

C O P Y

KILLARNEY COURT  
KILLARNEY, FLORIDA

JUNE 19, 1963.

Mr. Henry F. Swanson  
Orange County Agricultural Agent  
Orlando, Florida.

Dear Mr. Swanson:

It was with great satisfaction that I received a copy of your brochure entitled A to Z. Much of the factual information is here presented for the first time as a single source.

This brochure presents an unusual opportunity to pose new questions and challenge some of the answers presented here for the unwary.

Do not be surprised that the resort owners realize how close their water level aims are to those of the farmers. The actual difference in minimum levels, for instance seems to be just six inches. This six inches is to the resort operator the most important six inches in lake levels because it creates or destroys the shore line shelf where the game fish spawn, the critical point being about  $66\frac{1}{2}$  feet.

Now let's examine the report.

On page two under "New Era", it is stated that an additional loan was necessary because of high water damage in 1959-1960. Please note that the absence of prudent routine maintenance was the cause of damage, but the water level was blamed. Note also that page 6 states the levee is maintained at 70 feet and that year the lake level reached only 68.4 feet.

May I comment that the District's engineer would probably take better care of this type protection if his taxpayers would let him. District tax of \$17 to \$18 per acre is not bad for an income of about \$531 per acre. This provides for cleaning and regulating and pumping the canals and also for maintaining the levee. It seems to me that the district should be spending at least that much on the levee alone. This dike is the only means for separating 9,000 acres of Lake Apopka's original 40,000 acres from the remaining 31,000 acres that have been left to uphold nature's intent. It would appear that the major budgetary item could well be to keep the 9,000 acres separated, because this dike bears the responsibility for making possible the \$8,500,000 detailed on page 14.

On page 6 of "A to Z" is a statement that the average height of Lake Apopka was 66.1 feet to 67 feet based on the years 1946 to 1955. Right here, someone needs to make a point. The property owners of West Orange County built, with donated funds, a weir-dam for the expressed purpose of raising the lake to a more desirable level. Later, then, they saw to the creation of a tax district and eventually a permanent water control structure so that the water level WOULD BE maintained at a higher point.

On page 6 the question is "Why should farming interests be concerned with a lake level above 67 feet M.S.L.?" Lets try another answer just for kicks. The dikes are at 70 feet, three feet above 67 feet. The greatest fastest rise on record, and this was without an improved channel, was 2.42 feet from June 1, to

October 1, 1945. You can discharge in 21 days one foot. It seems to me there should be no more worry at 67 feet. Again, let's remember page 7 says that the highest recorded level was 69.3 feet, a record unlikely to be challenged with the improved channel and provisions for positive overflow built in the control structure at 67½ feet.

Let's face some of the "Fallacies" spoken of on page 9. After fifteen years making my living on the shore of Lake Apopka, I'll agree that there are periodically some kills of gizzard shad. These deaths are normal, but the number is normally small. This year it is nothing like normal, and neither does it appear normal the amount of airplane applied sprays and dusts when the wind is blowing toward the lake. Yes, you can see it clearly 8½ miles across open water.

On June 12, at the request of the governor's office there was a conference in Orlando attended by experts in many fields and aimed at finding the reason for the fish kills. True, some of the experts stated they didn't think it was insecticide, but the conference DID NOT RULE OUT INSECTICIDE. Too many intelligent people have been sprayed and dusted in their boats and have seen dead turtles and fish and snakes and rabbits on the shores adjacent to the farms to be easily put off. These men won't be likely to dismiss insecticide.

To sum up, no intelligent person would fail to appreciate the economic value of those agricultural interests to our Central Florida community. However, no one can honestly say that any group of businessmen capable of producing \$8½ million in our community should be permitted to take advantage of other property owners who depend on the fairness of our public servants to keep watch over our rights and natural resources. Conversely, why should other taxpayers assist that group in keeping up the dikes they built for the protection of no one but themselves?

Why should this group be permitted to even take a chance of killing the state's fish with their \$289,000 worth of spray annually?

Why not require a settling basin at the pumphouse to entrap the light solids which now are forming a dike in the lake. By cleaning this basin periodically, much muck should be recovered and maybe some of the dissolved fertilizer out of the \$289,000 annual fertilizer bill.

Again, we the resort operators thank the Agriculture department for this endeavor to enlighten us. It has done so. But, does not this report seem biased?

We'd rather call it APOPKA to ZERO.

Respectfully,

R. W. SHERMAN

*Killany seal  
(A) a portulacine can you  
John A Popke*