

November 2013

The Istokpoga Newswire

A publication of the Friends of Istokpoga Lake Association, Inc.



Lake Istokpoga Emergency Response Program

By Bill Dwinell, Director Emeritus

I am pleased to report that we presented our Lake Istokpoga Emergency Response proposal/plan/program (ERP) to the Highlands County Board of County Commissioners on September 24, 2013 and received 100% approval, followed by some very complementary words about our association from County Commission Chairman Jack Richie. So now we have a plan instead of a proposal, and soon we will have a program. Our job of rolling this program out has now begun. In this article I will explain what we have been up to and what we need to complete to actually implement this program. Our goal in all of this is to make Lake Istokpoga a safer place to boat for everyone.

Months ago we worked with Highlands County to develop and distribute the Lake Istokpoga Grid Map (GM). It is available to the emergency responders in the county, including the Highlands County Sheriff's Office, which includes 911, and the EMS responders on their computer systems, and it is available to everyone as a free download from our website. The GM is an integral part of our ERP, in that it will greatly facilitate the emergency responders in locating those needing assistance, which could be you. So, if you boat on Lake Istokpoga, do yourself a favor and get your GM now! We recommend one for home and one for your boat. We also offer a laminated version for a \$3.00 donation.

So how will it work? One of the things that will need to change is that boaters on Lake Istokpoga will need to start using the 911 system when they have emergencies. I know that most

boaters do not think about using 911 services on the water, but we are looking at improving the process with this program. Now-a-days we call our friends, neighbors, family, or local fish camps or anyone else we can think of when we have problems, and sometimes this will still be a good option, but not always.

The program lays out two types of emergency calls: life threatening and non-life threatening. Non-life threatening would be things like running out of gas, or needing a tow back because your engine died or you broke a prop. These are ones that do not require special training or skills. Life threatening ones are those that require police or EMS responders on site of the emergency. The 911 team will be making the decision as to what type of call it is.

The biggest problem for the responders with each type of emergency is finding the location of the emergency. Many times the caller does not know exactly where they are on the lake; after all it is a very big lake. But if they have a GM they can probably narrow the search down considerably. The next big problem is getting the right responders to the scene of the problem. For the non-life threatening call it could probably just be the volunteer responder.

So who will these responders be? How do we make Lake Istokpoga safer with this program? We are going to use VOLUNTEERS as emergency responders! "But wait! I am not able to respond to emergencies. I am not trained." Today, we have only a few boats available to EMS or Police to use if they need to respond to a call on the lake, in fact, on all the lakes in Highlands County. The

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Have you visited our FaceBook page yet? If not, you are missing the photos of some great catches on our lake. If you have and haven't shared your catches, please let us see yours.

Fall Meeting

Friends of Istokpoga will hold it's 2013 Fall meeting at the Lorida Community center on **Thursday, November 21st**, at 7:00 PM.

So please mark your calendars.

Public Welcome

county has a couple and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) has one or two. These boats are not always readily available and it can take some time for them to respond. In a life threatening emergency this time can be critical! Also, they sometimes need someone knowledgeable about the lake to help them find the person(s) in trouble.

The County EMS people have offered to conduct a basic first aid class for our volunteers, and FWC is looking into a basic boat handling class on how to approach a boat in trouble. More information will be provided on these classes at a later time. But for life threatening emergencies EMS help will be covered by fully trained personnel.

So what if we find people who reside on the lake that 911 can contact that can help out; people with boats already in the water or can be in the water just a few minutes; people that can have a can of gas, or a tow rope ready all the time, that we can call who can help out when needed; people that could take EMS or Police officers to the scene when needed; people located near the site of the incident; people with a GM in their boat? Does any of this sound like it could be you? Come and sign-up at our next FOI meeting (Nov. 21st). We will be needing volunteers all around the lake (all four quadrants). And, don't think that just because you are a snow-bird that we can't use you. The winter time is the most heavily used time of year and the most likely time for people to need help.

The program, after implementation, is that when 911 receives a call they will decide who needs to respond; and if a volunteer is needed they will contact one in the closest quadrant (NE, SE, NW or SW) of the lake, to respond directly to the site, or to meet the EMS/police at a nearby boat ramp, or other location, and carry them out to those in need.

Where are we now? We are at the point where we need to build our list of volunteers. We are just completing our volunteer registration form. If you think you are ready to help out as an emergency responder then you can send us an email at friends@istokpoga.org or call us at 863-219-0082. While we are still not ready to go live with this, we do need to build our list of volunteers so it is ready when the rest of the program is ready.

Once we get our volunteers list established we will need to get our publicity machine rolling so everyone knows what is happening and when it officially begins. As we approach the go-live date we will make announcements on our FOI Email List, on our FOI website, and on our FOI Facebook page. We will also be providing status updates on these as well as at our FOI Meetings, including the one on November 21st.

Lake Istokpoga Historical Tidbits – Vol. 18

By Gary Lamperelli, Vice President
Are you “Out of your gourd?”

Easy now... I'm not castigating anyone, just trying to connect this wonderful time of year with a bit of “Istokpoga-style” history. And it comes from an early 1900's explorer in the Istokpoga area. In past pages of the *Istokpoga Newswire* we had learned much about the “early days” of our lake, taken from Entomologist William Blatchley's field notes and printed in his book, *In Days Agone*. Well, this time, compliments of taxonomist and botanical explorer, John Kunkel Small we can get a glimpse of early Florida from another scientist's point of view. He was born in 1869 and graduated in 1892 from Franklin & Marshall College* (Lancaster, PA) with a degree in botany. Beginning in 1901, he became the first botanist to explore Florida since the days that A.W. Chapman had originally researched parts of the State in the mid-1800's. FYI, Chapman's research eventually led to his 1860 publication, *Flora of the Southern United States*, the first comprehensive description of

plants in any region beyond the northern states (2nd edition in 1884 & a 3rd final edition in 1897). In 1903, J.K. Small extended the knowledge-base by publishing *Flora of the Southeastern United States* (revisions in 1913 & 1933). Amidst his field-work, he was the 1st Curator of Museums at the New York Botanic Garden and then in 1906 was named Head Curator, a position he held until 1934. As a side-note, between 1927 and 1931 Small conducted additional field work within Florida, working with Thomas Edison on rubber-producing plants.

From *The Journal of The New York Botanical Garden (1921-1923)*, and back to Istokpoga: Small writes that he finds vast plots of pumpkins near Lake Okeechobee, as similarly recorded by Ponce De Leon and the early Spanish explorers. If you forgot your history, our man Ponce first arrived in The New World, actually, Hispaniola around 1502 where he was granted a bunch of land and became a wealthy planter and rancher. That didn't stop his itch for exploration and in 1513 he took his first trip to our peninsula, which he named Florida because of the beautiful flowers. Remember all that fountain-of-youth stuff that never has been found or proven? Well, they did find a gourd, or pumpkin, as originally described in a 1575 memoir of Hernando de Escalante Fontaneda. He describes the objects as Tocola-a-chile, which translates roughly to “Country where gourds are produced.” The color was pale yellow with many covered in green variegated markings. Small writes, “*There seems to be no good reason, therefore, for doubting that we really have discovered the pumpkin's Garden of Eden. This is especially in view of the fact that the geographic range, as far as we know it, of this ancestral pumpkin is rather restricted. i.e. the Lake Okeechobee region, including doubtless, the unexplored hammocks of Lake Istokpoga.*” He reported that pioneer white men found the Seminole Indians of the peninsula cultivating a form of the wild type of pumpkin... this wild

pumpkin “*may be considered the prototype of this species.*”

He adds: “*The Seminoles, as far as we can learn, inherited this esculent from the Florida aborigines, who may have developed it through many generations or ages from the wild plants now forced to the wall, so to speak, in the hammocks of Lake Okeechobee, and perhaps those of Lake Istokpoga...*” “*Several attempts to grow vines to maturity at the NY Botanical Garden were unsuccessful. However, we are growing specimens in the reservations of Charles Deering in Southern Florida where this plant can readily be compared with that of the Seminole pumpkin.*”

Here is a brief excerpt describing a route taken on one of Small's trips to our area: “*Crossing the river west of Bassinger, we left the Okeechobee prairie and were soon on the Istokpoga prairie, traveling east and north of Lake Istokpoga, a little-known body of water about ten miles in diameter. We then crossed Istokpoga Creek, which connects the lake of the same name with the Kissimmee River, and is apparently the only outlet of the lake. It is lined with beautiful hammocks. The dense hammock, about Lake Istokpoga itself, plainly visible in the distance, is a botanical storehouse, as yet wholly unexplored...After circling many miles toward the west and crossing a creek flowing from Lake Arbuckle into Lake Istokpoga, we met the pine woods again.*”

FYI, you can find seeds for Seminole pumpkins through selected seeds catalogs. According to the South Seminole Farm & Nursery site, this fruit is making a comeback. Probably because it is one of the few plants that doesn't wrestle with insect problems, can be grown most of the year in our parts and its fruit is sweeter and less stringy than other species. Sounds like a winner to me.

*Is it coincidental that 1 of the 14 intercollegiate sports mentioned on the Franklin & Marshall Web-

site is squash!!! Call me crazy, or “out of my gourd” if you prefer...I'm just sayin'!

What's Happening On Istokpoga?

By Bert Galloway, Director

The rain of the summer has subsided and the temperatures have come down a few degrees which has gotten people out and about enjoying the change of weather that fall has blessed us with. It also seems that fish and other critters on and about Lake Istokpoga are on the move too, getting ready for the seasonal change that is on the way. The lake level is back up to the winter pool schedule of 39.5 feet. The fishing this fall is still rather good and has made most of the anglers happy with their success ratio and size of fish. We also have a noticeable increase in the number of autos on US 27 and US 98 as our northern friends come south to get out of the cold. Following are some of the activities that have or will be occurring on the lake in the next few months. If you have any questions about or ideas for this column please email them to friends@istokpoga.org.

Istokpoga Marsh Irrigation Structure on CR-621

On County Road 621, about a quarter mile west of the entrance to Eagles Nest, is a large irrigation structure that the Istokpoga Marsh District uses to irrigate the caladium fields. In the last year this structure has experienced some erosion problems because of its age and amount of use. At this time, temporary repairs have been made to this structure so that Istokpoga Marsh District could still use it for irrigation purposes and also to insure that the structure doesn't fail, which would likely cause significant damage to their corps and a unchecked runoff of water from Lake Istokpoga. Highlands County is aware of the problem and they have a project underway for a permanent repair to this structure. Lakes Manager Clell Ford is the project manager and plans for a new structure are about 50% complete at this time. He is hope-

ful of getting the necessary funding so the actual work can start in the spring when the lake is lowered. Highlands County Road and Bridge and SFWMD are also on-board and in the loop with this project. We will keep you up-to-date at our next meeting November 21st, and in our February newsletter.

President's Corner

By Ken Stebbins, President

Fall is here, the weather has cooled off, the humidity has dropped, the lake level is up and the weeds seem to be under control. Fishing is always good and from what I hear the catching is also good. Everything is going great.

This association's mission has always been to keep Lake Istokpoga in pristine condition. We have now taken on another project of making the lake a safer place for recreation (The Emergency Response Program). However, to do this we are going to need your help. We are counting on our members to help with this program in any way they can.

In my last column I mentioned that FOI was making a proposal to the County Commission about The Emergency Response Program. I am happy to report that the Highlands County Commission gave us a “Thumbs Up” and we are now proceeding with plans to implement the program. If we are fortunate it could be as early as Jan 1st 2014. See the front page of this publication for details.

We will be having our regular fall meeting on November 21st at the Lorida Community Center and hopefully you be able to attend, and you can get your questions answered and also you can volunteer to be part of The Lake Istokpoga Emergency Response Program (we will have applications available).

As usual we have some outstanding speakers that will keep you well informed about what is going on around the lake. See the meeting notice for more information.

FOI Fall Meeting

The Friends of Istokpoga Lake Association, Inc. will hold its fall general membership at the Lorida Community Center on Thursday November 21st, at 7:00 PM. It is the start of a new season on Lake Istokpoga. We would like to see you, all your neighbors and friends at this kick off meeting for the 2013-2014 season.

Our main speaker for the evening will be Gary Ritter, SFWMD Okeechobee Office Service Director. He will give you insight into how they handled all the water that we have had this summer and give us a progress report on the Northern Everglades project. Director Bill Dwinell will give an update on our new Lake Istokpoga Emergency Response Program that we have been working on. We will also have some representatives from some of the local agencies who will bring you the latest on projects happening on Lake Istokpoga.

Refreshments will be served beginning at 6:45 PM. So mark your calendar for this informative evening. We will also have a table set up to pay your 2014 dues. Your 2013 dues expire on December 31, 2013.

Virginia's Recipe Corner

By Virginia Green, Director
Easy Leftover Turkey Pot Pie

2 c. frozen mixed vegetables, 2 c. cubed cooked turkey, ½ c. chicken broth, 1 can cream of chicken soup, ¼ tsp. poultry seasoning (opt), ½ to 1 tsp. Chicken bouillon powder, a dash of pepper and celery salt and pie crust (top and bottom).

Put bottom crust in pie plate. Mix everything else together thoroughly and put in. Put top crust and moisten edges of crust with water, seal edges. Cut a few slits in top crust. Bake at 400 to 425 degrees for 45 to 50 minutes. Let stand 15 minutes, and then serve.

Istokpoga Fishing

by Gary Albin, Trails End Fishing Resort
Wow, end of October and the start of the fall and winter bass and crappie seasons are already on us. The day time temperatures are still in the mid 80's but the rain has slowed up. It has rained 3 to 5 times every week since June. Lake levels are high and the hydrilla in the lake is pretty hard to find. Water temperature on October 16 was 81 degrees. The latest FWC aquatic vegetation treatments in September were confined to the Big Island, Bumble Bee, and some of the more shallow shore line areas. We will find out more in February about winter treatments for hydrilla but at this time none are planned.

At Trails End, we are just now starting to stock wild shiners and minnows for the season. This summer and early fall, nice catches of bass are being made both on shiners and artificial baits. Last weekend the bass tournament out of Trails End produced some 7, 8 and 9 pounders with lots of fish weighed in. The FWC Trophy Bass Program has been very successful with many of the bass registered came from Istokpoga. *[Editor: Please see the TrophyCatch article later in this newsletter for details]* If you need help with the photo, weight, length or other information come on into Trails End Fishing Resort and we will try to help. Eight pound bass and over generate some nice prizes when you participate in the FWC Trophy Bass Program.

Crappie reports have been good when trolling with jigs. Several limits of nice fish have been brought in. Night fishing has not yet produced the big catches but we have some people out there at night cause the big crappie are there, just not yet biting well.

Some FWC fish shocking has brought up some really big bluegill and shell crackers but you really have to hunt hard to find them this year.

Remember to keep smiling; it makes people wonder what you are up to. Take a senior or young person fishing. The young people spend too much time on phones and computer games

and not enough time in the great outdoors.

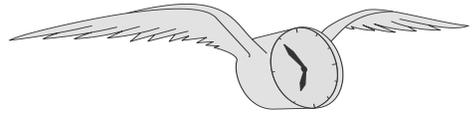
Weed Management

By Vickie Albritton, Director
The vegetation survey that was planned for September was pushed back to November. Hydrilla is very minimal with exception of the areas agreed to as "no control" zones. No treatment is planned for hydrilla at this time.

In September, FWC finished herbicide treatments with CLEARCAST to treat cattails, primrose willow, and pickerelweed. This chemical takes about three months to see results so results should be evident by mid December.

The boat trail treatment through Big Island is a success. Some touch up work will be needed at the north end but the east entrance is open and well marked.

According to information from Steve Gornak, he will be conducting approximately 41 acres of harvesting on the island marshes. Bids for the work should be received by the end of October with actual harvesting beginning in mid November.



TIME FLIES

By Vickie Albritton & Virginia Greene,
Directors

We all say "Where does the time go". 2013 will soon be gone. I am sure the last thing on your mind right now is INCOME TAXES. That is April 15, 2014! Please, let me just get through the holidays first!

Well the time to think of 2013 INCOME TAXES is everyday and every check you write! Friends of Istokpoga Lake Assoc. are a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization and donations are tax deductible. So support the organization that supports you. FOI is on duty every day watching out for the beauty and conditions of the lake.

A check for a donation to Friends

Membership Application

Friends of Istokpoga

Lake Association, Inc.

Annual Individual Membership fee \$7.00

Annual Family Membership fee \$12.00*

Annual Associate Membership fee \$25.00

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

Indicate number of family members for Family Membership: _____

Annual dues are valid January 1 to December 31

Name(s) or

Business name _____

Address (1) (street or POB) _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (____) _____ - _____

E-mail address _____

Address (2) (street or POB) _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

2nd Phone:(____) _____ - _____

Send all mail to address: 1 ___ 2 ___ other _____

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

Associate Members:

Primary Contact _____ Email _____

Web Address _____

Fax Number (____) _____ - _____

Nature of Business (Brief Description) _____

The above information is EXACTLY as you would like it to appear on our website and newsletter

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 33857-0205

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

friends@istokpoga.org www.istokpoga.org

Membership Renewal Reminder

We are quickly approaching the membership renewal period for calendar year 2014. You can renew at the upcoming November 21st meeting or mail your dues to the P.O. Box listed on the back of this newsletter. Membership provides you full access to our website, digital copies of all current and past copies of FOI *Newswire*, downloadable photos of the lake and wildlife, direct web-links to most County, State and Federal government agencies tasked with maintaining and/or improving this great stretch of water; a single portal to the most relevant Istokpoga informative in existence... anywhere! And peace of mind and pride that you are helping keep Lake Istokpoga the gem that it is.

Your small, tax deductible, donation indirectly helps maintain and/or increase property values surrounding Lake Istokpoga, while contributing to the economic benefits derived by all local businesses.

Your support is always appreciated and will help ensure the continuance of all that is great with Lake Istokpoga. We encourage you to ask neighbors and friends if they are current members...if not, provide them a copy of a *Newswire* or suggest that they contact us directly.

Please help us grow our membership by
giving this application or a copy of it
(other side of this page) to your friends
or neighbors.

of Istokpoga Lake Assoc. will be used for the membership activities only. Not a penny is received by those who serve this organization. The directors give their time and efforts out of love for the lake and those who use it.

So, "COME ON MAN", OR WOMAN, and write a donation check to **Friends of Istokpoga Lake Assoc.** before the end of the year so you can proudly claim that deduction come April 15th and know that your money is used for a good cause.

What's New with TrophyCatch?

By Bill Pouder FWC

Year one of TrophyCatch came to an end on September 30th and the start of year two is underway. It was a great start for the program with nearly 200 fish submitted from all over the state. As many of you are aware, TrophyCatch is an angler recognition program that rewards anglers with prizes for documenting and releasing largemouth bass 8 pounds and up. The program has three club levels (Lunker = 8 to 9.9 pounds, Trophy = 10 to 12.9 pounds, and Hall of Fame = 13 pounds and up) and prizes increase incrementally based on the club level. Great prizes such as gift certificates, fishing equipment, clothing, free guide trips, and more are given away to those that submit fish into the program. Additionally for those that registered for the program in year one, a brand new bass boat, motor, and trailer will be given away. For more information on the program, to register, or submit a fish visit www.TrophyCatchFlorida.com.

After summarizing all the fish caught in year one, Lake Istokpoga had 45 TrophyCatch submissions, which was number one in the state of all public waterbodies. There were a total of 33 Lunker Club fish (8 to 9.9 pounds) and 12 Trophy Club fish (10 to 12.9

pounds) submitted from Istokpoga which accounted for nearly 25% of all the fish submitted into the program in year one. Charles Beatty's 12 pound 7 oz. bass caught back in December was largest fish submitted from Istokpoga. Special thanks go out to Jim Reed and the Highland Lakes Volunteers and Gary Albin, owner of Trails End Fishing Resort. Jim and his volunteers did an excellent job this year working with tournament anglers to help them document and submit their fish. Gary worked with FWC to establish Trails End Fishing Resort as a certified weigh station and was given a certified scale. He also worked with many anglers to help them document their



TrophyCatch
My trophy swims in Florida

catches and is all geared up for year two of the program. Many of the fish submitted into TrophyCatch were directly linked to the hard work and dedication of Gary, Jim, and the Highlands Lakes Volunteers. I thank them all for an outstanding job last year helping to promote this great program and the great bass fishery on Lake Istokpoga.

Now that year two of TrophyCatch is underway, some changes have been implemented to the program. These changes will make it slightly easier for the angler to document their catch and also reduce the amount of time the fish is out of the water before release. The changes are as follows:

For all club levels (Lunker, Trophy, and Hall of Fame) anglers will only be required to submit a photograph of the entire fish on a scale with the weight clearly visible. There is no longer a requirement to take a photograph of the fish on a measuring board, but we recommend that you try to do so if at all possible. Additionally, we are recommending that the angler take a photograph of him/herself with the fish (bragging photo). Remember, Gary Albin has a certified scale at Trails End Fishing Resort and you can weigh your fish there during normal business hours if you don't have a scale, but you will still have to

submit your photos to be eligible.

There is no longer a Hall of Fame Season. Largemouth bass caught larger than 13 pounds can be submitted into the program year round. We are requesting that anglers contact us if they catch a bass larger than 13 pounds on the TrophyCatch Hotline (855-FL-Trophy or 855-358-7674) and if a biologist is local, they will verify the catch but it is no longer a requirement. You can document your catch as described above with a photograph of the whole fish on a scale with the weight clearly visible.

Tournament caught fish can be submitted into the program as long as the angler provides a photograph of himself with the fish and on the submission application includes a web-link to the tournament page where the weight of the fish can be viewed.

Well, I wish everyone the best of luck catching trophy fish in year two. Remember to always be prepared with a scale, measuring board, and camera; you never know when you might catch a TrophyCatch eligible fish on Lake Istokpoga or any other lake in the state. For a little bit of effort you will receive some great prizes. Also remember to register for the program at www.TrophyCatchFlorida.com. It's free and you are automatically eligible for an end of year two drawing for a new bass boat. Those that have already registered do not need to register again, you are automatically eligible for the drawing at the end of year two. Finally, I am always available if you have any question; please feel free to contact me at any time. Good Luck! Bill Pouder, bill.pouder@myfwc.com (863)648-3805

If you are done with this newsletter please share it with a friend or neighbor and encourage them to become a member.

**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

**Were on the Web —
www.istokpoga.org**



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Audubon of Florida, Lorida

Computer Electronics, Sebring

Delta Southern Construction, Sarasota

High Hopes Guide Service, Sebring

J & H Supply, Lake Worth

Lake Istokpoga Marina, Lake Placid

Lake Istokpoga Realtor, Lorida

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Lorida Bait & Tackle, Lorida

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Reds II, Sebring

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Trails End Fishing Resort, Lorida

Check us out on FaceBook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/FriendsofIstokpoga/>