

OFFICE OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
P.O. Box 522

December 22, 1967

Mr. C. W. Sheffield
Chairman-Technical Committee
Lake Apopka Restoration Committee
Orlando, Florida

Dear Mr. Sheffield:

I noted with pleasure that Governor Claude R. Kirk, Jr., in a recent speech before the Florida Park and Recreation Convention at Miami Beach, stated he is planning for the State to purchase additional land for park and recreation development starting in January, 1968.

Since the Lake Apopka Restoration Committee has given some consideration to establishing a recreational park in the Gourdneck Springs area, we urge you as chairman of the Technical Committee to request Governor Kirk to consider purchasing sufficient land in the Gourdneck Springs area for a recreational park and to give this high priority so the land may be secured before it is used for housing or some other type of development. There are no other natural underground springs and there is ample high and low vacant lands in the confines of Lake Apopka suitable for development of a recreational park that could include swimming, fishing, boating, camping and picnic facilities.

About 1960-61, through the efforts and sponsorship of the Winter Garden Chamber of Commerce, a non-profit organization was formed and chartered under the name of Gourdneck Springs Park Association which was organized for the purpose of establishing a State Park in the Gourdneck Springs area. The Gourdneck Springs Park Association had the endorsement of the Orlando Sentinel, The Winter Garden Times, Orange County Committee of 100, Florida Federated Garden Clubs and many other sports and civic organizations. For approximately two years this association made many attempts during former Governor Farris Bryant's administration to get the State Park Board to establish a recreational park in the Gourdneck Springs area. The Park's Board made some preliminary studies and agreed the Gourdneck Springs area was centrally located to serve the populated areas of Orange County and Central Florida and was suitable for development into a park.

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There are very few, if any, natural springs left such as Gourdneck Springs that still remain undeveloped. There still remains over 150 acres of high grounds and low grounds surrounding Gourdneck Springs that is undeveloped, in Orange Groves, or that is low lands that could be purchased by the State at a fair price. There is some consideration by the present land owners to make some of the high lands of the springs area into a high-class residential development. Our contention is, if this area is ever developed in houses, the state will have lost any hopes of ever using the Gourdneck Springs for recreational development as cost factors would be prohibitive.

For these and many other reasons too numerous to mention, we feel Governor Kirk, as part of his Lake Apopka restoration plans should give the highest of his priorities in securing recreational land to that of securing the Gourdneck Springs area before it is lost forever to commercial development.

As a representative of the Winter Garden Chamber of Commerce serving the West Orange County areas and some of Lake County and knowing the needs of additional recreational facilities to serve the ever increasing population of the Central Florida area, I feel it important and urgent that the Gourdneck Springs site be in some legal way preserved for future development of recreational facilities.

Trusting you and the Technical Committee shares in these views and will at the first opportunity make appropriate recommendations to Governor Kirk to give top priority to acquiring the Gourdneck Springs area land before it is too late.

Sincerely yours,

Arthur W. Sinclair
Executive Secretary-Mgr.

AWS/sp
cc: Mr. Nathaniel Reed