

# SpringLake BREEZE

*Florida... the way it should be!*



## Chairman's Message

*Bill Lawens, Chairman - Board of Supervisors*

As the Board of Supervisors begins the Fiscal Year '13 budget process we are extremely gratified to know that our levee was approved by FEMA and Spring Lake will not be in a high risk flood zone, thus saving our residents thousands of dollars a year. Additionally, there will be no repairs or construction needed on the levee, just the continuance of our maintenance program. I want to give a big thank you to our Manager, Joe DeCerbo, who worked tirelessly to obtain the levee accreditation from FEMA.

I would like to thank Supervisor Tim McKenna for his leadership with the renovation of the community center, and Supervisor Leon Van and resident Larry Miesner for their work with Personnel. Supervisor Brian Acker continues to work with staff on the Charter, finances and the budget process, and Supervisor Gary Behrendt is working with staff and legal counsel with the continuing land acquisition program.

Other articles in this issue of The Breeze highlight the signing of our Charter by the Governor so mosquito spraying can be conducted again; and the canal maintenance that has begun. Work by our own personnel, using leased equipment, is saving thousands of dollars by not having to contract the work out.

As our Drainage staff has begun working on canal maintenance projects, the Board anticipates the official start of our Updated Water Control Plan projects during the next fiscal year. With the help of our Engineer, SFWMD, and USDA, we should be well on our way to positively positioning this community in regards to water retention, storage, and quality for the future. This current Board and Manager want to ensure that future leaders of our District will not have to go thru the time consuming tasks of addressing and fixing old problems, and put into place a drainage system and organizational development process that will last for generations to come.

Many of our friends and neighbors are headed back north for the summer, and on behalf of our Board of Supervisors and Staff we wish you safe travels and see you next season!

## Fema Approves Levee!!!

After nearly four years of intensive and detailed work with FEMA, the Spring Lake levee has been approved and will NOT be shown on the new flood maps as an at risk structure, thus saving homeowners over a million dollars collectively. Additionally, the District does NOT have to spend any additional funds for repairs, which would have been paid via taxes.

### BACKGROUND:

Within Highlands County and within the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) Spring Lake has one of the few levees. When the area was first mapped for flood insurance purposes in 1983 it was determined that the levee provided protection from at least the 1% annual chance of flood. As a result, the areas south and west of the levee were shown to be of moderate risk (Zone B).

During the scoping phase for the remapping of Highlands County, this levee was identified as having to be analyzed to see if it still provided the same minimum protection from the 1% annual chance of flood. It was on July 2, 2008 that FEMA Engineers first met with the District Manager to inform him of the

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# Fema Approves Levee! ---

newly approved Levee Certification Process and the impact it had on the new flood maps. Along with FEMA, staff from SFWMD and the engineering consultants from PBS&J were in attendance. The Manager was notified that without levee certification the new flood maps would remove the District from Zone B and put it in a High Risk Flood Zone. The result to affected homeowners who have financed their properties would be flood insurance that could cost over \$4,000 per year! Additionally, PBS&J projected that studies and construction on the levee could run as high as a million dollars. To make matters even worse, this was an unfunded mandate; meaning we are required to do it but there is no money to help us.

After this meeting to determine our options it was evident that we could not just ignore the mandate but would have to work with FEMA as much as we could. On February 6, 2009 FEMA agreed to provide the District a 12 month correction period to address maintenance only deficiencies. During that period FEMA would continue its mapping study of the area as if the levee did not provide the minimum protection.

From 2009 thru 2010 the District conducted numerous tasks and submitted an application for what is known as a PAL; Provisionally Accepted Levee. It gave the District two years, until February 6, 2012, to submit documentation that the levee provides the necessary flood protection. During this same time period meetings were held with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Jacksonville and Tampa; PBS&J engineers in Orlando and Tampa; SFWMD; our own District Engineers; and FEMA. A meeting held in Atlanta, Georgia with FEMA Regional Director Mark Vieira gave the District much needed hope that we would not have to complete all of the extremely expensive tests and construction on the existing levee.

On December 1, 2011 the final report was sent to FEMA. After a few requests for additional information we were optimistic that the levee would be accepted and the flood maps would remain the same. A public meeting was scheduled to be held at the Agri-Center on March 22 and a morning meeting that day was coordinated by FEMA for all governmental staffs. It was at that meeting that Mr. Vieira showed the new flood maps to the District Manager and there were NO CHANGES! The Provisional designation had been removed from the maps and Spring Lake remained in the moderate risk level.

After the staff meeting Mr. Vieira, toured the levee and pump station and complimented our staff on the work that had been done on the levee, and the cleanliness and organization of our pump station.

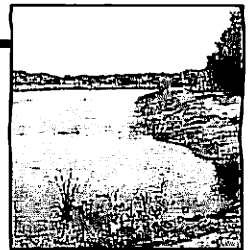
This has been a very long and arduous task over the past four years, but our success has saved Spring Lake residents a tremendous amount of money.



(L to R) Mark Vieira, FEMA Regional Director; Board Chairman Bill Lawens; and Levee Technician John Laiosa

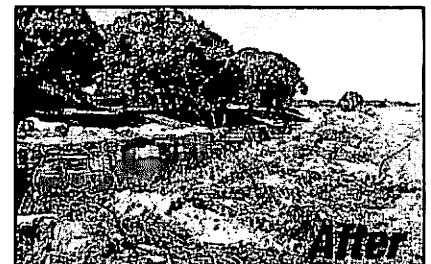
# Canal Maintenance Begins ---

In preparation for the Water Control Plan and the various projects that will be associated with bringing Spring Lake into compliance with South Florida Water Management District, we have begun to do general maintenance on selected canals and water bodies.



Veteran staff member Randy Nelson, with over 20 years' experience with the District, is overseeing all of our Drainage efforts and the initial maintenance phase. His expertise with large equipment is invaluable to the District, and with the recent lease of a Caterpillar Track Hoe, Randy makes quick work of the projects he has been assigned. Working in close contact with our District Engineer Randy has been dedicating most of his work week to the various drainage maintenance projects.

These pictures show some of the maintenance that Randy has been responsible for in the Blue Heron and Bobcat Course area in the back of Duane Palmer Blvd and the canal behind Holly.



- Please note that after several inspections by the Fire Department the stove in the Community Center has been removed for safety purposes. With the renovations the District has changed all the locks; groups must come to the District Office to check out a key and sign for the usage.
- We continue to urge drivers to watch for walkers and bike riders. Many more residents are on the roadways and bicyclists are required to go with traffic, and walkers against traffic.
- When District Staff conducts Aquatic Spraying they will post signs advising residents NOT to use their irrigation system during specific dates; please adhere to the notice.
- Mr. Charlie Reynolds, owner/operator of Contented Citrus will be conducting an informative seminar at the Community Center on how to care and nurture orange trees. As soon as the Center is remodeled Charlie will advertise his program, which is free of charge. You can reach Charlie at 863-381-6278 or e-mail him at cvr53@yahoo.com if you have immediate needs.
- If you want to complete a work order for the County to repair a pot hole simply go to www.hcbcc.net. On the left side you click on departments; scroll to road and bridge; and fill out the form. You can follow up by calling them direct at 863-402-6529.
- Those residents served by the Utility Corporation of Florida for their sewage can follow the rate case being completed by the Florida Public Service Commission. Go to their website at www.floridapsc.com, click on Dockets and Filings and then type in 110165-SU. The commission is expected to rule at their August 12, 2012 Commission Conference.
- Hydro Designs will be doing 152 inspections for backflow and cross connections the week of April 23rd. You will be contacted prior to that date if you are scheduled for inspection.

## Staff Profile



Spring Lake was fortunate to gain the services of **Travis Nolen** as our District Mechanic. Since coming on staff last April, Travis has instituted a number of preventative maintenance programs and

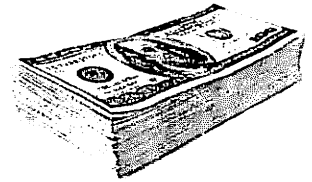
completely re-organized our service department. His 11 years of mechanical experiences are invaluable to our District.

Travis is a graduate of Sebring High School and the 1,800 hour Automotive Tech Certificate program from South Florida Community College. His experiences include stops at the Panoz Racing School, Sebring Ford, and Highlands County Road and Bridge automotive. Along with his mechanic duties Travis can often be seen assisting with projects, filling in for staff on vacation, and performing a myriad of tasks outside mechanics. People who work with Travis are often heard saying, "He can fix anything!!"

Travis and his wife, Katie, live in Lorida and have a 7 year old son, Connor. When he isn't working or spending time with family his hobby and love is fishing; including tournament fishing.

## Budget

### Process Begins



Beginning with the FY 2006 budget process a set of optimum financial goals, and a timetable, have been followed to assist the Board of Supervisors with the development of a yearly budget for the District.

#### Financial Goals include:

- The District will have a budget reflective of a sound staffing pattern, a progressive salary administration program, and organizational goals and objectives to determine expenditures.
- The District will maintain adequate reserves to protect it against unforeseen circumstances and situations.
- The District will have sound financial management and reporting including investments, controls, adequate insurance coverage, and utilization of appropriate external counsel and assistance as needed.
- The District will have a budget process that involves the Board, management staff, working groups, and public input.
- The District will develop a budget process timetable and chart of work for each fiscal year

#### Fiscal Year Projected Timetable:

April – June	Manager, Administrator, and working groups gather financial data
May	Finance working group develops projected budget
June	First draft of budget projection presented to Board
July	Second draft of budget projection presented to Board
August	Public Hearing
September	Budget approved by Board and assessments sent to Tax Collector

The development of the District Budget is an open process that is thoroughly discussed and reviewed at the monthly Board meetings, held the second Wednesday of each month at the District Offices, beginning at 10:00 a.m. Additional information can be secured and discussed by contacting the District Office at 655-1715 and making an appointment.



## SPRING LAKE

### IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

115 Spring Lake Blvd.

Sebring, FL 33876

863.655.1715 phone

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## Community Center Update

Over the past several months renovations have been underway at the Community Center. New lights have been installed; new windows; ceiling repairs; interior paint; restroom repairs; kitchen area re-organized; and new tile to replace the old carpeting. The outside will be receiving a face lift as well. These renovation costs have been substantially reduced as a result of the skills and talents that some of our staff members have, most notably: Travis Turner; Josh and Travis Nolen; and Brian Patrick. The work has been overseen by Assistant District Manager Clay Shrum and Board Supervisor Tim McKenna.

The Board continued to discuss the future usage guidelines for renting the Community Center and at its April 11 Board meeting passed a motion to establish new deposit fees effective May 1, 2012. Groups less than 25 will provide a \$50 deposit; larger groups \$100. *New guidelines and rental agreements* will be available when you come to the District Office to make your reservation request.

These are much needed improvements and should give our community a respectable place to meet and get together for a number of years. Along with the renovations the District has installed new locks; you must come to the District Office to secure keys and sign for the usage.

## Governor Signs Charter

On Friday, April 6, Governor Scott signed into law Bill 1495 that revised the Spring Lake Improvement District Charter, including the reinstatement of mosquito spraying. According to the Bill, Section 3 states:

Referendum- By July 1, 2012, the Spring Lake Improvement District shall conduct a referendum of landowners voting on a one-acre one-vote basis on the question of granting the Spring Lake Improvement District the power to provide mosquito control services. The referendum question shall be posed as follows:

Shall the Spring Lake Improvement District be authorized to provide mosquito control services?  YES  NO

Landowner  
Strap number

According to Section 4 of the Bill, if this referendum fails to receive approval from a majority of landowners voting on a one-acre one-vote basis, this act shall stand repealed on December 31, 2012.

**\*\*SAMPLE LETTER BEING SENT TO ALL LANDOWNERS\*\***

Dear Landowner,

The Spring Lake Improvement District must conduct a referendum of all landowners voting on a one-acre one-vote basis on the question of granting the Spring Lake Improvement District the power to provide mosquito control services.

Please complete the ballot below and mail it in the enclosed envelope to (CPA firm to be designated) and postmarked no later than June 1, 2012.

Thank you.  
Board of Supervisors  
Spring Lake Improvement District

## Aquatic Spraying Enhanced

Since assuming his role of overseeing Aquatic Spraying, District staff member John Laiosa has made a significant difference in the appearance of our District canals and water bodies. A visit was made to Spring Lake by Dan Willis, Aquatics specialist from the University of Florida, and Mike Jensen, Director of the County Extension office. They toured all the spraying areas and complimented John on the work that was being done to control weeds, the use of better chemicals, and the plans he has put together for the future control of aquatic and invasive weeds. Within the next six months the District will be purchasing and stocking the canals with grass carp in another effort to control hydrilla.

Here are some dramatic before and after pictures that reflect the success of our current program...

