



UNIVERSITY OF
FLORIDA

IFAS



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A Home for Florida LAKEWATCH

August, 2006

Dear LAKEWATCHER:

August 2006 is Florida LAKEWATCH's 20th anniversary! The first water samples were collected by LAKEWATCHERS at Lake Santa Fe (Alachua County) and Lake Broward (Putnam County). Since 1986, LAKEWATCHERS have sampled more than 1000 lakes and numerous near-shore coastal waters in 50 counties. The Florida Legislature in 1991 officially established Florida LAKEWATCH within the Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences at UF/IFAS (Chapter 91-69; s. 240.5329, F.S.; now F.S. 1004.49). LAKEWATCHERS have made LAKEWATCH Florida's largest and the nation's premier citizen volunteer monitoring program. But, we now must look to the future. This is especially true as population growth in Florida put ever-increasing pressure on our water resources!

It is my hope that you believe in Florida LAKEWATCH as much as I do. Florida LAKEWATCH has always had and will continue to have in its mission working with the volunteers *first!* LAKEWATCHERS have through the sampling of their lakes provided themselves an "insurance policy" so if a change or changes were to occur at the lake it would be documented. The LAKEWATCH team has developed a database that is used by many groups and is a tremendous asset to international, national, state, regional and local water resource managers and researchers, lake homeowners associations, educational institutions, consultants, and the general public. Together, we have solved problems at individual water bodies, we have addressed not only water quality issues, but also aquatic plant management problems and fisheries problems and we have developed lake management plans for lakes. The LAKEWATCH team has also influenced public policy. Now, I believe that the present LAKEWATCH team needs to take a bold step to help insure that Florida LAKEWATCH will be there for future Floridians.

Florida LAKEWATCH needs a better "home" that can improve program services now and in the future. Florida LAKEWATCH staff members and facilities are currently scattered amongst multiple buildings and sites. The facilities cannot be expanded to meet growing demands. Florida LAKEWATCH needs a permanent "home" where it can improve program services now and in the future. New facilities will increase communication, create efficiencies and enhance the ability of staff members to deliver services to the citizens of Florida. Plans have been developed for a 10,000 sq. ft. complex on the UF/IFAS Millhopper site that will greatly expand current opportunities for research and delivery of services and permit much needed future expansions in the next 20 years. The new facilities will include a bacteriological laboratory, a toxic algal laboratory, a fish tissue laboratory and a general fisheries laboratory, to provide state of the art resources needed to continue critical water quality analyses. The facilities will provide office and laboratory space needed to attract internationally recognized eminent

scholars to assist LAKEWATCH with addressing the issues raised by the LAKEWATCH team. A pavilion will permit Florida LAKEWATCH to continue its award-winning youth education program, *Fishing for Success*. Training youth to be future LAKEWATCHERS is a critical part of our mission. And lastly, the construction of a large conference room will finally provide a site where LAKEWATCHERS can meet to provide their insights and experiences on specific issues to each other and directly communicate their concerns to assembled scientists.

The vision for a new “LAKEWATCH HOME” is an exciting prospect. On July 8th, I met with leaders from various statewide LAKEWATCH groups. This group of dedicated volunteers agreed to help raise \$1,000,000. This money will be matched dollar for dollar by the Florida Legislature resulting in a total building fund of \$2,000,000. This money will not only build a facility for future LAKEWATCH activities, but it will also show the State that Florida’s citizens are willing to do what it takes to be good stewards of the water resources of Florida.

So, I am writing to ask for your help. Construction costs are significant, but our goal is very reachable if we all work together. LAKEWATCHERS can contribute individually and/or each LAKEWATCHER can reach out to their lake neighbors and others in their community that benefit from healthy water resources. Each of you probably knows other individuals or groups in your communities that might contribute. I hope you will contact them, or work with our Director of Development – Josh McCoy at 352-392-1975 to determine the best course of action. Often it is not what you know, but whom you know! With networking, creativity and hard work, we can make this happen.

Florida LAKEWATCH is housed within the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences at the University of Florida. All contributions to Florida LAKEWATCH are tax deductible and should be made payable to the University of Florida Foundation, Inc. Please include a note or a memo on the check indicating that you would like this gift designated to the Florida LAKEWATCH building fund. Josh is also able available to discuss non-cash gifts as well.

Please mail any donations to:

IFAS/SHARE Development Office
1001 McCarty Hall D
PO Box 110170
Gainesville, FL 32611-0170
Attention: Josh McCoy

For the 20 years that Florida LAKEWATCH has been in existence, the LAKEWATCH group has worked hard to gather the funds needed to keep the program alive. I have never asked volunteers for more than their time to take water samples. However, funds are becoming ever more difficult to obtain and now I need your help! I look forward to working with you on this great endeavor. With your help, Florida LAKEWATCH will successfully obtain a needed stability that will serve current and future LAKEWATCHERS for many years to come!

Sincerely,

Daniel Canfield, Jr., Professor of Limnology
Founder and Director of Florida LAKEWATCH