

# Friends Of Istokpoga

# NewsWire

Friends Of Istokpoga Lake Association, Inc.

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In This Issue: About your Canals; We need your help

## Canal Maintenance

By Bill Dwinell

Many of us that live on Lake Istokpoga or just use it, are concerned about the condition of the canals that we live on, or navigate when boating on the lake. Many of the canals are so shallow that when the lake level drops in the summer, we either have difficulty navigating the canals or worse case, we can't get our boats out at all. This will become an even larger problem when the lake is drawn down to remove the tussock in a few years, as planned by Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC).

This article will attempt to cover the options available to a property owner on Lake Istokpoga. While the article will spell out several options, your specific situation may not be exactly as described. In all cases you should discuss your specific situation with the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

First, let me describe the various options available to resolve canal problems that have occurred because the canals have filled with sand, and or muck over time.

1. Removal of silt and sand from an existing canal, returning it to its original, documented depth
2. Removal of silt and sand from an existing canal, making it deeper than original documented depth

3. Removal of silt and sand from an existing canal that was not originally permitted.
4. Creating a new canal by dredging.

According to DEP, there are two types of canals to be considered, those on state-owned (sovereign) submerged lands and those privately owned submerged lands. This determination is done when an application to dredge a canal is made (see "The Application" below). Also, according to DEP, no state agency has any obligation to maintain residential canals. Another important consideration is whether the canal is eligible for maintenance dredging. This is also determined when a dredging application is submitted. Bottom line, if a permit was obtained when the canal was originally dug, and if you only want to dredge it back to its original depth, it is probably eligible for a no-cost maintenance permit.

*If the canal was originally dug without the proper permit the process of dredging it is more complicated and will not be covered in this article. You should contact DEP for specific questions and estimated costs and requirements for obtaining a permit under these conditions.*

Note: Option 4, Creating a new canal, has little or no chance of being approved by DEP, according to Annette Nielsen when I discussed this with her.

### **The Application**

I want to start by saying that completing an application to dredge your canal may turn out to be much more complicated than you can imagine. Those with good

documentation of the original canal will have the simplest task. We will briefly discuss the process and later offer suggestions on where to obtain the information required.

### **What do you need to supply with your application for a dredging permit?**

You will need as much information as possible about the original construction of the canal. The more you have, the easier it will be to get a permit. Some things you should have are:

- Name of the water body
- Latitude and longitude
- Subdivision name
- Corresponding street addresses or other directions
- Origin and dredge history of the canal
- Date of original construction
- Purpose of the canal
- History of maintenance
- Funding sources
- Historic aerial photographs
- Copies of original permit, or permit references

By contacting DEP directly or visiting their web site at listed below, you can obtain a dredging (Environmental Resources Permit) application. You cannot apply "on-line", but must submit the application via regular mail to FDEP, 7451 Golf Course Blvd., Punta Gorda, FL 33982.

Processing the application can take some time, so submit your application as soon as possible. Also, please note that you will have to submit the original application with all the supporting documentation, and four additional copies of the application and documents.

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## After I complete the permitting process, When do I start the dredging?

Many of you are probably thinking that the best time to dredge your canals will be during the lake draw down, currently proposed for November 2002 to May 2003. While these dates might suit you today, keep in mind that the dates are likely to move again. If your canals are too shallow now, can you wait for the ever moving draw down? While you may be correct in waiting for your specific canal, I doubt it is the right answer for everyone. Many of us need our canals deeper now.

One big consideration is how you will dredge your canal. If your canal is accessible by land-based machinery, then you may be right in waiting for the draw down. But, if your canal can only be dredged using floating machinery, then there may not be enough water in your canal to do the dredging if you wait for a draw down. If you are not sure you should contact a contractor who specializes in dredging canals for advice.

If you determine that you cannot dredge your canal during the draw down, I recommend you begin the process of obtaining your permits soon because of the time it may take to process the permit and find a contractor to actually do the dredging. But, keep in mind that the permit is only good for two years.

One word of caution, dredging your canal before the draw down is no guarantee that you will have access to the lake during the draw down. You should keep in mind that the lake level will be dropped to 36.5 feet msl (mean sea level), or about one foot lower than it was this summer at its lowest point. You will only be able to dredge your canal back to its original depth.

## Funding the dredging

Permit Costs:

If it is determined that your canal is eligible for a Maintenance Permit, there

will be no charge for the permit application fee.

If it is not eligible for a maintenance permit exemption, DEP will contact you with a request for additional information and a permit fee based on the area (in cubic yards) to be dredged. According to John Fellows in a letter to me dated March 5, 1999, a permit could cost \$500 plus any fees for preparing project drawings and surveying depths in affected areas for areas of an acre or less. This does not include any other fees to contractors or engineers for preparing project drawings and surveying depths in affected areas. Larger affected areas could cost even more both in application fees and contractor fees.

## Sources of information

DEP The main web site is located at [www.dep.state.fl.us](http://www.dep.state.fl.us)

*The address for the permitting web site is [www.osprey.dep.state.fl.us/](http://www.osprey.dep.state.fl.us/)*

*Environmental Resources Permitting program (941) 575-5814*

**Highlands County Tax Assessors Office** or County Appraisers Office, 386-6500 extension 6685 (Ask about REDI Strips [Maps] for your canal)

## South Florida Water Management

**District** 800-432-2045 - Ask about permits for your canal

## Contracting Sources

Listed below are a few local contractors that are believed capable of doing the dredging of canals. While we have listed a few, we are not recommending any of them. Furthermore, there are probably many more available that are not listed.

Cheyenne Excavating 699-1716.

Brock Excavation 382-1781

CNB Land Service 655-0300

Hathaway's Land Srvc. 465-4862

Hickey Excavation 699-0024

Ridge Citrus Services 699-9880

Southern Excavation 699-5700

Spofford Stage Inc/Site

Preparation 465-6881

Spring Lake Srvc. 655-1742

Bo Tillman Excavating 465-5266

Tillman Construction 465-3522

Wilson's Lot Clearing 465-9552

## Other considerations

Disposal of the spoil material must be considered. If a local upland storage area is not available for storing the materials then removing it could add considerable cost to the dredging. DEP requires "upland" storage. This means the material must be moved to a location where it cannot get back into the lake. If this spoil material has value, the county may have uses for this material and could help with disposal of the material.

If your canal is deemed State Owned submerged lands, then you must pay a severance fee for each cubic yard of material removed from the canal, if the material is determined to have economic value by DEP. The rationale here is that it is state owned material and therefore you must pay for it. Since this material can be of different compositions a sieve test will determine the amount of organic material and the actual makeup of the spoil material and this will determine the actual cost, usually between \$1.25 and \$2.35 per cubic yard. For Highlands County this is generally \$1.25 per cubic yard. The saving grace here is that you may be able to recover some of your money by selling the material. If the material is used for a public purpose, like public landfill cover, or school ground improvements, then the applicant can request the severance fee be waived.

The FWC stated a couple of years ago that they would try to include the canals in their permit application for the draw down. Since they made that statement, they have determined that this will not be possible. The FWC does plan to hold some public meetings to help explain the process for obtaining dredging permits. We will keep you informed of plans for these meetings.

## Summary

It is time to start thinking about your canals and what you might want to do

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about them, if anything. Since it is likely to cost you a considerable amount to have your canals dredged, you might want to start talking to your neighbors to see if it is feasible to have the work done.

## Did You Know?

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Did you know Highlands County has approved the purchase of two lots at the end of Rutledge Road in Highlands Park Estates on the South Western shore of Lake Istokpoga. According to an article in the Lake Placid Journal, the lots will be used for parking at the Rutledge boat ramp.

There is some question about how much this will help when the lake is at full winter pool level of 39.5 feet. The county plans to fill the lot so it will be usable all year round.

Paul Grey, Bill Dwinell and Chris Monroe visited the site to judge the wetland impact of filling this area. Friends Of Istokpoga plans to participate in the mitigation of these wetlands.

## Buying a Bass Tag Helps Conservation and you...

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By Bob Wattendorf, FWC

The Florida "Go Fishing" tag is available through your local tag agent for an extra \$27, and now when you buy one you can log on to [www.WorldwideAngler.com/FLTags](http://www.WorldwideAngler.com/FLTags) and receive a free Coozie, free electronic fishing news letter and \$25 discount on a Shimano reel. Moreover, \$25 of the \$27 fee goes to support fish and wildlife conservation efforts in Florida. Those funds provide a critical additional resource for the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, which can be used to supplement programs such as the Lake Istokpoga restoration plan. The image is of a bass, a Bluegill and a Redear sunfish swimming in a natural eel grass habitat.

Since its inception in 1996, the "Go

Fishing" tag, which can be displayed on your vehicle or trailer, has generated about \$1.3 million dollars, that is more than the total of all six other tags that were authorized that year. Those tags included the boy and girl scout tags, agriculture and the police athletic tag offerings and attest to the beauty of the design and public support for funding conservation.

Other so-called "conservation" tags, are generally earmarked for specific purposes such as manatees, panthers, or sea turtles and do little to provide support for statewide conservation efforts. Still others are somewhat deceptive such as the snook tag (which is for Indian River restoration) or the tarpon tag (for Tampa Bay restoration) in that they are limited in the area that they support and are not specifically for any one species.

So if you'd like a great way to decorate your car, to contribute to statewide conservation and to get a little extra bonus in return. See your tax collector today about getting a "go fishing" tag for your vehicle or trailer.

**WHICH DID YOU CIRCLE YES OR NO ?** When you became a member of Friends of Istokpoga Lake Association, Inc. there were four questions on your application. If you circled "yes" for "I am willing to work on a committee" then we need you now! First, let us apologize for not contacting you. Now I am asking for you to contact us! We are in need of people who are willing to share their expertise! Maybe you have communication skills, writing skills, the gift to gab, a good imagination, organizational skills or you just like helping others and feeling good about yourself, whichever, **we need you!** Isn't it

wonderful to feel good about yourself, knowing that you have made a difference no matter how small or large. We are giving you the opportunity to do just that, to feel good about yourself and to make a difference in the existence of Lake Istokpoga We are not asking for daily commitments, or even weekly or monthly, we are just asking for your help.

Let me explain how just a few minutes of your time can make a huge difference. We need help on the following committees: Fundraising, publicity, newsletter, cookbook, and membership. Let's start with **FUNDRAISING**, this is how you could help! We depend on our membership dues to keep us going, to support our newsletter, pay postage, purchase office supplies and operating expenses. Maybe, you have an idea on how to generate funds. See, how much time does that take. Just a thought! Pick up the phone and give us an idea! My "Friend" we can't do it all, we need you also!

O.K. let's go on, **PUBLICITY**, this is easy! What is the best publicity you could have, You're right! WORD OF MOUTH! Talk Istokpoga! Do you see or speak to at least one person a day? Of course you do! Here is how you can help, talk about Friends of Istokpoga to everyone! The more the name "Friends of Istokpoga" is heard the stronger we become. You just never know who might be listening! Do you know anyone in the field of journalism, radio, television, or anyone that belongs to a club? You see how easy it is to gain publicity! I bet you have already thought of someone or maybe you are considering writing a letter to the editor of your favorite newspaper or magazine, (don't forget to include how to get in touch with "Friends of Istokpoga")

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O.K. pick up the phone and let us know that you care and how you can help.

**NEWSLETTER**, This really sounds like a big task, doesn't it? Well it's not, don't worry we are not asking for you to become a publisher! But, just maybe you could give us a hand (literally) folding, sorting, and attaching address labels, come on this only happens six times a year! Now do you really think that is a lot of time? O.K., you don't like folding or addressing, well Bill sure could use some help with articles. If you like to write, interview, investigate or do research, then you have the unique opportunity right now! Call Bill, to get additional information and see how you can make a difference.

**COOKBOOKS** as you know we reordered and currently have in stock approximately 200 cookbooks. Do you need stocking stuffers for Christmas, or do you belong to an organization? If so then you can help. It is really very easy, for example I was at the accountants office the other day, conducting business for Friends of Istokpoga and sold two cookbooks! Maybe you would like to purchase a few and keep them in the car so you can sell them! Let's see how many places we can think of to have them on display, beauty shop/barber shop, camp grounds, clubs/organizations, churches, meetings, bars, small businesses, or real estate offices, can you help with any of these suggestions or do you have any additional suggestions? If so pick up the phone right now and call us Now how much time does that take?

**MEMBERSHIP**, you might think this is a tough one. Well truthfully you could be right! Why would anyone want to join Friends Of Istokpoga, the outrageous dues of \$5.00 per year, that is a whopping .013 cents per day, goodness almost one and a half cent every day for a whole year! That certainly is a lot of money

isn't it? People ask "what do I get for a penny a day" and then we have to spout off a list longer than Santa gets! I just don't understand why anyone would not want to renew their membership or join. Help me out here, enlighten me tell my why it is so difficult to get people to join, or renew their memberships. Are they working too hard for the association? Do they feel they are not an important person or worthy individual, that they don't matter. I am not sure we did the correct thing when it was decided to keep the dues affordable at \$5.00 annually, maybe if it were \$50.00 or \$100.00 our members would think more of the association and have others join and share in the future of Lake Istokpoga. Maybe we just don't care about Lake Istokpoga, and would rather let others worry about it. You see, it was decided to keep the dues at \$5.00 so everyone could afford it, first of all we operate on our membership funds, secondly it is vitally important that we have growing memberships. The larger we become the louder we become! "Yea who screams the loudest, will be heard" after all we do the screaming for you! O.K. I have a challenge for you! Let's see what you've got! Over the next month (or think back, if you would like) when someone comes to visit, and enjoys looking, boating, fishing, hunting, swimming, photography, or bird watching, on Lake Istokpoga or Complaining about Lake Istokpoga, ask if they are a member and if not ask them why, then encourage them to become a member! Can you do it, I am depending on you! There is a membership application in this newsletter. Please use it to get at least one new member. Call us if you need additional membership applications! Now really how much time did that take, talk it out "are you a member?" well by my clock that took not quite two seconds!

So I hope after all the time I spent writing this, you have a better understanding of how you can help, and

how little time it actually does take. Please, don't put this newsletter down and tell yourself that tomorrow you will call us, tomorrow never comes.

**BEFORE YOU FINISH READING THE NEWSLETTER PLEASE PICK UP THE PHONE AND CALL NOW!**

Thanks for letting me spout off!  
Sincerely,  
Debbie Galloway  
Secretary/Treasurer

*Editors note: Call Friends Of Istokpoga at 941-490-0140 for any of the items Debbie mentioned. Note that this is a toll free call, but it does require dialing the area code.*

## Lake Istokpoga Lakewatch Program

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By Jim Wilkins

The Lake Istokpoga Lakewatch program is a volunteer citizens lake monitoring program. These volunteers are trained by the University of Florida's Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences to conduct long-term scientific lake monitoring activities. The program provides educational material regarding lakes and provides a way for concerned citizens to work with professionals to better understand their lakes.

The Florida Lakewatch program was formed in 1991 by the Florida Legislature within the Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences of the Institute of Food and Agriculture Science at the University of Florida. They furnish equipment and train the volunteers who collect water samples, and then compile data collected, disseminate information, along with other functions.

Lake Istokpoga is divided into two areas, north and south. The designated volunteer for the northern section is Jim Wilburn assisted by Jim Wilkins and Mike Springman. The southern section's designated volunteer is Dave Boyer assisted by Ted Clay and John Grant.

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Data has been collected on Lake Istokpoga for approximately the last three years.

In each area there are three locations where samples and data is recorded on a monthly basis. This includes a 250-ml. water sample taken in an acid cleaned nalgene bottle to be tested for phosphorus and total nitrogen, which is kept frozen until picked up by the Univ. of Florida. Water clarity and depth is also measured the each location with a Seechi disc. To estimate the concentration of algae, a measured volume of water is filtered through a Gelman typeA-E glass fiber filter. These are stored over silica gel deicant and frozen. Also noted and submitted with the samples are wind and direction, cloud cover, waves, boat traffic, birds, lake level change, pollen and anything that appears to be unusual.

The samples and data are picked up by the Dept. of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences where they are analyzed. This data collected and compiled are used to establish trends and provide information for any lake management program. The information shall in no instance be used in a regulatory way and the Florida Lakewatch program stays neutral on all issues.

Florida Lakewatch may be reached at 1-800-LAKEWATCH (525-3928) or by e-mail at lakewatufi.edu, or through Friends of Istokpoga by e-mail, friendsostokpoga@hotmail.com.

*Editors note: We want to thank Jim Wilburn, Jim Wilkins, Mike Springman, Dave Boyer, Ted Clay, and John Grant, all members of Friends Of Istokpoga, for their commitment to Lake Istokpoga and to Florida Lakewatch.*

## Rain, Rain, Where are you?

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The level of Lake Istokpoga, at the time this was written, was at least 8 inches below where it should be at this time of

year. Why, you ask. Well, the answer is simply too little rain and too much evaporation. According to Clell Ford, we lose between 1/4" to 1/5" per day. Read on for the rest of the story.

To determine the lake level You essentially need to plug evaporation and rainfall values into a hydrologic model for Istokpoga that accounts for all losses of water from the lake and all gains of water to the lake. Sounds simple. Right?

In the case of Istokpoga, evaporation is likely the main loss of water from the lake (except for the insignificant amounts lost around the edges of the structures, especially given that SFWMD "is not releasing water from Istokpoga"). Evaporation in Highlands County is estimated to average 50 inches per year, or ~6 inches per month or more this time of year- perhaps a more conservative (on the high side) estimate would put it between 1/4 and 1/5 inch per day. For Istokpoga, that represents ~500 acre-feet of water per day, 2,178,000 cubic feet per day or 252 cubic feet per second (cfs). Just to evaporation. There is also a small flow into the lake: USGS reported 23 cfs down Josephine Creek today, and there may be 5 to 10 times more than that flowing down Arbuckle creek today. Make it 10X and the flow into Istokpoga (Josephine + Arbuckle Creeks ~253 cfs) might be keeping up with the evaporative losses. This time of year the shallow groundwater seepage into the lake is somewhat small; since I do not have a good number to estimate it, I will ignore it for this back of the envelope calculation. Thus ends the easy part.

The hard part is how much rainfall it will take to raise the level of the lake. That depends far less on how much water actually falls on the lake, than how much water falls in the 603 square mile (385,952 acre) watershed that drains to the lake. Soil moisture conditions, lake levels on the Ridge, the potentiometric surface (fancy name for elevation - compare it with the land

surface elevation to predict springs) of the shallow and intermediate aquifer and the actual location of the rainfall in the watershed all factor into the rate of runoff to Istokpoga. There is probably a whole host of other incredibly important factors that I have completely ignored in developing this "model".

Unlike the evaporation loss and stream flow balance, I do not have good estimates for the rainfall input function is (for obvious reasons).

One thing is certain, simply receiving 1/5" to 1/4" of rain every day on Lake Istokpoga will be hard pressed to bring the lake up to its dry season level. It will depend on consistent rainfall and creek flows throughout the watershed..

*Note: Thanks to Clell Ford for this simplified explanation of the evaporation problem we are experiencing on our lake.*

## Draw Down Update

In our August Board of Directors meeting, Beacham Furse updated us on the status of the draw down currently targeted for November 2002 through June 2003. According to Beacham, a series of wells are required to monitor the effects a draw down might have on area lakes have not been funded by South Florida Water Management District and if they are not in place by end of this summer [read as now] then the FWC will probably have to fund them. This means the wells will not be in place in time to maintain the current schedule and it will slip a year. Beacham characterized the current schedule as "extremely optimistic".

We attempt to keep the latest draw down information on our web site. Be sure to check into

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friendsofistokpoga.homestead.com  
frequently .

Since it appears that the wind and wave action has had an impact on the amount of tussock actually on the lake, we asked Beacham Furse, FWC, to re-estimate the amount of tussock actually on the lake now. We will let you know the results in a future newsletter.