

SAVE OUR LAKES



SEPTEMBER 2018/Volume 18, Issue 9

THE DOCKS TELL THE STORY!...



The docks have told the story for decades! Most docks on our lakes have not seen water touching the pilings in twenty years. It's great to drive over the bridge on Hwy. 21 and see not just water, but water under the docks!

Most definitely, the rains help saturate the surface. However, if the surface is allowed to get so dry, it takes a lot of rain and time before any benefit is seen. Think of a sponge...if it's dry and parched, water just runs off and the sponge stays dry. June of last year saw record rainfall in the Keystone area, but Alligator Creek was still dry. It took Hurricane Irma to finally saturate the surface of the Creek to allow flow...and benefit to our lakes. Since that time, rainfall has been sufficient to keep Alligator Creek flowing...and the lakes continue to see benefit. We all recognize the benefit of rain to our lakes. What the docks have told us in the past when water was so far away...this can't be **just** lack of rain! In past decades, the lakes would ebb and flow along with dry and rainy seasons. Something more must be happening...or not happening. The SJRWMD started looking at what was really happening and why.

SJRWMD graphs of both Lake Brooklyn and Geneva levels indicate the typical ebb and flow caused by dry and wet seasons. However, in the mid-1970s, a steady decline across both lakes began to show up. Lake Geneva's decline was more evident due to the lack of water flowing out of Lake Brooklyn into Lake Geneva. It's not just rainfall...something more was going on. The local community started looking into what was happening. Rumors were flying...but some locals (Rob Bamford, Chester Moody, and Phil Baumgardner to name a few of the early folks) began digging into data, records...anything they could find to try to get to the bottom of the mystery.

SAVE OUR LAKES ORGANIZATION, INC.

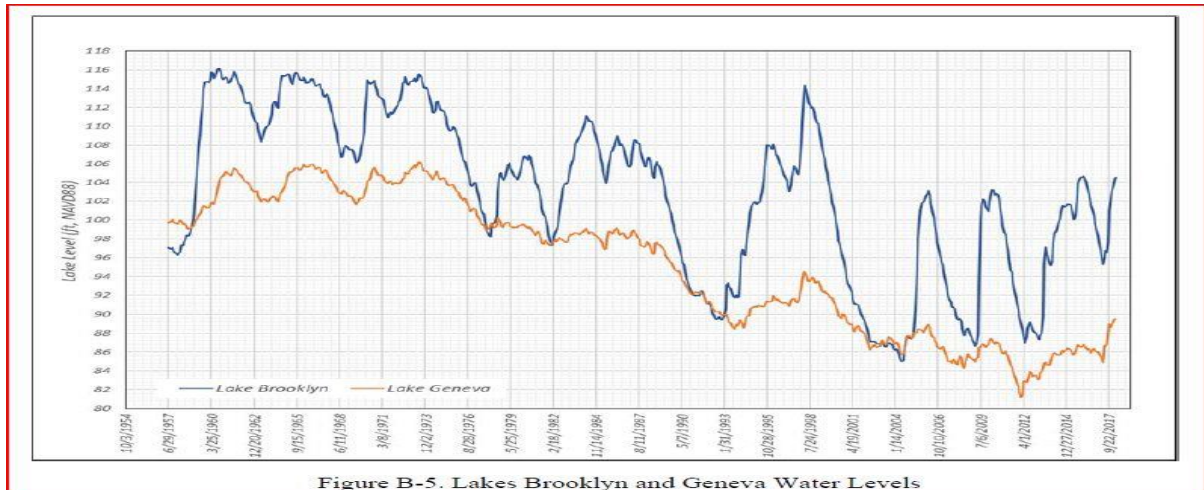
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President: Vivian Katz – Vice President: Chandler Rozear – Treasurer: Carol Rozear

Board Members: Webb Farber, Glenda Harper, Sue Plaster, Robert Thomas, Dr. Pat Welsh

DOES PROGRESS MEAN OUR LAKES MUST GO DRY??!



The results of their efforts pointed to an additional cause of lowering lake levels. It wasn't "all rain". It became apparent that SJRWMD was issuing CUPs (Consumptive Use Permits) allowing millions of gallons of water (each day) to be pumped from the Floridan Aquifer. This is NOT a bad thing. People and businesses need water to operate (literally). What we also learned in this process was the Keystone Heights area lakes provide major recharge to our Floridan Aquifer! Something had to be done to protect not just our lakes...but the Floridan Aquifer...our drinking water!

The SJRWMD was given the job of establishing that protection mechanism. In the mid-1990s, the Water Districts were under a great deal of pressure to come up with a level for specific lakes where pumping (not lack of rain) would cause harm. That protection mechanism is called an MFL (Minimum Flow Level). The Water Districts in Florida are required to set MFLs on specific water bodies throughout the state of Florida and are required to review those MFLs periodically.

The SJRWMD cannot control rainfall, so why set MFLs on Lakes Brooklyn and Geneva? The MFL is set to protect the lakes from over pumping not lack of rain. There are many BIG water users in northeast Florida...utilities, sand mines and agriculture to name a few. An example: JEA (Jacksonville Electric Authority) is permitted to pump approximately 150mgd (million gallons a day) from the Floridan Aquifer. That doesn't mean JEA actually pumps that much every day, but they can. In fact, they can pump MORE than that a day – as long as their reported average is 150mgd or less. Now think about hitting a period of dry weather...what happens...people turn on their sprinklers to water their lawns...and JEA pumps MORE water to accommodate. This is where the protection mechanism (MFL) is supposed to kick in to SAVE OUR LAKES!

Fast forward to a SJRWMD Governing Board meeting in the fall of 2010...Lake Geneva's MFL was on their agenda. It was time for review. Lake Brooklyn would be reviewed the following year. The original MFLs for Lake Geneva (98.5ft.NGVD) and Lake Brooklyn (101ft.NGVD) were set in the mid-1990s. These were pretty good numbers for both lakes. If the "protection mechanism" had been enforced, when the lakes fell below their MFL, projects would have been undertaken to offset the pumping effect (not the rain). Projects could have meant more conservation efforts for everyone, water reuse projects, and others as science caught up with water supply and demand. Those projects would have certainly affected the big water users and some of the "big CUP holders" (i.e. utilities) started crying foul. They put pressure on the Water District to lower the MFLs on Lake Geneva from 98.5 ft to 83ft (15.5ft lower) and Lake Brooklyn from 101ft to 81ft (20 ft. lower). Fortunately, one of the SJRWMD Governing Board members said..."have you talked with the folks in Keystone about what's about to happen"...SOLO was in the audience at that Board meeting. The answer was a resounding NO! Lowering the MFLs that drastically had the potential to literally put the nail in the coffin for the community of Keystone Heights.

SOLO has been working with the City of Keystone Heights, Clay County our State officials and the SJRWMD for eight years now. The MFLs for Lake Brooklyn and Lake Geneva are currently under review. We have been meeting with Water District staff, bringing our concerns to the Governing Board and staying focused on this MFL issue. While it may seem a bit innocuous, these numbers can literally drive the future of our lake community! The Water District staff will bring their MFL Reports for Brooklyn and Geneva for Governing Board approval by the end of 2018 or early 2019.

We will keep our SOLO members and the community informed. We also will be sending out a "**RED SHIRT ALERT**" when Lake Brooklyn and Lake Geneva's MFLs are on the SJRWMD Governing Board's agenda! Please be alert and be available.



GET INVOLVED IN 2018!!
SEPTEMBER 2018 - Calendar

Please join us in our efforts to Save Our Lakes - Save The Aquifer!

*SJRWMD BOARD MEETING-SEPTEMBER 11th, 2:45pm-District Headquarter, Palatka

*CLAY COUNTY COM. MTG-SEPTEMBER 11th - 4pm (time change) - Green Cove Springs

➔ **S.O.L.O. MEETING- SEPTEMBER 11th, 7p.m., 1st Baptist Church/KH**

*******IF YOU'RE NOT A SOLO MEMBER, JOIN TODAY!*******

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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION or RENEWAL

RENEWAL OR NEW MEMBER? (Circle One)

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PLEASE SEND THIS FORM ALONG WITH YOUR ANNUAL DUES CHECK FOR \$25.00 PAYABLE TO: SAVE OUR LAKES ORG., P.O. BOX 185, KEYSTONE HEIGHTS, FL32656. WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU AT FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF K.H. (Hwy. 100, just east of Hwy. 21), 7PM.

PLEASE SELECT ONE: SEND MONTHLY NEWSLETTER BY (US MAIL OR EMAIL)?

Save Our Lakes Organization, Inc.
P.O. Box 185
Keystone Heights, FL 32656



Logo by: Graham E. Kestner

NEXT SOLO MEETING: SEPTEMBER 11th -7p.m. -FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF K.H.

S.O.L.O. NEWSLETTER PRINTING BY FABCO-AIR. THANK YOU FABCO-AIR!



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2018

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