

# SAVE OUR LAKES



DECEMBER 2021 Volume 21, Issue 12

## MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM SAVE OUR LAKES!



**Sailboats are best seen on a lake but this one has been relegated to annual duty as a Christmas decoration.** Perhaps it is anticipating the return of water to the Keystone area lakes and the recharge of the Floridan Aquifer underneath them. Unlike the previous decades, when there was little hope of water returning to Keystone's lakes, much has happened this last year for which we in the Save Our Lakes Organization (SOLO) are truly grateful!

In the **December 2020** newsletter, we reported that the St Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD or District ) Governing Board (Board) directed the District staff to update them on the progress of the Black Creek Water Resource Project at the December Board meeting. This indicated their strong interest in seeing effective actions taken resulting in the timely completion of the project.

It was also reported that the "Site Specific Alternative Criteria" proposed by the District which would have allowed Lake Brooklyn to be reclassified from a clear water to a dark water lake (tannin stained) was not approved by the EPA. While it previously had been strongly suggested that this might effectively shut the project down, (We had been told: "Dark water or no water!"), the District's Project Engineers, CDM Smith, were now directed to provide a report at the January Governing Board meeting on treatment systems and system providers that could produce the water clarification required for EPA permitting.



In the **January 2021** newsletter, we described how the work on the Keystone Beach Pavilion Renovation Project was nearing completion. We also learned that, to meet permitting requirements, the incoming water from Black Creek, after treatment, would have to equal that of the water in Alligator Creek. The expected treatment area would be at the discharge end of the system near Alligator Creek and Treat Road on Camp Blanding. A "passive" treatment system seemed the likely choice.

It was noted that the modeling for the re-evaluated Minimum Flows and Levels (MFLs) for the lakes indicated that neither lake would meet their required levels. Therefore, a recovery plan must be put in place simultaneously with the adoption of the MFLs by the Governing Board.



**SAVE OUR LAKES ORGANIZATION, INC.**

**P.O. BOX 185, KEYSTONE HEIGHTS, FL 32656**

**EMAIL:** [save-our-lakes@comcast.net](mailto:save-our-lakes@comcast.net) - **WEBPAGE:** [www.saveourlakes.org](http://www.saveourlakes.org)

**President:** Vivian James — **Vice President:** Chandler Rozear — **Secretary/Treasurer:** Susan Welsh

**Board Members:** Webb Farber, Glenda Harper, Scott Slater, Dr. Pat Welsh

In the **February 2021** newsletter, we reported on what it would take to change the dark water of Black Creek into water matching or exceeding the water quality of Alligator Creek in Color, Lead, Nitrogen, Organic Carbon and Phosphorus. The District reported various proposed systems advantages, disadvantages, Operations & Maintenance and Life Cycle costs and the Board approved a Pilot Study for the treatment of water directly drawn from Black Creek.

The **March 2021** newsletter included a letter by SOLO Board Member Webb Farber sent to the Lake Region Monitor in response to a Monitor article by Clay County Utilities Authority (CCUA) Executive Director Jeremy Johnston, who pledged to oppose the Proposed MFLs which he considered “not economically sustainable.” In his reasoned response, Webb concluded by saying that he could not see how the utilities could justify seizing the water resources that are Keystone’s so as to only temporarily maintain their profits and keep their water costs low.



The **Revised Minimum Flows and Levels (MFLs)** for Lakes Brooklyn and Geneva went before the Board on **April 13, 2021** and were given their initial approval along with the required **Recovery Strategy**. The **North Florida Utility Coordinating Group (NFUCG)**, while generally supportive of the Black Creek Project, expressed their concerns about the impact that this would have on their operations and customers and that they needed more time to properly evaluate these impacts. In response, Board Chairman General Douglas Burnett and Vice Chairman Rob Bradley spoke forcefully in support of the MFLs, the Black Creek Project and the recovery of the Keystone area lakes.



In spite of a legal petition filed by the NFUCG requesting an Administrative Hearing against the MFLs and Recovery Plan, at the **May 11, 2021** Board Meeting, the Board gave its final approval to the MFLs and Lakes Recovery Plan. The District was also moving forward on the Black Creek Project on several fronts, not waiting on the results of negotiations with the utilities on their contributions to the project. The negotiations between the District and the Utilities were long and difficult but finally came to a favorable conclusion for all.

At the **July 13, 2021** Governing Board Meeting, SOLO, the District and the Utilities sang each others praises as the Utilities dropped their legal challenge against the MFLs and the Recovery Plan and agreed to a plan by which they would financially support the Black Creek Project. This took away a huge impediment to the project going forward. That evening, at the first SOLO member meeting since March 10, 2020, Vivian Katz James was approved to resume her role as President of SOLO.



We learned in **August 2021** that the EPA had issued a notice of their concerns about the Draft National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit and the ability of the proposed SWIG PES Biofiltration System to remove the needed levels of all of the required pollutants. With data forth coming from the Pilot Test, the District and its Project Engineers were preparing their responses. The project schedule, already behind, slipped even more. As of **September 9, 2021**, Dr. Ann Shortelle retired from her duties as the Executive Director of the SJRWMD. Without Dr. Shortelle having been at the District these last few years, it is unlikely that we would be now looking forward to the recovery of our lakes. Mike Register, P.E., a 31 year employee of the District and a long time friend to SOLO, was chosen by the Board to replace her. We look forward to working with him in the years to come to help restore our lakes.



**January is upon us and it's time for everyone to renew their SOLO Memberships for 2022! Just use this convenient form.**

# BLACK CREEK WATER RESOURCE PROJECT SCHEDULE ??

The Schedule has slipped significantly over this last year. In December 2020, construction was hoped to start September 2021. The latest word from the Project Manager is: "We have been focused on responding to EPA comments on the Draft NPDES permit. The draft Pilot Study report is being prepared and when it is final we can post to the website." Of course, these hurdles are frustrating to all of us who have been waiting for decades for our lakes to be restored but water is coming. In January an updated schedule will be provided and likely new challenges be found to overcome. The previous schedule update is below.

- July 2021 – Draft NPDES Permit issued by FDEP.
- July 2021 – Submit Draft ERP application to FDEP.
- October 2021 – EPA Comments on Draft NPDES Permit.
- October 2021 – Submit ERP application to FDEP.
- November 2021 – Pilot Study report.
- November 2021 – District sends response to EPA
- December 2021 – FDEP issue Notice of Intent (NOI) for NPDES Permit to District.
- December 2021 – District publish NOI for NPDES Permit (14-

- day petition period).
- January 2021 – NPDES Permit Issuance.
- January 2021 – ERP Permit Issuance.
- February 2022 – USACE 404 Permit issuance.
- March 2022 – Construction Bid (Phase 1 – Pipeline).
- April 2022 – Award Construction Contract Phase 1 (GB).
- June 2022 – Begin Phase 1 Construction.
- June 2022 – Construction Bid (Phase 2 – Intake/Pump Station/Treatment/Recharge).
- July 2022 – Award Construction Contract Phase 2 (GB).

NPDES = National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System  
 FDEP = Fla. Dept. of Environmental Protection  
 ERP = Environmental Resource Permit  
 EPA = Environmental Protection Agency (Federal)

NOI = Notice of Intent  
 USACE = U.S. Army Corps of Engineers  
 GB = Governing Board (SJRWMD)

**SJRWMD GOVERNING BOARD Mtg. 9:00 AM Tues., 12/14/2021 at the Palatka Office**  
**\*VERIFY\* on website: [www.sjrwmd.com/governingboard/](http://www.sjrwmd.com/governingboard/) (Live Streaming is available)**

## MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION and RENEWAL FORM

(Please Check) **RENEWAL**  **NEW MEMBER**

Cut, copy or send the whole page!

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
 MAILING ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
 CITY/STATE/ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
 PHONE NUMBER(S) \_\_\_\_\_  
 EMAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

**SEND MONTHLY NEWSLETTER**

**US MAIL**   
**EMAIL**

**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.**

**SOLO WEBSITE** [www.saveourlakes.org](http://www.saveourlakes.org)

You can get information as well as communicate with us through our website: [www.saveourlakes.org](http://www.saveourlakes.org) or our email: [save-our-lakes@comcast.net](mailto:save-our-lakes@comcast.net). Our newsletter comes out once a month by email and US Mail (usually the first week of the month). **Please feel free to check us out!**



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



Logo by: *Graham E. Kestner*

**Our next meeting: 7PM, January 11 at the First Baptist Church. Updates on the Black Creek Project and More! Look for meeting signs around Keystone Heights. Get your Shot/Booster & Live to see the lakes full again!**

NEWSLETTER PRINTING BY FABCO-AIR. THANK YOU, FABCO-AIR!



*Webpage Design By: REALTY PRODUCTIONS CO.*  
*RealtyProductions.com – (904) 502-0165 - Email: [wwwweb@realtyproductions.com](mailto:wwwweb@realtyproductions.com)*



**Bald Eagle**  
  
**Bait and Tackle**

Fishing, Hunting, Boating  
Supplies, Feed,  
Dog Food  
Snack Bar  
352-473-6060  
Keystone Heights, Fla.  
State Road 100  
Owners:  
Joey & Patty Tyson  
Hours: 5:30 AM - 6:PM  
Open Seven Days a Week  
"Not just a Bait Shop"

**Helen Hersey Realty**  
*Helen A. Hersey*  
Broker

Office: 352-473-8882  
Cell: 352-235-1586  
Toll Free: 1-866-649-8882  
Web Site: [www.helensersey.com](http://www.helensersey.com)  
Email: [helen@helensersey.com](mailto:helen@helensersey.com)

7396 SR-21 North • PO Box 2002  
Keystone Heights, FL 32656

Phone: 352.473.6405  
Cell: 904.219.1562  
Fax: 352.473.6495

Let Us Be Your  
Homestead Electrician

Serving  
The Lake Area And  
Surrounding  
Counties

[RegionalElectricInc.com](http://RegionalElectricInc.com)  
Residential & Commercial  
New Construction • Remodel • Service Calls

**Daryl Wilkins**

**TEAM BEALS**

COLDWELL BANKER  
VANGUARD REALTY

**TODD & DEBBIE BEALS**

510 S. Lawrence Blvd  
Keystone Heights, FL 32656  
[www.lakearearealtors.com](http://www.lakearearealtors.com)

Todd Beals (904) 588-2083 [toddbeals@cbvfl.com](mailto:toddbeals@cbvfl.com)  
Debbie Beals (313) 648-0295 [debbiebeals@cbvfl.com](mailto:debbiebeals@cbvfl.com)

***S.O.L.O., Inc.***