Let's say 1960. It takes some number of years for a clean lake to show the effects of all those added nutrients. In the case of Bear Lake, with its small watershed and good assimilative capacity, it took about 30 years to get noticeably worse. Ditto for Clear Lake, the Butler Lakes, Lake Holden, Lake Weir, and many other nearby examples. An alum treatment is like starting over! It both cleanses the water and seals the bottom from P. An alum treatment together with good watershed land use practices (swales & berms and limited fertilizer use) can actually restore a lake like ours. We can't say that about nutrient reduction alone as that will simply slow down the rate of degradation.

➤ Do we want to pay the price? The ini-

Alum is a lake clarification tool that has been used in lakes for 40 years.

tial testing, needed to determine the amount of alum needed, costs about \$10,000. A wild estimate, given by one of the experts before the required testing, was \$300,000 for the treatment of Bear Lake, which is expected to last 10 years. That sounds like a lot until you divide it between all the properties in the watershed. If it were shared by 1000 residents it would be just \$300 each or, \$30 per year. (Remember that the problem is caused by everyone in the watershed so they should all pay their fair share.) If divided by each of the 180 lake front residents it would come to \$1,666, or just \$166 per year. An-

other way to look at it is \$300 K is only one half the cost of one lake front lot! Or, If Seminole County treated the lakes for free they would be paid back handsomely by the resulting increase in property values over the next 10 years.

The BLPA Ecology Committee will continue it's investigation into the cost and benefits of an alum application, and will present their findings at the **next General Meeting on May 16th.**



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Have You Seen Any Blue Herons on the Bear Lakes?



The Great Blue Heron is one of the most commonly observed aquatic birds in Florida's lakes and fresh-water marshes. This species is the largest and most widespread heron in North America. The Great Blue Heron was observed on 67 of the 92 lakes participating in the Florida LAKEWATCH Bird Survey. It was most frequently observed in productive eutrophic and hypereutrophic lakes. The Great Blue Heron is a large blue-gray bird with long legs and a long "S"-shaped neck.

Distinguishing characteristics include a long thick yellow bill, white crown stripe, and a distinct black plume that extends from behind the eye to off the back of the neck. The legs and feet are brownish or greenish in color and unlike many bird species, the males and females are similar in appearance. Adult Great Blue Herons are from 38 to 54 inches tall with a wingspan of about 66 to 79 inches. Although seemingly large birds, adults generally only weigh from 4.5 to 5.5 pounds. This is because they have hollow bones that are strong yet still light.

The Great Blue Heron is often seen feeding along the edges of lakes in the littoral zone that separates the open water from the shoreline. This species prefers to forage in shallow areas for fish, frogs, crawfish, salamanders, snakes, and insects. Sometimes even small birds and mammals such as rodents are captured and consumed.

The Great Blue Heron seldom stabs its prey but prefers to use

its bill like a pair of tongs to clamp down on food items. The special vertebrae that create the distinctive "S"-shape allow its neck to curl up like a spring that can then spring out to attack prey. This also allows the neck to be folded back in while flying.

Great Blue Herons usually build their large nests of twigs and sticks lined with moss and lichen in trees near water and away from human activity. They are adept at weaving nests side by side, "condominium" style, in high tree top canopies. The size of the heronry grows with the amount of food available nearby. If humans disturb the nesting areas during breeding season, the reproductive rate of the colony can drop or the entire colony may move. Bald eagles have also been known to prey on heron chicks and have caused heron colonies to move.

The Great Blue Heron lays 3-7 eggs one to two days apart. The eggs begin hatching in about 28 days, again, one to two days apart. Both adults incubate the eggs and feed the young by regurgitating directly into the chick's open beaks. Weaker chicks that may be pushed out of the nest by siblings are not cared for by the parents. At 10 weeks of age, the young leave the nest and follow the parents to the feeding grounds.

The Great Blue Heron can live to be 15-20 years old and can begin breeding in their second year. Adults usually return to nest in the same colony where they were born, although some herons are attracted to other colonies which helps to ensure genetic diversity. The Great Blue Heron is one of the most commonly seen herons in Florida lakes and is easy to identify.



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Information on Lakewatch...Rainfall Data

Rainfall Versus Water Clarity

The following Lakewatch data covers the last 10 months (collected in the third week of each month). Clarity level is the average of four locations on Big Bear Lake and Little Bear Lake. Lake levels determined by surveyed elevation markers set on the lakes by Seminole County.

Bear Lake

Date	Rainfall	Clarity Level	Water Level (Above Sea Level)
6/05	14-1/4"	8'	104.9
7/05	11-3/8"	7'	105.4
8/05	7-3/4"	8-1/2'	104.6
9/05	7-3/4"	7-1/2'	104.6-1/2
10/05	6"	7'	104.6-1/2
11/05	7-3/4"	7-1/2'	104.6
12/05	3"	8-1/2'	104.5
1/06	7/8"	10-1/2'	104.5
2/06	3-1/4"	11'	104.5-1/2
3/06	1"	10'	104.4

Little Bear Lake

Date	Rainfall	Clarity Level	Water Level (Above Sea Level)
6/05	14-1/4"	10-1/2'	104.9
7/05	11-3/8"	7-1/2'	104.0
8/05	7-3/4"	9'	103.8
9/05	7-3/4"	7-1/2'	104.1
10/05	6"	7'	104
11/05	7-3/4"	8-1/2'	103.9
12/05	3"	10'	103.85
1/06	7/8"	no data	no data
2/06	3-1/4"	12'	103.8
3/06	1"	12'	103.33

The Lakes May Not Be Clean Tomorrow!

Remember to report any water quality changes immediately to your LAKEWATCH captains such as improper use of liquids, garbage or yard waste in the water or in ditches or storm drains. You can report this information to the following LAKEWATCH captains: Bear Lake, Nancy Dunn, 407-295-6335; Little Bear Lake, Janet Brown, 407-295-6739; Cub Lake, Margaret Bundy, 407-523-1064.

We Need LAKEWATCH Volunteers on Lake Asher

Volunteers are needed to continue monthly sampling of this lake. All you need is a couple of hours each month, lake access and a boat or canoe. Please call David Watson, University of Florida, 1-800-LAKEWATCH or contact Nancy Dunn, 407-295-6335.



Real Estate Watch

By Susan Burton, Realtor®

Real estate values continue to escalate. Contrary to what we hear on the news, properties are still selling at quick pace. Call me if you have any questions (407-682-1214). The following is the most current information regarding the activity on our lakes:

Active Listings.....None

Closed Sales

6007 Linneal Beach..... \$897,000

3304 Holliday Avenue \$600,000

6259 Linneal Beach..... \$1,340,000

The BLPA Wants YOU!

The BLPA is committed to preserving the lakes and community to protect our lifestyle and property values. The BLPA invites you to join our organization. Be Aware! Get Involved!

Look at the membership advantages the organization provides:

- Free BLPA license tag.
- Lake preserving activities and ideas for residents.
- “Watchdog” challenges to encroachment by developers and government.
- Neighborhood social activities (picnics, block parties, boat parade, etc.)
- Monthly Lakewatch testing and analysis.
- Expert speakers on environmental topics such as lake management and water quality.
- Coordination of Neighborhood Watch communities.
- Town Hall forums for homeowners to express pros and cons of neighborhood projects.
- Liaison with the county on issues such as traffic, lake patrols, and water run-off problems.
- Other activity suggestions welcomed by members.
- Annual community picnic.

Please add your voice and financial support by joining this community enhancement group.

NOTE: BLPA annual dues have been increased for the first time in 15 years, covering printing and postage costs.

New/Renewal Member • Bear Lake Preservation Association, Inc.
c/o Pam Ison, 3010 Holliday Ave, Apopka, FL 32703

Name(s) of Home Owner(s): _____

Street Address: _____

City/St/Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

Please mail this form to the above address with your check for \$75.00; senior citizens, \$35.00. Please make your checks payable to Bear Lake Preservation Association, Inc.

GET INVOLVED AND DO YOUR PART! WE CAN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU!

St. Andrews Presbyterian Church

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Calendar of Events

May 16.....	General Meeting
July 18.....	Board of Directors Meeting
August 15.....	Board of Directors Meeting
October 17.....	Board of Directors Meeting
November 14.....	General Meeting
December 9.....	Boat Parade
December 10.....	Boat Parade Rain Date

For committee meeting dates, please contact one of the Board members.

www.blpa.net

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Bear Lake Road Drainage Improvements Public Meeting
May 29, 2006 • 7:00 p.m. St. Andrews Presbyterian Church



c/o Pam Ison
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