

September 2008

# The Istokpoga Newswire

Friends of Istokpoga Lake Association, Inc.



## Hydrilla Treatment Update

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has funded Lake Istokpoga for 6000 acres of treatment of hydrilla for the calendar year 2008/2009. This treatment will be done in 2000 acre segments, with the herbicide Aquathol K starting at the end of November or the beginning of December. There will be another treatment in February and one in May, both being 2000 acres. DEP will have a private company conduct acoustic mapping of the hydrilla during the fall of 2008. These maps of the hydrilla coverage will be available on the Friends of Istokpoga (FOI) website. The stated goal of DEP is to keep the hydrilla confined to the south end of the lake as much as possible. So with the help of Highlands County Parks and Recreation Spray Unit they have been monitoring the lake for any significant hydrilla outbreaks in the north end of the lake. *You can also help by reporting any outbreaks of hydrilla on the north end of the lake to 863-402-6813.* After the treatments, crews from both DEP and Highlands County will be on the lake to monitor its effectiveness.

Some other things that are happening in regard to hydrilla is Highlands County Spray Teams effort to open up boating trails and access to canals when there is a localized topping out of hydrilla. They do monitor for these occurrences but they will also come out and take care of problems if they are called at the 402-6813 number.

In May 2008 DEP treated about 700 acres in the north end of the lake around the Istokpoga Park boat ramp entrance and out in front of the Sebring Estates.

From all indications the treatment was successful.

The hydrilla in Lake Istokpoga is never going to be eliminated. It is something that we are going to have to deal with forever if we care about our lake. You may think that it has left your area of the lake because you have not seen it in a few years but the truth is the tubers that the hydrilla sprouts from, can lie dormant on the lake bottom for years waiting for that right water level and sunshine to get it growing again. When these conditions are right, hydrilla takes off and can grow several inches a day till it reaches the surface of the water. It can also deplete the oxygen in the water when it tops out and forms a mat of hydrilla.

Now there are some good aspects about hydrilla that you will hear the big bass fishermen talking about. It is great cover for the minnows and shiners that hide and feed along it edges and so to do the big Bass who are looking for one of these tasty morsels. So since hydrilla is never going to be eliminated we need to try and maintain it at a level that makes everyone who uses the lake satisfied. In the past few years DEP, along with the Highlands County Spray Team, have been doing a good job of controlling hydrilla at a level that is satisfactory for most users of the lake.

## Friends of Istokpoga Meeting November 13

Our next general membership meeting will be held on Thursday, November 13 at the Lorida Community Center, Lorida, Florida.

### Inside this issue:

<i>Hydrilla Treatment Update</i>	1
<i>Next FOI Meeting</i>	1
<i>What's Happening on Istokpoga?</i>	2-3
<i>Canal project Update</i>	3
<i>Important Dates</i>	3-4
<i>Lake Istokpoga Regulation Schedule</i>	4
<i>Membership Application</i>	5
<i>Associate Members</i>	6

### Special points of interest:

See the important meetings coming up on page 3-4.

The canals that will be in phase 1 of the Canal project are listed on page 3

# What's Happening on Istokpoga?

It has been a slow hot summer on our wonderful lake but many projects are still ongoing. At this time we will try to bring you up-to-date on things that your board of directors is working on and other projects that are being preformed by some of the state and local agencies. Also we will give you some insight into events that have happened in the last few months. If you have any questions about or ideas for this column please Email them to friends@istokpoga.org.

## **A: Hydrilla Spraying on Istokpoga**

This will always be an ongoing project on Lake Istokpoga. Please see the article in this newsletter for a complete story about the hydrilla treatment plan.

## **B: Arbuckle Creek monitoring of water quality**

This is an ongoing project by South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) to assess the water quality of the Arbuckle Creek watershed. SFWMD is trying to track down the areas in the watershed that contribute the most phosphorus loading of Arbuckle Creek and subsequently Lake Istokpoga. SFWMD has not released any new data on this project for some time. We are still looking to SFWMD for more data on this project. Any news that we receive on this project we will pass on to you in this newsletter or on our website.

## **C: Hydrilla Resistance to Herbicides.**

Fluridone also known as Sonar that has been very effective in controlling hydrilla on Lake Istokpoga can no longer be used. For now and in the foreseeable future the state (DEP) will control the hydrilla with Aquathol K. There is hope that in the future that DEP will have some new herbicides to do whole lake treatments. At present there are five herbicides that are in some stage of testing and one could be the answer to our hydrilla problem. In the interim let us hope that DEP is able to keep the hydrilla under control in the south end of the lake. We are trying to get Dr Bill Haller, University of Florida, to speak at our

next general membership meeting on this subject.

## **D: Canal Maintenance & Dredging**

This is an ongoing project headed up by Clell Ford (Highlands County Lakes Manager). Please read the full article in this issue of The Istokpoga Newswire.

## **E: Istokpoga Canal Project US Army Corps of Engineers**

This project is now fully funded and the contractor has been back at work since the beginning of the year Following is the scope of work for this project. There are three main features to this project. The one that is most important to Lake Istokpoga is the building of a new control structure (S-67) and demolition of the old one (G-85). This control structure is about a ½ mile east of county road 621. It is old and it is leaking badly. Also this project will build a new park and boat ramp at the Istokpoga Canal and US. 98 and the Istokpoga canal will be dredged from U.S. 98 to the Kissimmee River. This project is still on schedule and should be completed in early 2009.

## **F: Spring Lake Pumping Problem**

Spring Lake Improvement District has done a complete rework of there pumping station at the Arbuckle Creek location. They have also completed a seawall at the pump location that will force the water into Arbuckle Creek and prevent it from flooding properties to the south of the pumps. It appears that these improvements to the pumping station will alleviate any flooding problems that the pumps may have caused in the past. We also understand that the parties, with issues about the pumps are pleased with these new improvements at the pumping station and its operation. Look for the injunction against Spring Lake to be lifted by the court. We hope that these improvements will resolve this problem for the good of the Spring Lake residents and also the health of Lake Istokpoga.

## **G: S-68 Modification Project US Army Corps of Engineers.**

This project is well under way and on schedule. The contractor has completed the concrete pour for the new gate just to the east of the existing gates on county road 621. The contractor is now digging a new diversion canal to supply water for this gate. Look for the contractor to start work soon on replacing the temporary road with a new road over the new gate. This project is being done to better handle

discharges of water from Istokpoga. Look for this project to be completed by December 2008.

## **H: Pond Apple Tree Enhancement.**

The Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) Along with the SFWMD have planted 800 Pond apple trees on the west side of Big Island. Historically there has always been a stand of these trees, in this area of Big Island but in recent years for one reason or another trees has been depleted. The Pond Apple also known as the Alligator-apple is native to South Florida and is common in the Everglades. It provides a good habitat for birds and other wild life. Its fruit is also a good food source for the wildlife. It is hoped that this new area of Pond Apple will be used as a bird rookery.

## **I: Apple Snail Study.**

Dr Philip Darby from the University of West Florida has received a grant from SFWMD to study apple snails on Lake Istokpoga. This study will provide information on the effects of wet prairie habitat restoration and management on trends in apple snail reproduction rates. The apple snail is the sole food source for the Florida Snail Kite which is a bird on the endangered species list. The rate of reproduction of apple snails has a direct effect on snail density and consequently on the Snail Kite populations. This study will assist managers of Florida lake systems by providing recommendations and data related to improving water and habitat management plans.

## **J: Osprey Update**

Mike McMillian is hard at work on his 20<sup>th</sup> season of researching Lake Istokpoga Ospreys. According to Mike the Osprey population looks about the same as last year. For the 2008 nesting Mike counted 278 nesting pairs. It is said that Osprey population are a good indication of the health of a lake and considering that Lake Istokpoga has the largest known concentration of nesting Ospreys in the world it reflects well on the health of our Lake. Thanks Mike for a great Job.

## **K: Arbuckle Creek Marsh**

There is a project underway to restore the earthen levee for the Arbuckle Creek Marsh. This is a saw grass marsh that is located next to Arbuckle Creek on the Avon Park Bombing Range. It is important to Lake Istokpoga because it acts as a big filter for Arbuckle Creek

thus helping to keep some of the phosphorous and nutrients from entering the lake. For information, it is estimated that about 80% of the phosphorous and nutrients that enter Lake Istokpoga come from Arbuckle Creek. This project is funded by SFWMD and is being managed by Clell Ford (Highland County Lakes Manager).

**L: Lake Water Levels**

At the time this article was written (during Tropical Storm Fay) the lake level was a little above the upper limit of the regulation schedule (RS) due to the considerable amount of rain Fay dumped on the area. In fact, the lake, for the most part, has been above the upper limit of the RS for the past month. The RS upper limit calls for the lake to rise from 38.25 ft. to 38.5 ft. by September 1<sup>st</sup>. The lake should be at full pool, 39.5 ft. (NGVD), by early October.

**Canal Dredging Project Update**

This project has been funded by the State of Florida for the sum of \$800,000. Senator J. D. Alexander sponsored the bill to obtain the funding for this project and it was also cosponsored by Representative Denise Grimsley. Clell Ford, the Highlands County Lakes Manager will be in charge of managing the project. All the paperwork to proceed with this project will be done by the middle of October and the project should be put out for bids in November.

To start with there are 17 canals approved by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for dredging. These canals are located all around the lake and are representative of the rest of canals. After the first 17 canals

(see chart below) are done the plan calls for the DEP to inspect the work and give the contractor permits to do the rest of the canals. The sticking point at this juncture is the project cost. There are a total of 61 canals around Istokpoga and the question of how many can be done with the monies budgeted for the project is an unknown at this time. We are in hopes of getting some good bid numbers from the contractors that will allow them to do a good amount of the canals on the lake.

One of the big costs in this project is disposal of the materials that are taken from the canals. The closer the deposal sites are to the canals the cheaper it will be for the contractor, this stands to reason. So if you have some acreage that can be used for disposal sites close to the lake please contact Clell Ford at (863) 402-6545. What you will be getting is the muck from the canals that is really good for your land but not so good for the lake. Not a bad deal for some free dirt.

There are a couple of thing to keep in mind about this project. When the contractor is working on the canals he can only take the muck out of your

**Once you have read this issue of the *Istokpoga Newswire*, Why not give it to one of your neighbors and encourage them to join our association?**

canal down to its historical depth. This means that he is not allowed to dig your canal any deeper than it was originally dug. Two reasons for this, one DEP won't allow you to go any deeper than the original sandy bottom, two the existing seawalls would be undermined if you came in and dug the canals any deeper. One other thing to remember is this project is for canal cleaning only, so when the contractor gets to the mouth of your canal he must stop. The DEP permit only allows him to work in the canals and not the lake. We at the Friends Of Istokpoga Lake Association, Inc. agree that not dredging into the lake will prevent

you from accessing the lake during low water. We and the agencies involved have had many discussions about this issue and we are told that when the US. Army Corps of Engineers changes the water regulation schedule for the lake that they will be obligated to make the lake navigable by doing the dredging in the lake.

If you would like to hear more about the dredging project please attends our general: membership meeting on Thursday November the 13, at 7:00 PM at the Lorida Community Center. Clell Ford will be there to answer question and bring you up-to-date on this project.

Canal #	Description
4	Mallards North/South
5	Mallards East/West
6	Palms Estates
7	Sunset Shores (Oakridge Dr. North/Cypress Dr.)
8	Sunset Shores—South of Lake Blvd.
11	Raccoon Lane—North lateral Rim
12	Raccoon Lane—Entrance to South rim canal
19	Waterway No. 1 in Istokpoga Shores Unit 1
28	Lake and Ranch Club 1st Add (Club Lane and Lakeshore)
29	Lake and Ranch Club 2nd Add. (Lakeshore and Heron)
33	Trails End
34	Trails End T canal
37	Mossy Cove
42	Lake Placid Marina
46	Bald Cypress Canal
51	Mary Bell Landing—West
58	Elliott Road North canal

**Important Dates**

**LIMC – Regular Quarterly Meeting**

- Summer Meeting Thursday,

September 11, 2008 - 09:00 am - Noon

### LIMC – Lake Management Plan Sub-Committee

- None currently scheduled

### LIMC - Hydrilla Subcommittee

Will meet in October to discuss the November hydrilla treatment. The date will be posted on our website as soon as the meeting is scheduled.

### Friends of Istokpoga Lake Association, Inc. Meetings

- Thursday, November 13, 2008 – 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm
- Thursday, February TBD, 2009 – 7:00 pm – 8:30 pm

## Lake Istokpoga Regulation Schedule

Many of you may not be aware that Lake Istokpoga’s water level is regulated by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), and managed by South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD). This schedule was implemented in 1962-3 and was modified in 1991 and has been in effect since then. The primary purpose of the regulation schedule is flood control.

I am writing this article to explain a little bit about the schedule and what it means. The graph of the regulation schedule I show here is representative of the actual schedule used to manage the lake, but is a simplified version only showing the levels at the first of each month. The actual schedule is only slightly different, and for the purpose of explanation is insignificant.

To begin with, the top line is the maximum depth the lake is allowed to reach at a specific point in time. You will notice that the lake is allowed to reach its **maximum** depth of 39.5 feet National Geodetic Vertical Datum (NGVD) only mid-October through April 1. Following the top line

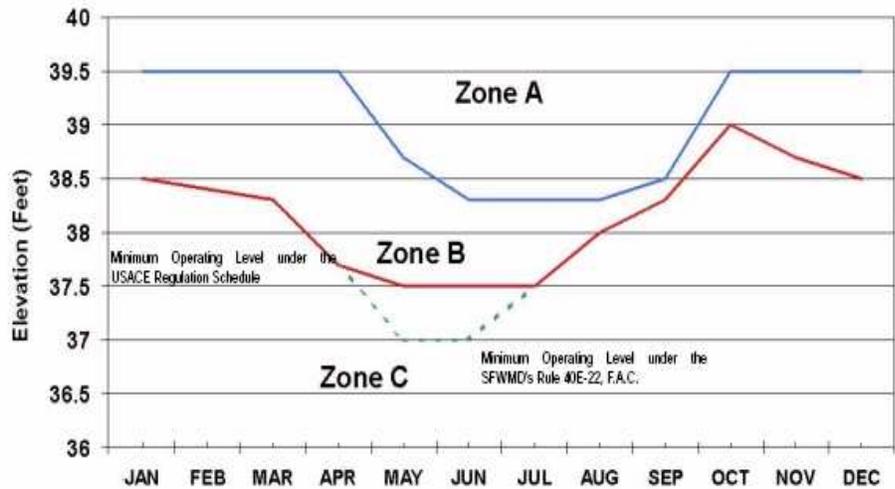
from April to June you will notice that the maximum the lake level can be is 38.25 ft. NGVD and in August and September it is allowed to rise slowly until it reaches the 39.5 ft. level in mid-October. The area above the top line is known as Zone A and is managed at this level to prevent flooding.

Now take a look at the center line. This line represents the **minimum** level the lake can be lowered to under

a deviation and can be granted if conditions exist to justify the request). Once the water level rises above the minimum level they can again release water.

There are two exceptions to this when you might see releases. First is when SFWMD does periodic maintenance on the S-68 structure. They are required to insure the gates in the structure are in working condition monthly. This requires that

Figure I-2. Current Regulation Schedule and Minimum Operating Level for Lake Istokpoga.



Zone	Releases
A	Through all outlets
B	For agricultural demands only
C	No releases to be made

**normal conditions.** The water between the top line and the second line (Zone B) is under control of SFWMD and is used as water supply for the Istokpoga/Indian Prairie Basin.

The bottom line (dashed) is the **minimum** level that water can be withdrawn from the lake by SFWMD under **drought conditions**. They can release the water for water supply purposes between the middle line and the bottom line only when we are in a drought. Once they reach the 37.25 ft. (Zone C) level they are no longer allowed to release water under any conditions without the express approval of USACE (This is known as

they open all three of the gates (soon to be four gates) for a short period of time. Knowing this, it is possible that you may see water releases that are not within the regulation schedule. The second exception is an emergency release for agriculture freeze protection.

You can see a graph of the actual levels superimposed over the regulation schedule on the Internet by going to our website and looking at the Lake Level Graph from the Links menu. Note that this version also shows any deviations from the normal schedule approved by the USACE.

Mail completed Application to address at bottom of form with your membership fee or bring it to our meeting.  
Remember that numbers count, so please consider all members of your household when joining.

## Membership Application Friends of Istokpoga Lake Association, Inc.

Annual membership fee \$7.00 per person  
Annual Family Membership fee \$12.00 per family\*  
Annual Associate membership fee \$25.00

Annual dues are valid Jan. 1 to Dec. 31

\*Family Membership is for a couple and their children under 18 years old living at home

Name(s) or Business name \_\_\_\_\_

1<sup>st</sup> Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

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**Send all mail to address:** 1 \_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_ other \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

Circle Correct Answer: Yes/No I am willing to work on a committee below?

Committees: Finance, Legislative, Newsletter, Membership, Publicity, Weed Control (Circle one)

### Associate Members:

Is business name EXACTLY as you would have it appear in the newsletter/Website? \_\_\_\_\_

Primary Contact \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Business for website \_\_\_\_\_

Web Address \_\_\_\_\_

Fax Number (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Additionally, I would like to donate \$10 \_\_\_ \$15 \_\_\_ \$25 \_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_\*

*\*All Donations are tax deductible*

Make Checks Payable to: **Friends of Istokpoga**

Mail to: P.O. Box 205, Lorida, FL 33857

For additional information call: 863-219-0082 - Voice Mail

Or email us at: [friends@istokpoga.org](mailto:friends@istokpoga.org)

Please visit our web site: [www.istokpoga.org](http://www.istokpoga.org)

**Friends of Istokpoga Lake  
Association, Inc.**

P.O. Box 205  
Lorida, Florida 33857

Pager: 863-219-0082  
Email: friends@istokpoga.org

Help us protect Lake Istokpoga

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[www.istokpoga.org](http://www.istokpoga.org)**



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