

On July 1, 1977, the Florida Legislature enacted Chapter 77-369, Laws of Florida, establishing the Water Resources Restoration and Preservation program within the Department of Environmental Regulation. This legislation, now Section 403.061 of the Florida Statutes, also provided for combined funding from the state's general revenue, monies available from the Pollution Recovery Trust Fund, and federal funds. By passage of this bill, the scope of the former "Office of Lake Restoration" was broadened to include rehabilitation and improvement of all of Florida's water resources: lakes, wetlands, estuaries, streams and aquifers.

Thus far the Water Resources Restoration and Preservation program (WRR&P) has supported, entirely or in part, twelve restoration projects:

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| *Lake Apopka, Orange and Lake Counties | - environmental impact statement being written; engineering design ongoing |
| *Lake Jackson, Leon County | - monitoring continuing; engineering complete; negotiations for land acquisition underway |
| Lake Lulu, Polk County | - feasibility study ongoing; final report due 6/30/78 |
| Lake Washington, Brevard County | - water quality data being gathered by Florida Institute of Technology |
| Sanibel River, Lee County | - salinity weir to minimize saltwater intrusion; construction complete |
| Lake Carlton, Orange and Lake Counties | - restoration by drawdown; completion anticipated before 6/30/78 |
| Cape Coral, Lee County | - well plugging operation to halt degradation of Hawthorne Aquifer; completion anticipated before 6/30/78 |
| Bayou Chico, Escambia County | - environmental assessment by F.S.U. completed; dredging to remove contaminated sediments expected to begin before 6/30/78 |
| Bayou Texar, Escambia County | - hydrological study completed; area will be dredged in accordance with recommendations of study; dredging expected to begin before 6/30/78 |
| Pond Creek, Santa Rosa County | - restoration of Pond Creek watershed at Chumuckla |

Big Hickory Pass, Lee
County

- 9-month hydrographic
study underway

*Lake Eola, Orange County

- feasibility study to
include stormwater
treatment underway

*receiving matching federal funds

Certainly the largest and most complex project the section is working on is the Lake Apopka Restoration Project. While a pump-assisted lake drawdown has been suggested for this 48-square mile lake, special precautions would have to be taken to prevent the possibility of frost damage to adjacent citrus groves, to provide irrigation water to adjacent farms, and to minimize the damage to downstream areas.

The Environmental Protection Agency has advised DER that an Environmental Impact Statement is required for the proposed Lake Apopka restoration. Therefore, during March of this year, EPA and the WRR&P section of DER began work on the preparation of a joint EPA/DER Environmental Impact Statement. The EIS preparation process is under a very stringent time frame, with the Final EIS scheduled to be filed in the first part of 1979.

Included as a part of the EIS process will be an active public involvement program. As presently outlined, this program will include the publication of newspaper and magazine articles, the presentation of slides and films to civic and environmental groups and the distribution of brochures explaining Lake Apopka and its water quality problems. A Citizens Review Panel will be appointed to focus attention on the project and to bring about public understanding of the restoration approach.

As the first step in the EIS process, a public meeting was held in Eustis on March 7, 1978. Out of the 100-member audience, fourteen people requested to address comments to the EPA and DER panel members. The great majority of those who spoke favored a restoration of the 31,000-acre lake and encouraged speedy action on the part of the governmental agencies.

If you wish to contact the Water Resources Restoration and Preservation staff, they can be reached at:

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