



FLMS Newsletter

www.FLMS.net Winter 2019

Florida Lake Management Society
Managing Florida's Water Resources

President's Message



FLMS President, Robbin Huffines

Greetings to all our fantastic water resource managers,

It seems like it was just a few weeks ago that we were all watching Hurricane Dorian and wrapping up our symposium in the Keys. I would like to thank Rob Burnes for putting together another fantastic program and the entire FLMS board for all their hard work pulling off another great event. I would also like to thank all our attendees and sponsors; without all your support none of this would be possible. If you were not able to make the 2019 symposium, mark your calendars for August 25th – 28th for the 2020 symposium in Estero.

As I think back to the program at Hawks Cay and all the great speakers and presentations that we had, the variety of topics was striking but everything tied back to the common theme of Florida's water quality. It seems anytime that I see a story on the news it is usually focused on one narrow problem and the narrative that if we could only fix that one thing everything would change. All of Florida's aquatic and marine systems are so closely linked that even little changes in one system can impact all of them as our waters all ultimately head off our coast.

While I believe our membership is well aware of this, I think we need to do a better job of getting this message out to the public. It is easy to blame Lake Okeechobee, failing septic tanks, high nutrient reclaimed water, golf courses, and agriculture and think someone else needs to do something. The reality is we can all do something. We can all be responsible with fertilizer use, pick up after our pets, and not over water our yards. Communities with storm water ponds and lakes can plant native shoreline buffers and work to reduce nutrients in these ponds before it flows off their property. Ensuring proper use and maintenance of irrigation systems that utilize reclaimed water to keep this water out of our lakes and street drains is vital. These are only a few examples, but the list goes on and on.

Over the last ten years I do hear more and more individual homeowners that are concerned with water quality and how they can help make things better, so the message is getting out there. I think all of us as resource managers need to take every opportunity that we can to continue to get this message out to the public. The more that we can educate them and have them get involved and help with the little things, the more likely they all are to support larger public projects in their community and across the state. This communication helps all of us continue to do the great work that we do and have the funding and support that we all need for future projects to protect and restore Florida's wonderful water resources.

Let's set a goal and get as many people involved and onboard with doing as much as they can individually to be a part of the solution and I think we will all have a great 2020!

Robin

FLMS Conference 2020 and Upcoming Events!

**It's never too early to start thinking about our next conference!
Mark your calendars for August 26th-28th 2020, with pre-
symposium workshops on August 25th at the Hyatt Place
Coconut Point in Estero Florida.**



The North West FLMS chapter is hopeful for a mini-conference in the Spring of 2020, post-graduation. Stay tuned for details and updates!

Due to the popularity and high attendance of the location, the 2021 FLMS annual conference will again be held at Hawks Cay, in the Florida Keys. Conference registration rates will then increase from its current \$260 to \$350. In 2022, the Annual Conference will be held in the Florida panhandle.

The Karl Havens Scholarship Fund



Dr. Karl Havens

On April 26, 2019, Florida lost one of our most noteworthy scientists, Dr. Karl Havens. Many professionals, researchers, activists and students knew Karl as a person who provided opportunities to study and advance the knowledge of aquatic systems. At the time of his departure, he was the Director of the Florida Sea Grant College Program and Professor at the University of Florida with 35 years of experience in aquatic research, education and outreach. Previously he worked at the South Florida Water Management District focusing on the water quality and ecology on the Everglades watershed. In 2018, he was the keynote speaker at the FLMS annual symposium and was the recipient in 1999 of the Edward Deevey, Jr. Award from the Florida Lake Management Society. In recognition of his dedication to the study and his support to students who investigate freshwater systems, the FLMS board of directors has created the Karl Havens Student Scholarship Fund. This fund will help finance the research for those who seek the scientific answers that Karl was in search of as well. A designated amount (starting in 2020 with \$5,000) will be granted to a graduate student who is enrolled in academic studies. The study shall be related to freshwater ecosystems in the state of Florida. To know more information, application dates and forms, refer to the FLMS website under Scholarships and Grants.

From Golf Course to Community Park

Built in 1926, Rolling Hills Golf Club was one of Central Florida's oldest golf courses and a premier course in its heyday. As with many golf courses throughout the country, the owners became interested in selling the property to a developer rather than maintaining costly fairways and greens. Seminole County expressed interest in transforming the property into a community park, and pursued approval from the state to lift development restrictions because the land was purchased with a \$1.7 million state grant. Seminole County successfully received the approval and land acquisition. The parcel was in neglect after years of abandonment, and the lake/ponds were overrun with invasive vegetation and algae.

The restoration of the Rolling Hills ponds has thus far spanned over 6 months of excavation and replanting. Restoration efforts have included: installation of berm and swales, planting of native vegetation, treatment of hydrilla and algae, bioswale designs, redesign of stormwater systems, and installation of an aeration fountain.



On June 8th, 2019, a community-based restoration event drew 55 volunteers, who helped to install 5,000 native aquatic plants (1500 pickerelweed, 1500 duck potato, 400 golden canna, 400 fire flag, 400 soft rush, 400 spike rush, 400 iris). Over 9,500 additional aquatic plants were provided and installed by EarthBalance. The plantings are thriving today.



Volunteers help restore native vegetation to their new community park.

The grand opening for Rolling Hills Community Park is planned for spring 2020. While the park continues to be refurbished, the newly revegetated ponds are already in use by citizens enjoying walks along the trails, and new waterfowl continue to join the local wildlife. We look forward to a flourishing future for this valuable community resource.



Transplanted vegetation continues to thrive in and around Rolling Hills ponds.

Restoring Mirror Lake

On weekends in the spring and fall, the Seminole County Lake Management Program (LMP), the Seminole Education, Restoration, and Volunteer (SERV) Program, and local residents partner to hold shoreline planting events to improve water quality and wildlife habitat in Seminole County lakes and ponds. Most recently, on October 12th, 2019, LMP, SERV, and lake residents organized a shoreline restoration event at Mirror Lake, a natural waterbody with a surface area of 31.68 acres, located in the Little Wekiva Watershed in the southwest part of Seminole County, Florida.



Ariel view of Mirror Lake



Volunteers planting pickerelweed

The three-hour restoration event drew 69 volunteers from the community, including participants from Casselberry Elementary School, Girl Scout Troop 1815, Hagerty High School Science National Honor Society, Solitude Lake Management, South Seminole Middle School, and the University of Central Florida (Volunteer UCF, UCF chapter of the American Society of Civil Engineers, and Environmental Science students). LMP/SERV staff and volunteer assistants led the group in planting seven sites around the lake with a total of 1,400 native shoreline plants: 500 pickerelweed, 500 duck potato, 100 iris, 100 soft rush, 100 golden canna, 50 swamp lily, and 50 fire flag.



Mirror lake residents first formed a lake resident network and organized a Municipal Service Benefit Unit (MSBU) in 2006 to fund lake management services including aquatic weed control and lake restoration activities. The MSBU Program of Seminole County provides management of the assessment districts that are established for funding various local improvements and services within the unincorporated boundaries of Seminole County. Since the formation of the MSBU, there have been a total of 4 shoreline planting events (10/23/2010, 10/22/2011, 10/20/2018, 10/12/2019). Each event has expanded upon previous planting efforts, and has introduced new planting areas around the lake. Along with educational outreach, these efforts will continue to improve water quality with the establishment healthy shoreline vegetation that filters polluted run-off into the lake and provides resources for birds, fish, amphibians and reptiles.

Volunteers interested in joining future waterway restoration efforts can read more about the opportunities online (<http://www.seminolecountyfl.gov/serv>), or sign-up for specific events at <http://SERVProgram.eventbrite.com>. Shoreline restoration projects will resume at the end of March, 2020. Winter volunteer options include invasive plant removal activities such as the “Weed Wrangle”, storm drain marking, and litter clean-ups. Contact Elizabeth Stephens at serv@seminolecountyfl.gov or 407-665-2457 with any questions.

Our Mission

The mission of the Florida Lake Management Society is to promote protection, enhancement, conservation, restoration, and management of Florida’s aquatic resources; provide a forum for education and information exchange; and advocate environmentally sound and economically feasible lake and aquatic resource management for the citizens of Florida.
