

Bear Lake Stormwater Outfall Manhole

Consistent Problems with Eelgrass Blockage

North winds or high waters on Bear Lake is a telling sign that it's time to clear the drain to prevent property flooding. Algae from the summer months stresses the eelgrass blades and cause it to break off from the rest of the plant. The broken blades then float to the surface and the winds will carry them to the lake's shorelines. Once the north cold front winds come through in the fall, the endless floating eelgrass blades are drawn toward the cove on the south end of the lake, which causes the drain and surrounding manhole to become clogged.

Since 2008, volunteer residents have cleared the grate around the manhole and hauled off the eelgrass. The box barrier, which was designed to prevent blockage, worked well until late September 2014 when we already had a total of 17" of rain. During this time, more than nine resident volunteers and privately retained lawn companies attempted to keep up with the eelgrass clogging problems in and around the drain. Because of the amount of rain in such a short period of time, Bear Lake's elevation rose to 104.6, to levels over the manhole and box barrier. The northerly cold fronts and high waters keep piles of eelgrass tossed up onto the south shorelines and the manhole was getting plugged up almost every hour.

Volunteers worked four to five times daily to clear the clogging eelgrass so that the water levels could be maintained. At this point, many docks were under water. For more than three weeks, BLPA and many concerned resi-

Floating eelgrass is drawn toward the cove of the Bear Lake drain. The manhole drain becomes clogged and the lake is subject to flooding, and erosion of shorelines.

Seminole County Stormwater work crew rake, skim, and haul the eelgrass out of the water by the drain.

dents asked lakefront and lake access residents not to create a wake until the water elevation returned to normal. Fortunately, Little Bear and Cub Lake were able to maintain the heavy rains and high water levels during this time by draining normally.

In late October 2014, Seminole County was contacted and they agreed to visit the site. When Bob Ballerino and Joe Tamulonis from Seminole County arrived to inspect the issue, the eelgrass was already starting to decay. It was to the point that the privately retained lawn service companies and the resident volunteers, could no longer continue this overwhelming task. Seminole county recognized the immediate



The area around the drain is cleared until North cold front winds send endless floating eelgrass back again.



County vacuum truck hauls off heavy eelgrass loads.

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Stormwater Outfall Manhole

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need for assistance and relocated two separate crews off of current job sites to clear the drain and the surrounding area, and used a vacuum truck to haul the eelgrass away. However, they informed us at that time, this would not be a regular maintenance. The BLPA board is planning further communication with Seminole County in an attempt to come up with a solution to this recurring problem.

BLPA resident volunteers must use waders and dry off with towels quickly after touching and removing the eelgrass to prevent swimmer's itch, which is common in warm waters with eelgrass.

As Dr. Harvey Harper reported during BLPA's August 2014 General Meeting, the number one thing our resident members can do to prevent nutrients from entering the lake is to rake out the decaying eelgrass quickly before the phosphorous loads are released from it.

BLPA would like to thank the volunteers who help clear the drain and grate! And thanks to Jim Seay, Ren

Werrenrath, and Rob Dominica, all of whom live closest to the drain. For many years, these residents have had the financial burden of having their privately retained lawn companies assist in maintaining Bear Lakes' manhole and grate. We are thankful we currently have volunteers from Bear, Little Bear, and Cub Lake assisting us with this issue. If we did not have the same resident volunteers or these residents who live around the drain hiring their own lawn crews to remove the eel grass on a regular basis, the docks would be under water, property would have erosion issues, and unnecessary loads of nutrients would be released into the lake, all of which would bring down the property values.

BLPA would like to thank all the resident volunteers and the recent assistance from Seminole County. Again, we will keep you apprised of any new developments from Seminole County on this issue. In the meantime, keep raking!

Announcing the Bear Lake Preservation Association Election Results

The election results for our Board of Directors are in! Voting took place at our general meeting held on Thursday, January 29, 2015, and by mail after the meeting. Thanks to all the members who came out to cast your vote. BLPA Board of Directors were able to answer many questions asked by its members about the lake. In addition, members were able to review the construction plan details for future projects planned by the County for the Bear Lake watershed.

Here are the official results: George Helm; Bill Houston; Judy Ihrig; and Bob Shields (there were no write in candidates).

The following volunteers are cur-

rently serving their second term as a Board of Director: Margaret Bundy; Nancy Dunn; Dr. Jay Goebel; and, Catherine Heideman.

BLPA would like to give a special thanks for the generous donation of your time, many years of service, and for your ongoing support of our Mission Statement.

Volunteering is about giving your time to help other individuals in order to make a meaningful contribution in your community. "Be the change you wish to see in the world." — *Mahatma Gandhi*

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please contact a board member today!



2015 Board of Directors

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- Vice PresidentBob Shields
321-354-4449
- Acting TreasurerDr. Jay Goebel,
407-295-9457
- Secretary.....George Helm
407-808-2089

Committees

- BLPA Email....Happy Oropeza, 407-446-5859
- Ecology Nancy Dunn, 407-920-4975
Dr. Jay Goebel, 407-295-9457
Bill Houston, 407-721-0219
Bob Shields, 321-354-4449
- Lakewatch..... Nancy Dunn, Big Bear
407-920-4975
Jan Brown, Little Bear, 407-295-6739
Margaret Bundy, Cub Lake, 407-497-0295
- Acting Membership..... Nancy Dunn,
407-920-4975
Margaret Bundy, 407-497-0295
- Newsletter Margaret Bundy, Editor
407-497-0295
Judy Ihrig, Advertising, 407-292-4632

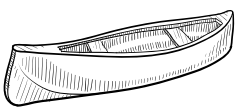
- Social ... Catherine Heideman, 407-538-1097

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- Nancy Dunn 407-295-6335
- Catherine Heideman 407-538-1097
- Bill Houston..... 407-721-0219
- Judy Ihrig..... 407-292-4632

Board Supporters

- Brian Allen 407-580-6979
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- Susan Burton..... 407-521-8212
- Patsy Cumbie 407-886-5588
- Denise Fitzgerald..... 407-296-0079
- Tealea Fortune 407-694-9297
- Buddy Hutson 407-298-3681
- Anne and Walt Juergensen 407-299-7147
- Mark Leavitt 407-578-9993
- Sue Parker 407-294-6026
- Matt Rayl..... 765-437-5118
- Vicki and Marc Renner 407-569-0494
- Sherri Walls..... 407-928-8878



CANOE FOUND ON BEAR LAKE: Is your canoe missing???
A faded, red canoe in good condition drifted on my property on Friday, January 23, 2015. If this is your canoe, please call Ken 407-782-0431.

Slow Down the Amount of Pollutants Entering the Bear Lakes!

- **Lawn Maintenance Activities:** Keep yard waste (leaves, grass clippings) and fertilizers off of impervious surfaces (sidewalks, driveways, roads) and out of swales and ditches that lead to lakes. Replace areas of your landscaping with natural mulch and Florida friendly plants that do not require a lot of water and do not require fertilizer.
- **Boating:** Restrict boating in shallow areas (less than 10-15 feet deep). Boating in shallow areas stirs up the nutrients which are settled on the bottom of the lake. Did you know that enhanced wake boats damage and stir up bottom areas as deep as 15 feet? If you own an enhanced wake boat, avoid areas 15 feet or less. Were you aware you can get a ticket with a fine for creating a wake within 150' of the shoreline, docks, piers, bridges, or boathouses on any wa-

ters in Seminole County? See the November 2013 newsletter, page 5 (go to www.blpa.net to refer to any previous newsletters). **Come to the next general meeting on April 23, 2015, at 7:30 pm, to hear more about the Rules and Regulations of operating a water vessel in Seminole County and the State of Florida. See the back page of this newsletter for more details.**

- **Stormwater Swales:** Stormwater swales control stormwater runoff and allow polluted rainwater to seep into the ground slowly for filtering. Do not fill-in the swale (ditch) located in the county's right of way of your front yard. It's there for a good reason. If you don't have one, make one. Swales help prevent stormwater runoff from directly entering the Bear Lakes.
- **Rear Yard Berms and Swales:** In addition to street runoff, residents

can prevent pesticides, fertilizers, and bacteria from animal wastes and ground sediments from flushing directly into the lakes. Create a slight berm and swale in your backyard to slow down and filter the water before it enters the lake.

- **Septic Maintenance and Use:** When the ground is saturated, the Bear Lakes' residents should be good stewards and minimize the use of septic tanks by reducing water used in showers, dishwasher, washing machine, sinks, disposals, and toilets. Have your septic tank cleared and maintained every two-three years.

BLPA Youth Ecology Members Hard at Work



Scott and Chase Morell, officially trained for lake water sampling by the University of Florida, carefully measure 500 ml of water from Bear Lake to filter the monthly algae sample for the LAKEWATCH Program.

Educate Yourself and Your Lawn Maintenance Crew!



When Mowing and Edging Your Property:

- Do not blow grass clippings, leaves, or other yard debris into streets, ditches or storm drains!
- When mowing near the water's edge, use a grass catcher. Do not blow grass clippings into the lake from your mower, weedwackers, or edgers!

Stop this harm to the Bear Lakes now and help keep the Bear Lakes clean!

Information on Lakewatch...Rainfall Data

The following data collected for the University of Florida LAKEWATCH program covers the last 8 months on the three Bear Lakes sampled. The ground in the Bear Lakes' Watershed is beginning to dry since the 17" of rain we received last September. Our area has received a total of 18.7" of rainfall in the past five months, from November 2014 through March 2015.

The most damaging source of pollutant is still lawn fertilizer. Bear Lake's high water has been slow flowing out to Cub Lake due to floating eelgrass plugging the outfall manhole (see related article in this Newsletter edition).

In December 2014, a number of

seagulls from our beaches arrived on the Bear Lakes. More than 40 were counted on Bear Lake alone. Unfortunately, phosphorous is added to the lake by their "droppings." As it starts to warm, the seagulls and other visiting migrating birds will head back to their home. Although bird "droppings" add phosphorous to the lakes, the most damaging source of pollutant is still lawn fertilizer.

Overflow elevation is the amount measured when each of the Bear Lakes flow into the other. It is measured in feet above sea level. The overflow elevation occurs when Lake Asher reaches 105.78'. When it does,

it flows into Bear Lake. When Bear Lake reaches 103.50' and Little Bear Lake reaches 102.78', the lakes flow into Cub Lake. At 100.19' Cub Lake will flow into Lake Lotus and the Little Wekiwa River.

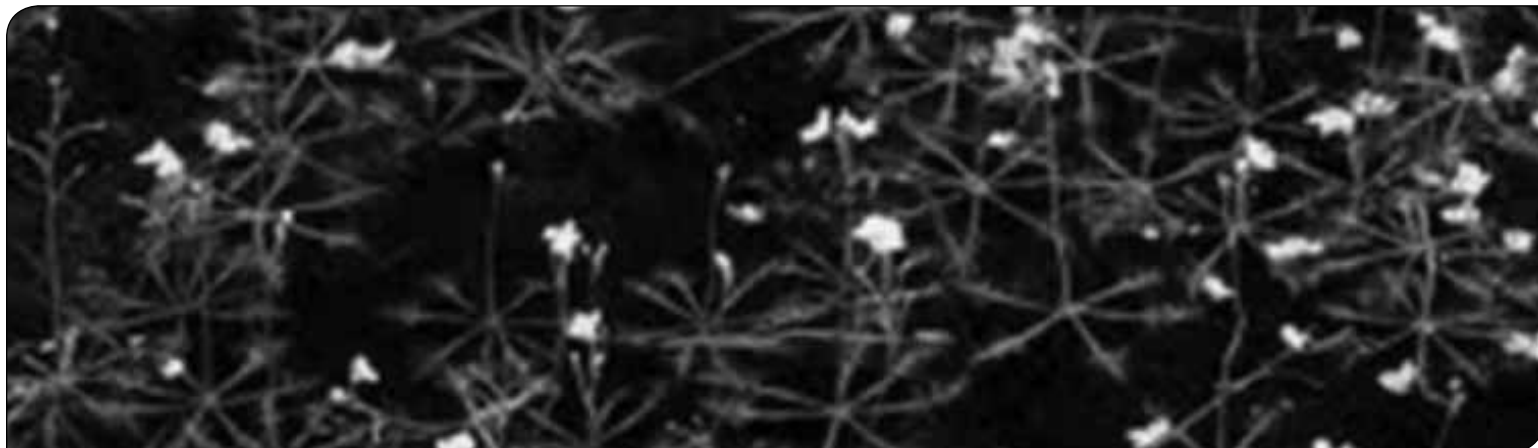
To report activities in the watershed affecting a lake's water quality, unusual plants/algae, fish kills, construction, etc. contact your LAKEWATCH Volunteer: Bear Lake and Lake Asher, Nancy Dunn 407-920-4975; Little Bear, Janet Brown 407-295-6739, and Cub Lake, Margaret Bundy 407- 497-0295.

Bear Lake	Date	Rainfall	Clarity Level	Water Level (Above Sea Level)
	8/14	3.1"	10'	103.88
	9/14	17"	8'	104.55
	10/14	3"	10'	104.14
	11/14	0.5"	12'	103.70
	12/14	7.95"	15'	104.14
	1/15	4.4"	13'	104.20
	2/15	1.65"	12'	104.05
	3/15	4.2"	13'	103.91

Little Bear Lake	Date	Rainfall	Clarity Level	Water Level (Above Sea Level)
	8/14	3.1"	7'	103.72
	9/14	17"	6-1/2'	103.90
	10/14	3"	4-1/2'	103.80
	11/14	0.5"	5-1/2'	103.90
	12/14	7.95"	6-1/2'	103.83
	1/15	4.4"	7'	103.82
	2/15	1.65"	n/a	n/a
	3/15	4.2"	5-1/2'	103.80

Cub Lake	Date	Rainfall	Clarity Level	Water Level (Above Sea Level)
	8/14	3.1"	9'	100.00
	9/14	17"	8'	101.80
	10/14	3"	8'	100.60
	11/14	0.5"	9'	100.60
	12/14	7.95"	10'	100.20
	1/15	4.4"	9'	100.60
	2/15	1.65"	9'	100.20
	3/15	4.2"	9'	100.00

Bladderwort-Utricularia Species and Native to Florida



Little Bear Lake has seen an increase in the Bladderwort. The following is a reprint of information concerning this plant from the University of Florida website.

Bladderworts are submersed free-floating plants. There are about 200 species in the world, ranging in size from a few inches to several feet long. Tiny bladders attached to the leaves

trap and digest very tiny animals. Utricularia species occurs almost always (estimated probability 99%) under natural conditions in wetlands.

All bladderworts are rootless. They have main stems from which lacy, often complex leaves grow. Bladderwort flowers are usually bright yellow (but sometimes lavender, depending on species); the flowers have two "lip-

like" petals of about equal size. Flowers are on long stalks that emerge several inches above the water. The carnivorous bladders are attached at regular intervals along the linear leaf segments.

For more information on this and other aquatic plants, go to: <http://plants.ifas.ufl.edu/>

Six Ways to Pay Your BLPA Dues

Like many other organizations today, the BLPA is offering its members and potential members, more options to easily, quickly and safely make donations and pay their annual dues. The six ways you can currently pay your BLPA dues or make a donation include:

- Cash**
- Check**
- Debit Card**
- Credit Card**
- PayPal***
- Internet Banking***

The last two items* require a computer or smartphone and internet access.

In addition to cash and checks, the BLPA accepts donations through its website and the PayPal "Donate" button, which is much easier and faster than writing a check and mailing it. Just type www.blpa.net into your computer

or smartphone browse and click on the Donate button:

Then, just enter the amount you wish to donate and log in to PayPal.

If you don't already have a PayPal account, just click the "Continue" link under "Don't have a Paypal account?" in the lower left corner which will take you to this form where you can fill in your credit card info and billing address. You only need to do this once, not every time you want to pay for something with PayPal. They keep your information secure and do not share it with any people you send payments to, including the BLPA. The BLPA does not have and does not store any of your financial information so there is no risk in using its site to donate money.

Since the BLPA started offering PayPal as a method to send in donations and dues, quite a few members have taken advantage of this convenience.



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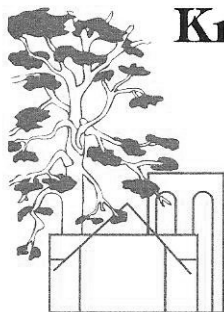
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Sunday School: 9:15 am

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BLPA NEW MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION 2015 BLPA MEMBER(S) DUE PAYMENT FORM BLPA MEMBER(S) CHANGE OF CONTACT INFO FORM

New Option - pay by Paypal! To sign up or renew your membership go to www.blpa.net and click on Join BLPA.

Please make your check payable to “BLPA”:
\$85.00.....BLPA Membership \$50.00.....BLPA Senior Membership (62+)
Mail to: BLPA, Post Office Box 162605, Altamonte Springs, Florida 32716
Alternatively, PayPal † pay online www.blpa.net.

Thank you for continuing to support to help keep our lakes clean!

The Bear Lakes Need You!

PLEASE CHECK: New Member(s) Current Member(s) Change of Member(s) Contact Info

Name(s) _____ Date _____

Address 1 _____ City _____ State/Zip _____

Mailing Address _____ City _____ State/Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Cell 1 _____ Cell 2 _____

Email 1 _____ Email 2 _____

Membership Questions please call Margaret Bundy (407) 497-0295
BLPA is a 501(c)(3) tax exempt organization. All financial contributions to BLPA are tax deductible.
BLPA will provide a receipt upon request for your donation.

Upcoming Event

SAVE THE DATE

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING & GUEST SPEAKER

Thursday, April 23, 2015 • 7:30 p.m.
St. Andrews Church Fellowship Hall
9913 Bear Lake Road

GUEST SPEAKERS:

A Deputy Sheriff from Seminole County Range & Water will speak to us on **BOATING SAFETY RULES AND REGULATIONS FOR SEMINOLE COUNTY AND THE STATE OF FLORIDA**. Immediately following, we will have a Deputy Sheriff from the Seminole County Sheriff's Department give us an update on crime prevention in our area.

The warm spring and summer months are fast approaching. No doubt you and the family will be enjoying our beautiful lakes. Please join us at our next general meeting to discuss the top boating safety tips, as well as, courtesy and environmental considerations. It is the responsibility of each lake lot owner and their families to operate their vessels safely and courteously, abiding by all boating regulations. It's the law. We encourage you to bring your family, neighbor, guest, and especially young people who will be operating water vessels this year and years to come.



PO Box 162605
Altamonte Springs, FL 32716

2014 BLPA Bear Lake Boat Parade

December 13, 2014, was the perfect evening on Bear Lake as nine decorated boats gathered to enjoy the Holiday Boat Parade. The shorelines and docks were decorated with colorful festive lights, all of which were reflecting on the water's edge. An echo of Christmas music carried across the water from

many boats and shorelines adding to the festive mood. As the boat parade proceeded around the lake, many families, friends, and neighbors gathered on their docks to greet the boats!

BLPA would like to thank everyone who made this annual event a great success! Congratulations to the follow-

ing 2014 winners:

First Place — Best Decorated Boat — Sue and John Parker

Second Place — Best Decorated Boat — Gary and Brenda Vallancourt

First Place — Best Backyard and Dock — Angie Willis and Randy Cramner

