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WHAT HAPPENED TO OUR LAKES...AND WHY?

WHAT HAPPENED TO OUR LAKES – The community of Keystone Heights (K.H.), known as the “Lake Region” was literally founded by people (most from northern states) seeking a beautiful place to call home. The area offered a mild climate and beautiful lakes for fishing, boating, swimming and family gatherings. Homes were built around the area lakes and, naturally, a business community began to develop. The K.H. Lake Region became a thriving community. In the early 1970s, the lakes began to decline. Even though lakes would have some recovery during rainy periods, area lake levels were no longer stable and a steady overall decline began.

WHY?

The thought for many years – “it’s all rain”. NOT TRUE! It has taken many years of research and scientific study to finally prove that theory wrong. As in any region, periods of heavy rain or draught have consequences. Lakes flood and recede. The difference, the K.H. area lakes no longer experience real recovery during rainy periods but DO continue to recede. So...WHY?

A particularly heavy rainy season in the early 1970s caused road closures and flooding of many homes in the area. The governor took action to “help” the flooding situation. An earthen dam was quickly constructed at the outflow of one of the area lakes to “stop” flooding conditions. This drastically changed the natural water flow through the “Etonia Chain of Lakes” – the main body of lakes in the K.H. area.

Water Management Districts (WMD) were formed to “manage” Florida’s water. The St. Johns River Water Management District is the WMD for the K.H. area lakes. These WMDs issue Consumptive Use Permits (CUPs) to businesses who use large quantities of water in their operations. As north and central Florida has developed, CUPs have been issued for billions of gallons of water. As lakes declined, the WMDs began to study the problem...their scientists concurred that “excess” pumping was causing some of the decline in area lakes and springs. CUPs were approved and issued making it all “legal”.

Science and research has now begun to shed light on WHY our lake levels continue to decline. It’s NOW time to do something about it. That’s WHY **Save Our Lakes Organization, Inc.** was formed.