

Spring Lake BREEZE

Florida... the way it should be!



Chairman's Message, Brian Acker

The District is moving forward with the construction of the Storm Water Treatment Area (STA) located in the northeast corner of the District and extending southerly toward the pump station. The District Engineer is finalizing the plan in preparation of going to bid on this estimated \$3.7 million project. The District has secured over \$1 million toward this project with an additional \$624,000 in a Florida Department of Environmental Protection grant awaiting approval. The Board is actively exploring additional funding from South Florida Water Management District, the Florida State Revolving Fund and other sources.

On behalf of the Board I made a presentation to the Legislative Delegation requesting an appropriation for the rehabilitation of the District Pump Station. The District Engineer has estimated the cost of the rehabilitation to be approximately \$750,000 which was conveyed to our representatives in the legislature. I urge the residents and landowners of Spring Lake to contact Senator Grimsley and Representative Pigman to support this initiative.

For the past couple of months District personnel have cleaned out drainage and retention areas on the golf course in the south Duane Palmer area. This work is expected to enhance drainage and prevent road flooding in this area. This has been a cooperative effort with the South Highlands Investment Corp., the owners of the golf course. I extend a sincere thank you to them for their contribution to community improvements. I also appreciate the hard work and dedication our personnel continue to demonstrate throughout this project.

At the January meeting the Board voted to enter into a contract with South Highlands Investment Corp. to acquire the sewage treatment plant which services 314 units in our community. The acquisition of the sewage treatment utility will not only benefit the present users of the utility but will also meet the future needs of the community. This utility will be funded in the same manner as the water utility; through user fees and charges in a separate Enterprise Fund.

The Board actively considers solutions which are in the best interest of the community as a whole. We ask patience as we evolve and face new challenges and opportunities which present themselves. We seek your continued support and participation in Board meetings where you may ask questions and share your concerns or ideas. We are all available to discuss District efforts at any time.

District Web Site ———



It seems that web sites are a constant work in progress, and the District has several staff members who try to keep the site as updated as possible. Residents can access all the latest information on the District by going to

www.springlakefl.com Whether you want to read the highlights, search the databases, view the meeting schedule, or read The Breeze on-line, these and many other features are on the web site.

A number of residents are using the web site to pay their water bills, a recent addition to the site. In the near future, look for the front page of the site to get another remodel and contain four large buttons that will direct residents to more popular service requests: Water turn on and turn off; paying water bills; mosquito spraying; and work orders.

Transparency in government is vital, and this site allows residents to view each month's financial report and read the monthly Board minutes. Actually, for those who like history, minutes and financials go all the way back to the start of the District in 1971. If the web site does not provide the information you are looking for, you can access the Public Records room in the District Office.

District Seeks Appropriation —————

Thanks to the efforts last year of State Representative Dr. Cary Pigman and State Senator Denise Grimsley, Spring Lake was fortunate to receive a \$416,000 grant to be used as matching funds for a \$1.2 million Storm Water Project described in the Groundbreaking article of this issue.



The District attended a Legislative Delegation meeting on October 3, 2014 and presented our Legislators with a 2015 request for \$750,000 to refurbish our 40+ year old pump station. The pump station protects Spring Lake from serious flooding; a shutdown would devastate the area. Last year over 1 Billion gallons of water were discharged into Arbuckle Creek. The pump station is also extremely critical to the effective operation of the Storm Water Treatment Project.

The request would completely renovate and upgrade the pump station to meet the needs of our District for many years to come. Several of the upgrades need to be made regardless of whether we receive the appropriation, for the safety of our community. As a resident, if you would like to share your support for this appropriation, please contact:

Denise Grimsley
State Senator
205 S. Commerce Ave.
Sebring, FL 33870
grimsley.denise@flsenate.gov

Dr. Cary Pigman
State Representative
205 S. Commerce Ave.
Sebring, FL 33870
cary.pigman@myfloridahouse.gov

Mr. Ben Albritton
State Representative
150 N. Central Ave.
Bartow, FL 38830
ben.albritton@myfloridahouse.gov

District Purchases Sewer Plant —————

The South Highlands Investment Corporation, owners and operators of both the golf course and the existing sewer plant, have agreed to sell the plant to the District. A contract has been presented to the Board for their review, and ownership should transfer within the next several months. The system currently serves over 300 residents and will be set up as an Enterprise Fund. This means that only users of the system are assessed a fee; residents who are not on the sewer system will not be charged. Finances are kept separate and distinct from the General Fund, similar to the District Water Fund and Lot Mowing Fund.

Plans are already being discussed with our District Engineer to relocate and build a new sewer system that will meet the needs of future development. Grants and very low interest loans are available for waste water plants, as both the Department of Environmental Protection and the Environmental Protection Agency prefer to eliminate the use of septic tanks in new housing.

Over the next several months management will be formulating policies, procedures, job descriptions, an operating budget, and rates. Users will be notified of any public meetings that might be held prior to a regularly scheduled District Board meeting to discuss any of these items.

Groundbreaking

The official Groundbreaking for the multi-million dollar Storm Water Treatment Area took place on October 31st. Located on the back side of Duane Palmer Blvd. and bordering the levee and Arbuckle Creek, the 100 acre project is expected to progress over the next several years. Grants from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the State Legislature have expedited the start of this project.



L-R: Don Elwell, County Commissioner and Spring Lake Resident; Gene Schriener, District Engineer; Brian Acker, SLID Board Chairman; Marty Mielke, Administrator for Senator Denise Grimsley; Dr. Cary Pigman, State Representative; Greg Harris, County Commissioner.



State Representative Dr. Cary Pigman (left) was instrumental in securing a \$416,000 matching grant from the State Legislature. State Senator Denise Grimsley and her Administrator, Marty Mielke (center) coordinated efforts in the State Senate for the matching funds. County Commissioner Greg Harris (right) was County Board Chairman during this grant process.



L-R: SLID Supervisors Gary Behrendt; Bill Lawens; Brian Acker; Arlene Klingbiel; and Tim McKenna

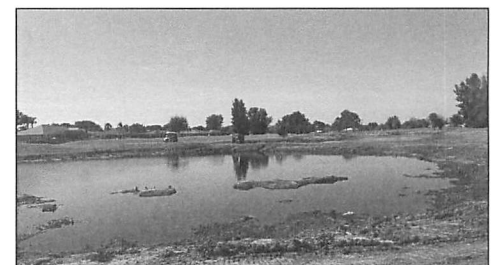
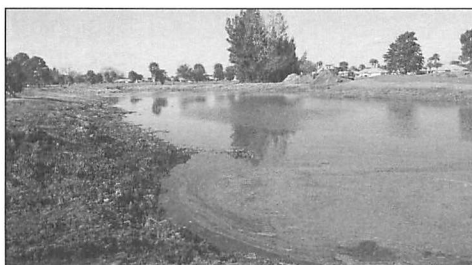
Drainage Project Continues

Work continues to move forward as these BEFORE and AFTER pictures show. Not only will flooding on south Duane Palmer be corrected, but the District gains much needed acreage for retention and storage of storm water before it enters our canal system. The South Highlands Corporation has prepared an Access Authorization Agreement to allow the District to access close to 70 additional acres of ponds and drainage areas.

Before...



After...



SPRING LAKE IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

115 Spring Lake Blvd.
Sebring, FL 33876
863.655.1715 phone
863.655.4430 fax



District Receives State Utility Award

Last June, at the Florida Association of Special Districts Conference, Spring Lake was named the 2014 Special District of the Year. While most everyone reveled in this honor, it has now been followed up by an announcement from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection that the Spring Lake Improvement District has been selected to receive a 2014 Plant Operations Excellence Award.

The Award is being presented in recognition of outstanding treatment plant operation, maintenance, and compliance. The award is being presented at a ceremony on February 10th in Punta Gorda in conjunction with a State Conference.

Water Superintendent Clay Shrum and Distribution Operators J.R. Clarke and Randy Nelson will be accepting the award on behalf of the District. Many of our Field Staff, especially Matt Thompson and Brian Patrick, who are the off hours, on call, personnel, are actively involved in handling water leaks and other situations that occur. This award also recognizes the service and dedication of our staff in responding to residents who have water problems.



Bits and Pieces

- The District continues to explore funding sources to help defray costs for the water control plan and the Storm Water Treatment Project. Along with the State Appropriation request for the pump station upgrading, the District is reaching out to: Department of Transportation; South Florida Water Management District; Florida Department of Environmental Protection; and the State Revolving Funds.
- Highlands County continues to support our drainage projects, and any work that impacts flooding on County roads will result in County equipment and personnel being involved. The District continues to maintain an excellent relationship with the County and sincerely appreciates the help and support they provide to our community.
- The Little Free Library boxes have been recently installed at the map and newspaper area in front of the tennis courts, next to the District Office, as well as the Center Median on Monte Reale. Thank you to Sam Heede and the SLPA for making this project a reality.
- **RECYCLING PROBLEMS PERSIST!!!** Help our community identify the residents who treat this area as their own dumping ground. People are leaving unauthorized items by the bins, as well as dumping their "junk" inside the bins. With the majority of people having cell phones, take a picture of the person(s) or jot down their license number. Contact the County Recycle Office at 655-6400 and they will follow up. If the problems do not correct themselves the District is going to request that the bins be removed. It is everyone's responsibility to help with this problem.
- If there is a street light out near your home simply write down the street address, copy the number listed on the light pole tag, and send it to the District Office.
- Some people have urged the District to install lines at the Tennis Courts for Pickle Ball. Let the District Office know if you are in favor by e-mailing us or giving us a call.
- Beginning February 23rd residents will see a new face in the office; a new Administrative Assistant is being hired. Thanks to the extra effort of District Administrator Diane Angell, services and office operations went uninterrupted during this vacancy.