

Friends of Lake Apopka Position Paper

Lake County Water Authority – Nutrient Reduction Facility

The Lake County Water Authority (LCWA) has announced plans for construction of an alum treatment facility that would treat water flowing through the Apopka Beauclair Canal to Lake Beauclair. The project, called the Apopka-Beauclair Canal Nutrient Reduction Facility (NuRF), is designed to remove nutrients and solid particles from the water before it leaves the canal.

FOLA appreciates the efforts of the LCWA and although we have several concerns about the project it is important that we continue to work together to achieve our goal of healthy lakes in Central Florida.

The FOLA Board of Directors has expressed concerns about the project for several reasons:

1. The primary concern centers on plans to use the CC Ranch parcel on the northwest shore that was part of the farmlands purchased by state and federal agencies for restoration to native habitat. This parcel is the only part of the entire north shore acquisition that was never tilled and the only piece that can be restored to a valuable wet prairie ecosystem.
2. Since the entire restoration process (which cost taxpayers more than \$105 million), was justified by the plan to remove pollution sources from the lake and to restore the 15,000 acres of farmland back to wetland systems, this industrial use of CC Ranch cannot be justified. FOLA has made it clear that if another parcel can be utilized there would be no opposition to the project, though several other major concerns have been expressed.
3. There is also the potential for degrading adjacent parcels with the excavated clay which must be stored on site. Necessary trucking access by tankers delivering alum and constant noise from machinery required in the process would also degrade habitat in surrounding areas.
4. In addition to the habitat loss at CC Ranch, other concerns related to the process include the possibilities there will be a diversion of emphasis, including future funding, from the Lake Apopka restoration. LCWA has already requested a grant of \$500,000 from SJRWMD for this project for the 2005-2006 budget year. (Until headwaters are clean, downstream pollution will continue).
5. There is little research regarding long-term effects on benthic (bottom dwelling) organisms if alum slurry is released into a natural lake system. Most available research focuses on northern lake systems. There is always a chance accidental discharges can occur.
6. Some have also expressed concerns about the cost of construction (over \$5 million) and operation (over \$1 million/year). As phosphorous levels in Lake Apopka continue to fall, concerns about how cost effective the project might be should be expressed.
7. The SJRWMD has already entered into an agreement to lease the 250-acre parcel to LCWA for \$1/year. The LCWA selected this site because the inflow can be gravity-fed. Other parcels can be used but not for free and intake must be pumped.

In summary, FOLA expresses opposition to construction of the NuRF project on the CC Ranch parcel and urges the LCWA and the SJRWMD staff to review other parcels for construction and to re-evaluate the project costs and feasibility using current data from Lake Apopka.

In 1991, The Friends of Lake Apopka organized, advocating the restoration of the lake and the adjacent muck farms on the north shore. This broad-based citizens group actively continues working towards this goal. FOLA has a strong membership with a mail-out of over 1000 concerned citizens throughout the Lake Apopka basin.

TO: ST JOHNS RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT
FROM: CONCERNED RESIDENTS OF LAKE APOPKA
RE: Lake County Water Authority – Nutrient Reduction Facility

Mail back to:
FOLA
Box 770355, Winter Garden, FL 74777

We have recently been made aware of the request from the Lake County Water Authority to create the NuRF facility on the CC Ranch. We strongly urge the LCWA to consider moving the facility to a location that does not negatively impact the environment.

NAME	ADDRESS	DATE