

February 2009

The Istokpoga Newswire

Friends of Istokpoga Lake Association, Inc.



USACE Istokpoga Projects — Update

At the present time the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACE) are working on two projects that involve Lake Istokpoga. One is on the Istokpoga Canal that links Lake Istokpoga to the Kissimmee River. The other project is on C41 (canal 41) and involves S68 (structure 68). S-68 is the structure that controls the water level in Lake Istokpoga.

The Istokpoga Canal project is three projects rolled into one. The first part of this project is to create a park and boat ramp on the Istokpoga canal where the canal intersects US 98 about 4 miles east of Lorida. The park will have a picnic area, restroom facilities, parking area and three boat ramps on the Istokpoga Canal; one boat ramp for air boats and two ramps for regular boats.

The second part of this project is the dredging of the Istokpoga canal from US 98 to the Kissimmee River. This will be the main access point to the Kissimmee River when

the Kissimmee River Restoration Project is completed.

The third part of this project is the building of a new S-67 structure and the dismantling the old one, G-85. The old G-85 structure is worn out and has not really worked in years. The new S-67 structure will have the ability to allow water to flow into Kissimmee River from Istokpoga and also is built to withstand the pressure if the Kissimmee River rises above the level of Lake Istokpoga. The S-67 structure will be capable of releasing water up to 400 cubic feet per second. Most of this project will be done by the end of March. The one exception is S-67 and this should be completed by early summer.

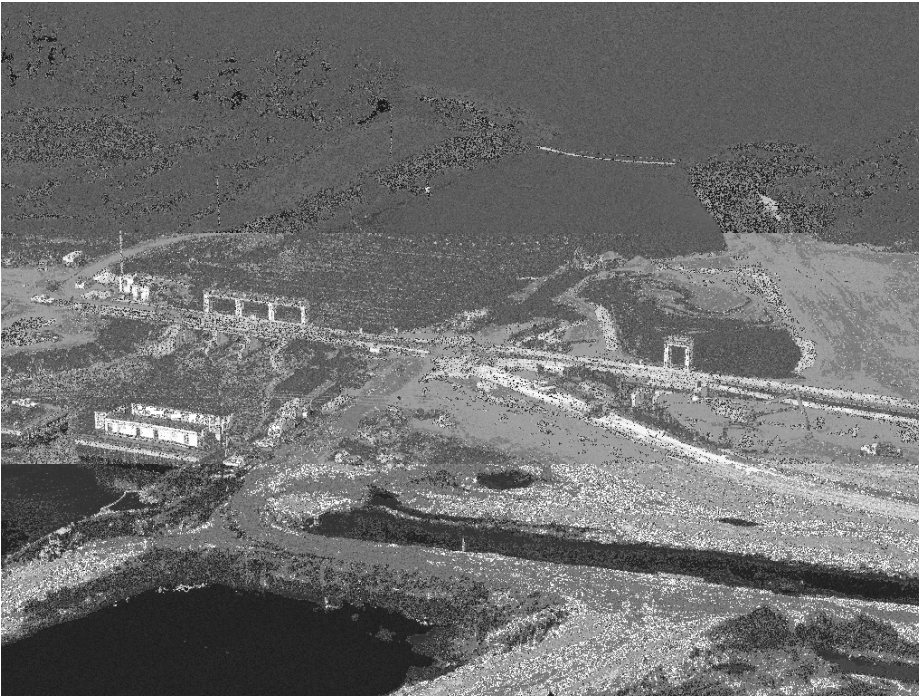


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Special points of interest:

FOI Annual Meeting and election of Directors will be on February 12th. See page 3 and 4 for more information



hydrilla are deemed as very good by FWC aquatic plant management group. At this time there is just a few spots on Lake Istokpoga where you can see some of the hydrilla at the surface. As of this date FWC is looking at treating 500 acres in the north end of the lake and they may do some treatment in the south end of the lake also. This treatment should be done by the beginning of March. This will most likely be the last treatment until the fall of 2009. One thing to keep in mind about hydrilla is the fact that it is always in the Lake waiting for the right conditions for it to start its mad growth rate to the surface. If you have problems getting out of your canal because of hydrilla call Highlands County at 863-402-6813 and they should be able to help you.

We also just learned that the USACE will be installing a second gate in the Istokpoga Canal area. It will be S-67 X1, and we believe it will be similar to S-67 and located on No-Name Creek. We will tell you more in our next newsletter.

Istokpoga Canal and destroying the natural wildlife habitat and beauty of this canal. The redesign reduced the flood control capability that was planned so adding the extra gate at S-68 resolves this deficiency.

The second project is the building of a fourth gate at S-68. This project is well under way and should be completed by the early part of April. The contractor is finishing building County Road 621 across the new gate and completing the diversion canal to this new gate. The reason for all this work is to allow greater flexibility in the amount of water that can be released in a short amount of time, mainly for flood control. This increase capacity of S-68 is necessary because the redesign of the S-67 structure due to objections by Friends of Istokpoga, Highlands County and USFWS to the original plan of widening

What's Happening On Istokpoga At This Time?

Lake Istokpoga is holding firm to its winter pool level of 39.5 ft. The hydrilla on the lake is under control, with a scattering of some top out spots that make for good fishing. Following are some short updates 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 try to 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 we can use your help.

If you have problems getting out of your canal because of hydrilla call Highlands County at 863-402-6813

A: Hydrilla Spraying on Istokpoga

The results of the last treatment of

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. 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.

C: Hydrilla Resistance to Herbicides.

During the last treatment of hydrilla this fall the FWC aquatic plant management group with the help of Dr. Bill Haller used a new herbicide (Clear Cast) on a few treatment areas. The hope is that the Clear Cast along with the Aquathol K will suppress the hydrilla for a longer period of time. At this time the results are not in but we will keep you up-to-date in our next newsletter.

D: Canal Maintenance & Dredging

This project headed up by Clell Ford (Highlands County Lakes Manager) is still in the process of going out for bid. It is an \$800,000 project to dredge residential canals all around Lake Istokpoga. Because of some technical glitches, Mr. Ford is looking at a

March or April letting of the bid. With this in mind we should see a contractor at work by late spring or

early summer. For more information on this project see our September 2008 newsletter at our web site www.istokpoga.org.

E: Istokpoga Canal Project US Army Corps of Engineers

This is still an on going project. Please read the Army Corps of Engineers article in this newsletter.

F: Spring Lake Pumping Problem

This problem is resolved and all parties are pleased with the outcome. We will not be reporting on this item any longer.

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

This project is well under way and on schedule. Please read the Army Corps of Engineers about this project in this newsletter.

H: Apple Snail Study.

Dr Philip Darby from the University of West Florida hopes to be back on Lake Istokpoga this season to study apple snails. 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. One thing to note is that Lake Istokpoga is one

of the few places in the world that the Snail Kite is still nesting. You can help by giving the Snail Kite nests a wide berth if you come upon one while out boating.

I: Osprey Update

Mike McMillian is hard at work on his 20th 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. Mike McMillian will be one of our speakers at our general membership meeting on February 12, 2009. He will give a presentation on the birds of Istokpoga with special empathies on the Snail Kite and the Osprey.

J: Arbuckle Creek Marsh

This project to restore the earthen levee for the Arbuckle Creek Marsh has just gone to bid (early January). We should see a contractor at work on this project by late March or early April. Following is an explanation of where and how this marsh relates to Lake Istokpoga:

The Arbuckle Creek Marsh 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. Just for information, it is estimated that about 85% of the phosphorous and nutrients that enter Lake Istokpoga come down Arbuckle Creek. This project is funded by SFWMD and is being managed by Clell Ford, Highland County Lakes Manager.

K: Lygodium Treatment on Big Island

There is a 100 to 200 acre patch of Lygodium on west side of Big Island that FWC and SFWMD will be spraying very soon. Lygodium also known as old world climbing fern or Japanese climbing vine is a very invasive plant in Florida. It is native to Asia and Australia but as usual it does very well in Florida. It climbs into trees and over other native vegetation shading them out and eventually killing them. The FWC hopes to eradicate this exotic before it gets to strong of a foothold.

Membership Renewal Time

* * * * * Memberships in Friends of Istokpoga Lake Association, Inc. are from January 1, through December 31. Current members can stay up-to-date with

Be sure to renew your membership in Friends of Istokpoga Lake Association as soon as possible. All 2008 memberships expired on December 31st.

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their memberships by the numbers located on the greeting line of mailing labels attached to our Istokpoga Newswire newsletter. (Example: James Powell 11) In this case James' membership will expire on December 31st 2011.

Many members are choosing to renew for 3 years to take advantage of the limited time offer of a free Friends of Istokpoga T-Shirt, or attractive matching hat with the Friends of Istokpoga logo. Our membership fee remains unchanged and is \$7.00 for one year individual membership or \$21.00 for a three year membership. Family memberships are \$12.00 for one year or \$36.00 for three year. With a three year family membership you can select either 2 – T-shirts, 2 – hats, or one of each. When renewing for three years please indicate your choice of items and the t-shirt size you would like. The Associate Membership level is a donation of \$25.00 for one year or \$75.00 for 3 years. Associate level members receive a certificate of membership, listing on the newsletter and on the Associate page of the web site.

Please note that all of our members whose dues are current also receive access to the Members Only section of our website. All members for 2009 will be informed of the new password when it is changed in March.

Election of 2009 Board of Directors

Election of the 2009 Board of Directors for Friends of Istokpoga will be held on Thursday, February 12, 2009 at the General Membership Meeting. The Directors' are elected to a one year term. There are no limits to the number of terms a Director may serve. The Board meets regularly on first Friday of the month at 1:00 P.M. except in July and August when no meetings are held. A quorum must be present at each meeting to conduct business. Meetings are usually held in a Board members home. Officers on the Board are elected by board members.

If you are interested in a Board position or know someone you would like to recommend for a board position please e-mail friends@istokpoga.org or call 863-219-0082. Nominations for Directors will also be solicited from the floor and added to the slate before the election.

Current board members indicating their interest to be on the 2009 slate are; Gary Albin, Bert Galloway, Virginia Greene, and Ken Stebbins. Ray Gaiefsky will continue to volunteer as an alternate representative on the Lake Istokpoga Management Committee and Chairperson of the Hydrilla Management Study Committee. Bill Dwinell will continue as Web Master for the Friends of Istokpoga web site.

2009 Winter Meeting

The Friends of Istokpoga Lake Association Inc. will hold our winter general membership meeting at the Lorida community center on Thursday, February the 12th at 7:00 PM. During this meeting we will hold the election of Directors for this year. So please come out and vote and listen to our great winter program.

We are always looking for new individuals to help us by serving on our board of directors. So if you, or anyone you know, would like to serve on the Friends of Istokpoga Lake Association, Inc. Board of Directors, please let us know. We can always use new ideas and help running our organization.

We will have two speakers for the evening. Our first speaker will be Mike McMillian from the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. He will have a power point presentation on the birds of Istokpoga with special emphasis on the Osprey and the Snail Kite. Mike has been studying the Osprey on Lake Istokpoga for the past 20 years and has a vast knowledge of them, as well as the rest of the birds on the lake.

Our second speaker will be Erin McCarta from the Highlands County

Lakes Managers office. She will give a presentation about the Lakes in Highlands County. She will focus on Istokpoga, its make up and the tributaries that feed it. Erin has worked on many of our lakes and has a lot of knowledge about them.

These are two speakers that you don't want to miss. So we urge you to come out vote, listen to our speakers and get answers to some of questions that you may have about Lake Istokpoga. Bring your friends, neighbors and fishing buddies. We need everyone's support in our effort to keep Istokpoga a vibrant and Healthy Lake.

We will provide refreshments beginning at 6:45 PM. There will also be membership tables where you can pay your 2009 dues so come out and meet with your Board of Directors, neighbors and others who are interested in our beautiful Lake Istokpoga.

LIMC Update

The Lake Istokpoga Management Committee will be holding the regular quarterly meeting in March. We will post the meeting schedule on

LIMC meeting on
February 12th

our website as soon as the date is confirmed.

There will also be a Management Plan –Sub-committee meeting on February 12th. The management plan, when completed, will set the guidelines for managing Lake Istokpoga for all of the various agencies involved with our lake. This will be a major step forward in our goal to protect Lake Istokpoga.

The LIMC Hydrilla Sub-committee is not currently scheduled to meet, but Erica VanHorn, FWC, is working on the presentation . Hopefully it won't be too far in the future.

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 _____

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Phone (____) ____ - _____

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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

Please visit our web site: www.istokpoga.org

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

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Email: friends@istokpoga.org

Help us protect Lake Istokpoga

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