“Significant changes in human behavior can only be brought about rapidly if the persons who are expected to change participate in deciding what the change shall be and how it shall be made.”

— H.A. Simon 1995

The TEAM Approach

A Process for Developing Effective Lake Management Plans

TEAM. The acronym sums it up pretty well: “Together for Environmental Assessment and Management.” The concept evolved several years ago by a group of researchers at the University of Florida’s Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences as a way of bringing citizens, scientists, and water managers together to develop lake and/or water management plans.

Why the emphasis on developing management plans? Diffusing user conflicts is one major reason. As the number of lakefront residents continues to grow in Florida, controversies related to how lakes are used and managed is also increasing. As LAKEWATCH can certainly attest to, it seems that most lake user conflicts are rooted in conflicting values of what makes a quality lake — and how a waterbody is being used.

A classic example is the clash between lakefront property owners who want relief from the prolific growth of aquatic plants in their lake and anglers who see the same aquatic plants as prime fish habitat.

It was the goal of the researchers who developed the plan (Susan L. Canfield and Daniel E. Canfield, Jr.) to create a framework that allowed a “combination of input from all interests and the community-at-large with guidance from the scientific community.” This was a fresh approach after years of the more traditional command and control management techniques.

This all sounds well and fine. But does it work? There was only one way to find out. It wasn’t long before an ideal candidate presented itself. Homeowners from the Tsala Apopka Chain-of-Lakes in Citrus County approached Dr. Canfield a few years back and requested information about this new TEAM approach. Since then, they’ve embarked on a rare adventure in lake management. The process they’re using is a modified version of the original and has been broken into three main phases. They are currently in the third phase.

Phase 1

The initial phase, which began in May of 1998, involved a series of meetings with citizens, during which the public was asked to identify water or lake management issues that were of special concern. Through a series of short “round robin” talks, everyone was allowed to speak about what concerned them most. More than 50 topics were identified and discussed. Many issues were interrelated and most seemed to fall into eight major categories:

- Water Level Management
- Aquatic Plant Management
- Management of Fish and Wildlife
- Muck and Tussock Management
- Water Quality
- Public Education
- Land Use Management/Growth and Development
- Streamline Government and Government Accountability.

Continued on page 2.
The second part of Phase 1 involved meetings where professionals sat down and did the same thing. Interestingly, they came up with a list of concerns that was almost identical to the citizen list.

**Phase 2**

Once a list of priority issues was compiled, a series of individual meetings were held on such topics as water quality, fish and wildlife, aquatic macrophytes (plants) and water level management. Within each group, experts were brought together to review the best data available for the specific issues. They were then asked to discuss and develop a variety of approaches that could be used to manage the Tsala Apopka Chain-of-Lakes. (LAKEWATCH data played an important role in this phase of the project.)

As one might expect, this phase took many months to complete as it involved multiple issues concerning several lakes.

A report is currently being assembled as a result of these discussions. In August, it will be distributed to the citizens that were involved in Phase 1. Included in the report is a list of proposed management options for further debate.

“**This is not a report that will sit on the shelf collecting dust. This final plan will be a living changing document for use in managing the Tsala Apopka Chain-of-Lakes.**”

— Mark Hoyer

**Phase 3**

The third phase begins in September when, after reviewing the report, the original group of participating citizens will be given an opportunity to discuss the scientific evaluation and try to decide which of the options will work best.

Mark Hoyer, a UF/IFAS researcher that has been very much involved in the process, wants to stress that this TEAM approach is “an attempt to not only organize a management plan, but also to create a living document that will continue to evolve along with the process.” As Mark points out, “We currently don’t have all the data needed to answer all of our questions. However, as more information becomes available we want to be able to make adjustments to the management plan as we go along. This is not a report that will sit on the shelf collecting dust. This final plan will be a living changing document for use in managing the Tsala Apopka Chain-Of-Lakes.”

A final management plan will be finished and distributed by December 31 to everyone involved including representatives from the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD), Citrus County leaders, scientists, and private citizens — a great way to ring in the new millennium of lake management!

For more information about the TEAM approach, or to obtain a copy of the Tsala Apopka TEAM report, contact the LAKEWATCH office at: 1-800-LAKEWATCH (1-800-525-3928).

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**SOME HERONS**

— Mary Oliver

A blue preacher
flew toward the swamp,
in slow motion.

On the leafy banks,
an old Chinese poet,
hunched in the white gown of
his wings,
was waiting.
The water
was the kind of dark silk
that has silver lines
shot through it
when it is touched by the wind
or is splashed upward,
in a small, quick flower,
by the life beneath it.

The preacher
made his difficult landing,
his skirts up around his knees.

The poet’s eyes
Flared, just as a poet’s eyes
are said to do
when the poet is awakened
from the forest of meditation.

It was summer.

It was only a few moments past
the sun’s rising, which meant
that the whole long sweet day
lay before them.

They greeted each other,
rumpling their gowns for an instant,
and then smoothing them.

They entered the water,
and instantly two more herons —
equally as beautiful —

Joined them and stood just beneath
them in the black, polished
water
where they fished,
all day.

— Mary Oliver

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**Florida LAKEWATCH**

newsletter is generated by the Florida LAKEWATCH program, within the Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences of the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) at the University of Florida (UF). Support for the LAKEWATCH program is provided by the Florida Legislature, grants and donations.

For more information about LAKEWATCH, to inquire about volunteer training sessions, or to submit materials for inclusion in this publication, write to:

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Gainesville, FL 32611
or call 1-800-LAKEWATCH (1-800-525-3928)
(352) 392-9617 ext. 228
E-mail: lakewat@ufl.edu

All unsolicited articles, photographs, artwork or other written material must include contributor’s name, address, and phone number. All submissions shall remain the property of Florida LAKEWATCH and cannot be returned. Opinions expressed are solely those of the individual contributor and do not necessarily reflect the opinion or policy of the Florida LAKEWATCH program.

Inclusion does not constitute endorsement, nor does exclusion represent censure of any item, organization, individual, or institution by the University of Florida or the Florida LAKEWATCH program.
Dear LAKEWATCHers,

...In the fall of 1997, milfoil was covering well over 50 percent of our lake. It made the lake almost unusable for boating, fishing and swimming. We had two meetings to determine what action would be taken ... and decided to solicit bids from contractors for control using either contact or systemic herbicides.

About the same time the bids were being received, several residents noticed that the milfoil was dying in massive quantities. After consulting with several elders, prophets, wise men and wise women around Riley Lake it was concluded that the best source of action for us to take was to observe the “Riley Lake Pause.” In other words, don’t do anything and see what happens in a few months. The milfoil continued to die off over the summer. Each month the status of the milfoil was monitored and it continued to die off until early November, when no milfoil was observed growing in open water.

The milfoil problem began in 1992, and became much worse during the drought and low water conditions that prevailed for several years. The heavy rains of 1996, the winter of 1997 and late summer rains of 1998 caused the lake to rise and the water to darken. The dark water is probably the major reason why the milfoil has diminished so dramatically. Milfoil is not entirely gone from the lake and it is strongly suggested that we develop a plan of action that will be taken if conditions return (a long-time drought) which would enhance milfoil growth.

— John and Janet Yocum
Lake Riley/Putnam County

Editor’s Note: Although, it worked out well here, waiting isn’t always recommended when it comes to managing aquatic plants. However, these folks had the right idea by carefully monitoring things and consulting a variety of aquatic plant management experts, including the Bureau of Aquatic and Invasive Plant Management/DEP. It’s also a good example of how the presence of dissolved organic sediments in your lake (called tannins) can help to inhibit the growth of aquatic plants in your lake.

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Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
A New Commission to Replace Florida GFC

By Henry Cabbage
Excerpted with permission from Florida Wildlife magazine.

As of July 1, 1999 the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission (GFC) and the Marine Fisheries Commission (MFC) no longer exist. Florida voters abolished them in a 1998 election and replaced them both with one agency — the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC).

As a result, the responsibility for conserving the state’s freshwater and marine life, and terrestrial wildlife, are all under a single agency with roughly 1735 employees.

While officials are still sorting out such details as office space, equipment, phone lines, uniforms, colors for the vehicles, budgets, letterhead and whatnot, one thing is clear; the new FWC basically encompasses all the programs of the old GFC and MFC, plus a few new ones. A few employees and programs from the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Marine Fisheries Institute are now under the new FWC umbrella.

All law enforcement employees from the DEP (except the Park Patrol), the Bureau of Emergency Response, Office of Environmental and Resource Crimes Investigations and some field investigators are now part of the new FWC. Former Marine Patrol officers will continue to concentrate on enforcing saltwater laws, and former wildlife officers will continue to focus on freshwater and wildlife laws. However, when there is a need to reassign law enforcement officers to deal with an emergency, the agency can do so. A new executive director must be selected by the FWC Commissioners and, for the first time, must be confirmed by the Florida Senate.

Questions about the new commission can be directed to the Office of Informational Services at (850) 488-4676.
A Key to Water Management: Nutrients

Just like the plants and trees in your yard, algae and aquatic plants need nutrients in order to grow. Knowing more about these nutrients and their relationship to your waterbody can help you work more effectively with water managers, as well as your neighbors and lake association, if there is one. The following information was excerpted from Keys to Water Management: Nutrients (Circular 102). For more information and/or a complete copy of the circular call 1-800-LAKEWATCH.

“P” is for Phosphorus

Phosphorus — represented as “P” on a chemical element chart — is an element that, in its different forms, stimulates the growth of aquatic plants and algae in waterbodies.

It’s a building block for growth and life. If low in phosphorus, plants and algae don’t have enough resources to build new cells. Phosphorus compounds are also found naturally in many types of soils and rocks. Phosphorus mines in Florida and throughout the world provide phosphorus for many agricultural and industrial uses.

In water, phosphorus occurs in two forms: dissolved and particulate. Dissolved phosphorus is defined based on its size, as being small enough to pass through a 0.45 micron (one millionth of a meter) filter. It includes phosphorus forms like soluble reactive phosphorus and other soluble organic compounds that contain phosphorus.

Its counterpart, particulate phosphorus, is too big to pass through a 0.45 micron filter. It’s formed when phosphorus becomes incorporated into particles of soil, algae, and small animals that are suspended in the water. A combination of dissolved and particulate forms of phosphorus put together is referred to as total phosphorus (abbreviated “TP”).

(continued on page5)
There is ongoing scientific inquiry about when, where, and how often these specific phosphorus forms are found in waterbodies. LAKEWATCH analyzes water samples for total phosphorus measurements because by measuring the sum of all types of phosphorus, it gives us an estimate of the potential of a waterbody’s biological productivity — it’s ability to support plants, fish and wildlife. Plants can only use phosphorus in certain forms. Phosphorus that is in unusable forms is said to be “unavailable” to plants and algae. (See below: Phosphorus As A Limiting Nutrient.)

Understanding the relationship among aquatic plants, algae, and phosphorus is additionally complicated by the fact that the ability of algae to use specific forms of phosphorus is strongly influenced by several factors, including the following:

- alkalinity (pH),
- water hardness (caused by the presence of calcium and/or magnesium),
- the amount of dissolved oxygen in the water,
- concentrations of iron in the water, and
- thermal stratification (layers of water having different temperatures).

For more about these factors and how they affect water chemistry, see A Key to Water Management: the ABCs (Circular 101).

A Bum Rap
It’s been found that waterbodies with low concentrations of TP usually have relatively clear water. Because many people prefer clear water, it’s often assumed that high concentrations of TP (and less water clarity) are bad. It’s a misconception, however, that clearer water is intrinsically better. The association of clear water with low phosphorus levels has given the public the mistaken notion that phosphorus is a pollutant. And yet there are many lakes in Florida with high phosphorus concentrations that are naturally occurring. These high phosphorus lakes often have high fish and wildlife populations.

There are many ways in which phosphorus finds its way into waterbodies. The more common ways are described below.

- Some areas of Florida and other parts of the world have extensive phosphate deposits in the soils. In these areas, rivers and water seeping or flowing underground can become phosphorus sources.

Phosphorus as a limiting nutrient...

While talking with lake scientists, you may hear them refer to a lake’s limiting nutrient. A limiting nutrient is a nutrient that is necessary for plant growth — but is in short supply or available on a very limited basis to the plants and/or algae in a waterbody. Once the limiting nutrient is exhausted, further growth of the algae population stops.

If more of the limiting nutrient is added, larger algal populations will result until their growth is again limited by nutrients or by other limiting environmental factors.

In most freshwater lakes in Florida, the limiting nutrient is believed to be phosphorus. Aquatic plants may not respond as directly to nutrient limitation in the water as do algae, because many of these plants take their required nutrients from the bottom sediments through their roots, rather than from the open-water.

In general, it’s believed that waterbodies that have higher phosphorus levels also have higher levels of algae in the water. This is based in part on surveys of lakes in Florida and throughout the world and on results of whole-lake experiments. A picture of this relationship emerges when average yearly chlorophyll concentrations are plotted on a graph versus the total phosphorus concentrations (see Figure 1).

The graph shows that increasing phosphorus values are generally accompanied by increasing chlorophyll levels.

As a result, aquatic scientists often recommend the manipulation of phosphorus, called “phosphorus control,” as a primary management strategy for controlling algal biomass (the mass or weight of algae in a waterbody at a given time). The high priority placed on phosphorus control by regulatory and professional management agencies in Florida is evidenced by its use in the multi-million dollar lake management programs at Lake Apopka and Lake Okeechobee.

See the next LAKEWATCH newsletter for information on the role nitrogen plays in a lake’s nutrient supply. FLW

This graph depicts a strong relationship between total phosphorus and chlorophyll concentrations for Florida lakes. As phosphorus levels increase (indicated as dots), so do chlorophyll levels (which are also depicted as dots).
enriched and may carry significant amounts of phosphorus into waterbodies. ♦ Sometimes phosphorus is added intentionally to waterbodies as a management strategy to increase fish production by fertilizing aquatic plant and algal growth.

♦ Phosphorus can enter waterbodies inadvertently as a result of human activities such as landscape fertilization, crop fertilization, wastewater disposal, and stormwater run-off from residential developments, roads, and commercial areas.

**Waterbodies in the Florida LAKEWATCH database analyzed prior to January 1998 had total phosphorus concentrations which ranged from less than 1 to over 1000 µg/L.**

Analysis of total phosphorus concentrations in Florida shows the following three patterns that should be of interest to both managers and lake residents/users:

♦ There seems to be a relationship between the geographic location of a waterbody and its total phosphorus concentration.

♦ Using total phosphorus from the Florida LAKEWATCH database, Florida lakes were found to be distributed into four trophic states* as follows:

♦ Approximately 42% of the lakes would be classified as **oligotrophic**, with TP values less than 15 µg/L. Oligotrophic lakes have very low levels of biological productivity.

♦ About 20% of these lakes would be classified as **mesotrophic**, with TP values between 15 and 25 µg/L. Mesotrophic lakes have moderate levels of biological productivity.

♦ Approximately 30% of these lakes would be classified as **eutrophic**, with TP values between 25 and 100 µg/L. Eutrophic lakes have moderately high levels of biological productivity.

♦ Nearly 8% of these lakes would be classified as **hypereutrophic**, with TP values greater than 100 µg/L. Hypereutrophic lakes have very high levels of biological productivity.

These patterns suggest that it’s important to consider the range of phosphorus concentrations found in your particular lake region, their seasonal fluctuations, and your waterbody’s trophic state in order to evaluate the feasibility of goals you may set for phosphorus levels in your waterbody.

See the next LAKEWATCH newsletter for information on the role **nitrogen** plays in a lake’s nutrient supply.

* For more information about trophic states, see the LAKEWATCH information pamphlet entitled: Trophic States: A Lake’s Ability to Support Plants, Fish, and Wildlife.

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**Featured Fish: Bluegill ~ Lepomis machrochirus**

Despite the fact that people catch bluegills more than any other freshwater fish, this feisty little sportfish still suffers from an identity crisis. What most folks call a “bream” is in fact a bluegill. (Bream is a generic term used to describe many types of panfish.)

Greenish on the top and sides with dark vertical bars and small amounts of blue and orange colors around the head, the bluegill is a handsome fish. It’s also an important sportfish and excellent food fish.

Bluegills were originally restricted to western and central North America, ranging from coastal Virginia to Florida; west to Texas and northern Mexico; and north to Minnesota and western New York. Currently, bluegills have been transplanted to most other parts of North America, into Europe, and South Africa.

**Biology**

The bluegill may spawn throughout the growing season, which in most years is from February through October in Florida. Pairs nest in colonies with males fanning nests in shallow water, usually less than 1 meter deep. They have diverse food habits including algae, vascular plants, zooplankton, aquatic and terrestrial insects, crayfish, and small fish. A wealth of additional biological information has been published on the bluegill.

Note: Information for this Featured Fish column was excerpted from the Handbook of Common Freshwater Fish in Florida Lakes (Mark V. Hoyer and Daniel E. Canfield, Jr.).
Volunteers Needed in Polk County

Florida LAKEWATCH has recently begun an effort to expand its volunteer base in Polk County — home to some of the best bass fishing and water skiing in the state. Roger Griffiths, with the Lake Regions Lake Management District, is excited about LAKEWATCH’s efforts to expand in that area. “There are hundreds of private lakes within the County that have never been monitored before and that we know very little about.” Volunteers will be trained on a first come, first serve basis. Anyone interested in monitoring a lake in the Polk County area should call John Brenneman at: 941-533-0765.

New Leon County Collection Center

Volunteers living south of I-10 in the Tallahassee area now have a collection center closer to home. Located near the Leon County Fairgrounds, you can drop your samples at the:

Leon County Extension Office
615 Paul Russell Road
Tallahassee, FL 32301
Phone: 850/487-3003
Contact: Cindy Boyer
Hours: Monday - Friday 8 AM - 5 PM

Collection Center Changes in Marion County

The Marion County collection center (US Forest Service Visitor’s Center on Hwy 40) has been closed. A temporary collection center has been designated at the Lake George ranger station, located 7 miles east of the old collection center on Hwy 40. The ranger station is open from 7:30 AM until 4 PM Monday through Friday. It’s closed on federal holidays. Tell the receptionist that you’re a LAKEWATCH volunteer. Remind them that your samples need to be stored in the freezer. This is a temporary collection center until a permanent one can be set up at the Silver River State Park. Questions? Call: 1-800-LAKEWATCH (1-800-525-3928).

Something Buggy at UF

The Florida LAKEWATCH office is fortunate to have a new neighbor these days. The Freshwater Invertebrate Resources Unit of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (formerly the GFC) is now housed right here at the Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences. Laboratory staff Gary Warren and Darrie Hohlt are providing invaluable taxonomic and ecological expertise to UF faculty, staff, students, as well as LAKEWATCH volunteers. Need a mussel, snail, insect, or other mysterious aquatic critter identified? "The bug lab," as we affectionately call it, is a good place to start: (352) 392-9617 ext 279.

Hillsborough Lake Atlas On-line

One more example of how LAKEWATCH data are utilized is now available for you to use and peruse. Hillsborough County’s lake atlas is on-line. The atlas provides one-stop shopping for data acquired from a multitude of sources including Florida LAKEWATCH. Creation of the atlas was a collaborative effort of Hillsborough County, Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) and the University of South Florida’s Center for Community Design and Research. It’s an interactive site that provides bathymetric maps, aquatic plant surveys, rules, regulations, permit information, educational materials, as well as opportunities for feedback from experts. Check it out:

http://www.lakeatlas.usf.edu

Bathymetric maps on the web

Lakefront homeowners, as well as anglers, will be glad to know that for the past several summers, LAKEWATCH has been in the process of generating bathymetric maps for a number of Florida lakes. Even better, the maps are now at your fingertips on the LAKEWATCH web site. The maps have been produced with the help of students working under the supervision of Christy Horsburgh, research assistant for the Florida LAKEWATCH program. There are currently only 45 maps available. However, the number of maps available will continue to grow each year as LAKEWATCH plans to continue its annual summer collection of mapping data and aquatic plant surveys, as funding is made available. For access to the maps, go to the LAKEWATCH web site at:

http://www.ifas.ufl.edu/~lakewatch/index.htm

Bathymetric maps depict physical features of a waterbody such as the contour of the shoreline and water depths at various locations within the waterbody. Bathymetric maps can be used to determine surface area, maximum length, maximum width, total volume of water, and the average and maximum depths. Note: Florida LAKEWATCH bathymetric maps are not intended for navigational use.
Thanks to your support, LAKEWATCH has been able to expand its staff right along with the growing number of lakes entering the program. This summer, the LAKEWATCH program has undergone a re-organization with the addition of two more regional coordinators and the designation of a program leader, Mark Hoyer.

We want to stress that any of our regional coordinators can answer your questions or provide you with data, regardless of whether or not your lake is in their region. (The regions are just our way of dividing up the responsibilities.)

If you don’t know who your regional coordinator is, we encourage you to refer to the chart below and give them a call to get acquainted. You can call our toll-free citizen message line at 1-800-LAKEWATCH (1-800-525-3928) or reach the regional coordinator office directly at (352) 392-4817.

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Recommended Resources

Living at the Lake
By M. Bachmann, M. Hoyer, and D. Canfield, Jr.

Whether you live on a lake or hope to someday, here’s help on how to enjoy the benefits of waterfront living as well as wisdom about the responsibilities that come with it. Living at the Lake, a new book published by the University of Florida’s Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, provides readers with useful advice on how to choose lakeside property, as well as manage it. Several chapters cover regulations that apply to lakeside construction, fishing, boating, hunting, and other water uses. The beautifully illustrated, 182-page resource describes the variety of unique lake-types found in Florida, along with information about the plants and wildlife that inhabit them. A ‘Short Guide to Common Aquatic Plants in Florida’ rounds out this useful resource, along with a handy listing of the agencies and organizations related to lake and/or water management.

Price: $15.00 plus appropriate FL sales tax and $4.00 shipping and handling.

Aquatic Plant ID Deck
By Vic Ramey  Photography by Kerry Dressler, Alison Fox, David Sutton, Jess van Dyke & Karen Brown
This pocket sized field guide (3” X 4”) includes color photographs and information for 67 aquatic and wetland plant species. The deck is laminated and bound with a metal fastener, making it suitable for outdoor use. It’s proven to be extremely popular with lakefront homeowners, amateur and professional naturalists, teachers, scientists — anyone that’s a freshwater enthusiast.

Price: $10.00 plus appropriate FL sales tax and $4 shipping and handling.

Grasses, Sedges and Rushes of Wetlands ID Deck
By Vic Ramey   Photography by Ann Murray
This handy field guide and/or desk reference for wetlands and wildlife managers, naturalists and outdoor enthusiasts, waterfront homeowners and science teachers. The laminated 3” X 4” card deck is designed for in-the-field identification of 84 species (including 11 non-native species) of grasses, sedges and rushes. Each plant is illustrated with color photographs, line drawings and reader friendly text. Notes about how these plants are utilized by wildlife such as ducks, cranes, geese, rabbits and deer are invaluable to the wildlife manager or lake manager. Pages are bound together by two easy-to-open bindery rings, allowing for easy use. Price: $12.00 plus appropriate FL sales tax and $4 shipping and handling.

Free Information About Aquatic, Invasive, or Wetland Plants
The University of Florida’s Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants might have a new name (formerly the Center for Aquatic Plants) but it continues to be a one-stop shop for information about aquatic, wetland and invasive plants.

It’s also the home of APIRS, an aquatic plant information retrieval system (library) that houses over 46,000 references. The collection is mostly comprised of scientific articles from peer reviewed journals, but also includes books, agency reports, and proceedings of research conferences. Articles are available concerning chemical control methods (herbicides), biological control methods (plant eating fish, insects, or pathogens), and mechanical control methods (machines) as well as all other aspects of aquatic and wetland plant science.

Anyone can contact APIRS for a free literature search list about aquatic and wetland plants. Copies of up to 10 documents from the APIRS library are available for research purposes. The library, located in Gainesville, is also open to the public during normal working hours. Inquiring minds with access to the Internet can do their own literature search on the APIRS database via their web site. The web site itself is a gold mine of information about aquatic, invasive, and wetland plants. The Center also offers a newsletter, AQUAPHYTE, published twice a year. The newsletter is on-line at the APIRS website or the printed version can be subscribed to for free. For more information, contact:

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**Happy Campers at Hillsborough County’s Lake Day**

Many happy aquatic gardeners went home with handfuls of free macrophytes (another word for aquatic plants) from a recent Hillsborough County Lake Day, held on May 22. LAKEWATCH volunteers, Adopt-a-Pond volunteers and the general public were invited for a day of fun in the sun on Lake Crescent at Camp Keystone in Odessa. Activities included fish and aquatic plant displays, a fishing derby for kids, fish fry, water skiing demonstrations and even water sampling races via canoes. You’ll be glad to know that while the LAKEWATCH staff didn’t win 1st place, they did score big points in technique and also accomplished their main objective of not flipping the canoe!

The free aquatic plants were made available to Lake Day participants thanks to the Hillsborough County Public Works Department and the fishing derby was organized by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission (formerly the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission).