

SpringLake BREEZE

Florida... the way it should be!



Assessments **DECREASE**

For the second consecutive year the District Board of Supervisors have lowered the non-ad-valorem assessment. The approved amount of \$285.42 for FY '22 is the lowest since 2015 and represents a 2% decrease from last year. Additionally, all utility rates and fees will remain the same. Over the last seven years the district has secured just under \$17 million towards infrastructure, and the construction of the Stormwater Treatment Area (ECO Park). Thanks to Legislative appropriations, DEP grants, and 30 year no interest loans, Spring Lake is positioned to accommodate all the development that is occurring now, as well as in the future. The budget consists of four funds:

General Fund	\$1,205,315
Water	906,633
Wastewater	367,200
Lot Mowing	<u>219,892</u>
TOTAL:	\$2,699,040



High Speed Internet Update



For well over three years the district has tried to work with Century Link, Comcast, and Delcom in efforts to bring high speed internet to Spring Lake. Century Link most recently did a survey to judge the interest in high speed, and many residents responded. Mark Chard, Senior Account Manager for Century Link, wrote to the District on June 8, 2021, and stated they were putting together a proposal for us to consider. They were encouraged by the survey results, but to date we have not heard anything. Highlands County is receiving two payments of \$10 million from what is called America Rescue Funds. The district has asked for some of that funding to install our own fiber optic and then lease it to a vendor. This would save residents a lot of money!! The Highlands County Board

of County Commissioners will begin reviewing proposals at their September 21st meeting. There is no doubt that high speed internet is imperative if we are to meet the needs of our residents and businesses. It is proven that home values increase with the presence of high-speed internet, and businesses need high speed to locate in communities. It is difficult for internet companies to take Spring Lake seriously because of our lack of potential customers; we are a small dot on their large map. We will continue to network with as many people as possible to ensure that high speed comes to our community sooner than later.



FLORIDA RURAL WATER SUPPORT

The Florida Rural Water Association is a membership organization that receives funding and support from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.



For over 30 years Spring Lake has been a member of the FRWA and has received tens of thousands of dollars of support. This picture depicts a FRWA staff member meeting with our Utility Staff to review the GPS program the district has in place.

FRWA provides the district with water and wastewater studies that recommend what our utility rates and fees should be. District Operations Director Clay Shrum worked for FRWA before coming to Spring Lake. His contacts and relationship with FRWA staff have been extremely beneficial to our district in receiving the numerous services and studies they conduct for Spring Lake. The public is welcome to review any of the studies conducted by FRWA by coming to the district office.

BEWARE OF FRAUD

The Highlands County Sheriff's Department continually warns residents about fraud and "con games." While many of these criminals get away with it, that was not the case with a scam that involved over a dozen Spring Lake residents. Several months ago, a Mr. Dan Merrell approached residents to have their driveways repaired or replaced. He had previously worked in Spring Lake and many people knew him. It turned out that he collected the deposits, never gave money to the contractor who was to do the work, and driveways sat with the concrete removed and no one to complete the work. Merrell was arrested on fraud charges and was jailed without bond, where he still sits today awaiting trial. Often, people are cheated out of their money and don't want to involve law enforcement. If you feel you are being "scammed" you should contact the sheriff department at their crime prevention unit, 863-402-7453, or the Seniors crime project office, 863-402-7849



The Highlands County Engineering Department publishes a list of contractors, surveyors, and Engineering firms in Highlands County who are all registered with the County and do work throughout the County. You can pick up a copy at the Engineering Department or call 863-402-6877 for further information.

COMMEMORATIVE 50TH PUBLICATION

After months of writing, reviewing, selecting pictures, proofing, layout, and printing, a glossy, multi-colored 50th Anniversary Special Edition will be available at the October 23rd Spring Lake Festival. Copies of the edition will be only \$5, and a 50th commemorative key chain will go with each purchase. Not only will residents want to have one, but they will also make great gifts for people you know who used to live in Spring Lake or are thinking of coming here. A limited number of these special editions were printed and will be available after the festival by stopping by the district office.

The District wants to thank Creative Printing for the huge role they played in producing this publication. They have been preparing and mailing The Breeze to district residents since February of 2010 and have been superb vendors to work with. The talents and professionalism of their staff is second to none, and they have done an exceptional job. The district receives numerous compliments about the quality, layout, color, and first-class presentation of content.



TOO MUCH STUFF? WE HAVE SPACE!

863-835-1070

5795 US 98 "UNDER THE BIG CROSS"



unique
SELF STORAGE

COOLED • SECURE • SIMPLE

OPENING FALL 2021

Inn the Woods



Relax and enjoy your stay at Inn the Woods. Offering short-term vacation resort rentals in comfortable "tree canopy cottages", guests will delight in exploring nature on 15 acres while still keeping their creature comforts. Our facilities offer air conditioned cottages, natural swimming pond, organic farm-to-table restaurant, full kitchens in cabins and indoor and outdoor showers.



Opening 2022!



Fiscal Year 2022 District Schedules

Board of Supervisor Meetings, District Office, 10:00 a.m.

October 13 November 10 December 8 January 12 February 9
March 9 April 13 May 11 June 8 July 13 August 10 September 14

Holidays (office closed)

Veterans Day	Thursday, November 11, 2021
Thanksgiving Day	Thursday, November 25
Day after Thanksgiving	Friday, November 26
Day before Christmas	Friday, December 24
New Year's Day	Friday, December 31 (Observed)
MLK Birthday	Monday, January 17, 2022
Good Friday	Friday, April 15
Memorial Day	Monday, May 30
Independence Day	Monday, July 4
Labor Day	Monday, September 5
Veterans Day	Friday, November 11
Thanksgiving Day	Thursday, November 24
Day after Thanksgiving	Friday, November 25
Friday before Christmas	Friday, December 23
Christmas	Monday, December 26 (Observed)
New Year's Day	Monday, January 2, 2023 (Observed)



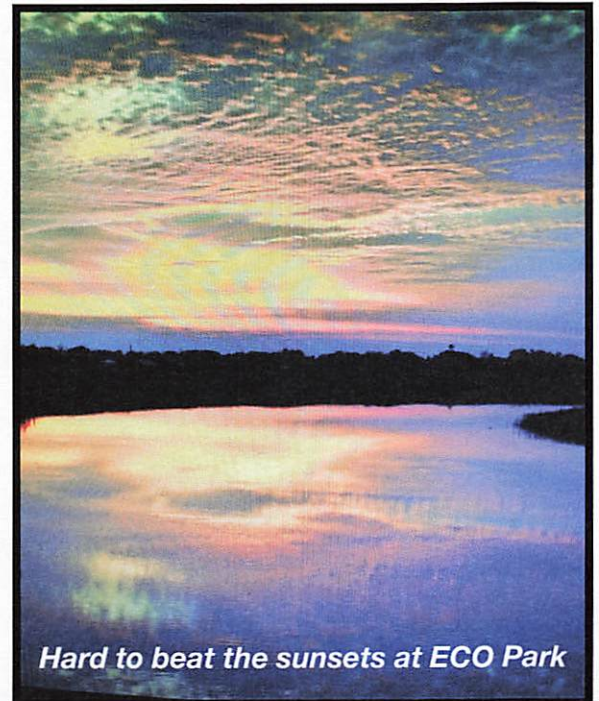
Construction Continues



Developers continue to build in Spring Lake, and as you drive around the district you can see many homes and duplexes being constructed. Several companies are in the final stages of negotiations to bring needed retail to our community. There is no doubt that the extension of the wastewater force main along Rt. 98 has made this area very appealing to developers. A 200-unit apartment complex is in the permitting stage, as well as an independent living facility. Future issues of The Breeze will highlight these exciting projects as they develop.

As depicted in this picture, there are close to a dozen homes

being built, or the land being surveyed, for construction just around Duane Palmer alone. Twenty-Five water meters have been sold to developers for homes or duplexes they are currently building, or plan on building, in the next few months. Additionally, several realtors have contacted me regarding over 25 acres of land on Rt. 98 that are in the negotiation stages and were inquiring about the availability of water and sewer, both of which are readily available from the District.



Hard to beat the sunsets at ECO Park



*Mmmm, Good eatin'!
Black Crappie (also
called Specks) abound in
Istokpoga.*

Bark Park News



The Bark Park continues to be a very popular place for our fur friends and their owners. The district recently added some concrete areas for more adequate seating and a place to put the little splash pools. One of the biggest issues that still confronts the park is when owners do not respect the Little Dog and Big Dog areas. There are separate areas for a reason, and people should respect the rules and regulations that govern the park. Additionally, too many people are not picking up after their dogs, and district staff should not have to be cleaning up before they can mow. There are more than enough bags in the holders for people to help with the clean-up. People are also starting to use the pond that is directly east of the park for fishing, and the district put a few benches there. Future plans call for developing the land between the park and pond, but nothing definitive has been discussed. It is a beautiful area, and it is the best Dog Park

in the area, bar none!! Continue to enjoy the Bark Park, but please honor the regulations.

The Spring Lake Dog Club is conducting a raffle for a Dog DNA Test. Purchase \$1 tickets by calling or texting 863-381-8052. The drawing will take place at the October 23rd Festival.



Water Angels

This program continues to be popular and is helping our residents in need. Here are a few examples of what donations made to the Water Angel Fund have done.

- A single mom with 2 children has had a number of her house cleaning clients cancel because of COVID and has gotten behind on paying bills.
- A man lost his job to COVID and is trying to do odd jobs until he can find work.
- A grandmother is caring for her grandchildren, and needed help
- A woman has bone cancer and needs to move back north to be cared for. The Angel Fund paid her last bill.
- A woman e-mailed us, "Oh my goodness, I am literally crying. You have no idea how much this helps, and I appreciate it"



If you would like to contribute to this worthy program, please make out a check payable to SLID and put Angel Fund on the memo section. You can also stop in the district office to make your gift. We have been blessed with some wonderful people who have really stepped to the plate and contributed to this program.

Official Anniversary Celebration Planned

November 11, 2021, marks the exact date 50 years ago that the Spring Lake Improvement District was officially chartered by the State Legislature. An informal event will be held on that date at the Golf Resort restaurant from 5:30 – 7:30. A limited number of tickets will be available at \$10 per person that will include selected complimentary beverages and appetizers. While there will not be an official program, several pertinent announcements and recognitions will be part of the evening, as well as the introduction of special guests.

Along with the anniversary celebration, developers will have exhibits to showcase the exciting projects they are planning for the future of our community including apartments; small home village; resort cabins; independent living complex; ECO village; and retail plans.

The District thanks the Sebring International Golf Resort for hosting this event. Additionally, the District received numerous contributions to support our 50th Anniversary events, and those donations have helped to underwrite the costs of this event. We look forward to spending a few hours in celebration of our past 50 years and showcasing the exciting projects that lay ahead.

“Under the Oaks”



Save the Date to Participate!

Spring Lake

Artisans



1971-2021

50
SPRINGLAKE
YEARS



Vendors

Anniversary Festival



October 23, 2021

10:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.

Spring Lake Boulevard & U.S. Highway 98
Pine Breeze Park Community Center



RAFFLES

Food Trucks

Games



**Kid's
Activities**

Music

Exhibits

BITS AND PIECES

- Thank you to P.J. Steeby and her sister Lynn Kohler-Glowatz who copied all the various newspaper articles and pictures from 1970 to 1984 and preserving them for future generations of Spring Lake Residents. You can view more than 1,000 articles and pictures on the district web site at www.springlakefl.com. A number of the pictures are included in the 50th Anniversary special edition.
- The project for the widening of Rt. 98 began in 2013 by the Florida Department of Transportation. Several delays, mostly financial, have put this project on the back burner. While it is eventually going to happen, it will be quite a few years before we see any construction. If you want to keep up to date you can go to the FDOT website and search Project ID #414511.
- New Neighborhood Watch signs have been posted at all District entrances, as well as the ECO Park, Bark Park, Pine Breeze Park, and the Shelter
- A Fire Station for Spring Lake is still on the County drawing board, and the recent fire assessment increase included this station in the not-too-distant future. It will be located at the site of the old power plant and the district's water plant just south of airport land. The station will have full time employees and not rely totally on volunteers.
- A Landowner position on the District Board of Supervisors will be elected at the November 10th Board meeting. Any landowner in Spring Lake can pick up a proxy to collect signatures.
- Census data for the zip code 33876 shows a population of 4,888, 34.2 square miles, 142 people per square mile, and a median age of 60.8.
- Spring Lake has 31 miles of roads



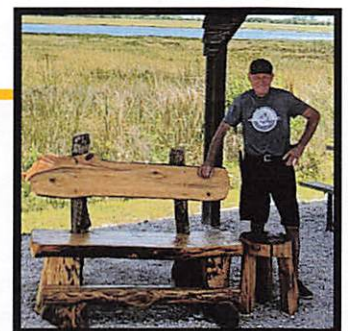
District Sells Surplus Lands

In the interest of fostering development, the district has sold the last of its surplus lands thru a formal bid process. Twenty-Five lots along the levee from south of the pump station area towards Rt. 98 was sold for \$125,000 and the buyers will be working with the district to install both water and sewer to the properties. Close to 20 acres between the Bark Park and the ECO Park has been sold for \$165,000 and is the future site for a small home village. District utilities will be installed. The final sale of 11 acres adjacent to the district office for \$264,000 will be the site for a full-scale independent living facility. As more details become available, as well as pictures and site plans, they will be published in The Breeze.

All proceeds from these sales have been put into the Reserve Account, and all parcels are now back on the tax rolls since they are now owned privately. These are exciting times for Spring Lake, and these projects are a welcome addition.

ECO Park Donation

A big THANK YOU to Forest "Tinker" Helseth for the donation of a hand carved bench now in the ECO Park. Tinker and his wife Sharon live on Oak Lane here in Spring Lake during the winter months and return to Canada where they operate a fishing and hunting Lodge. Tinker's home is filled with his hand carvings, and he surprised the district when he announced what he wanted to donate. The next time you are in the park take note of this beautiful carving.



SPRING LAKE IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

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

PINEDALE ESTATES



After several years of planning and securing funds, the long-awaited drinking water project has begun in Pinedale Estates to bring service to 30 homes. The work is being done by GO Underground and Craig A. Smith engineering is overseeing the project. Pictured left, left to right, are GO owners Crayton and Racheal Tillman, and Greg Giarratana from CAS.

This project was first discussed as far back as 2015. At that time, the District was heavily involved in its water control projects and funding options were not available to help underwrite and lessen the costs to residents. Pinedale Estates is not within the boundaries of Spring Lake, and that posed several other problems that had to be overcome. With all residents currently on wells, this new water supply will greatly

enhance the quality of their water, ensure continuous service by District back-up generators during power outages, and provide system maintenance by the District. The addition of fire hydrants helps to lower homeowner's insurance and increase the value of homes.

COUNTY PAVING PROJECTS

All paved roads in Spring Lake are owned and maintained by the County. Each year, personnel from County Road and Bridge use a system to evaluate all the roadways to determine which of them need to be paved or repaired. While the District staff can make recommendations, final decisions are made by the County.

Pictured above is one of the largest paving projects that has been completed in recent years. Duane Palmer Blvd. had not been repaved in over 30 years and was a priority on the County list. After the County budget is approved each year, the district receives a list of roads that will be paved, and we publish those roads in *The Breeze*. This year the County paved Duane Palmer, Blossom Drive, Sherwood Way, Edgewater Terrace, and Lakeview Blvd.

There are several roadways in the District that are not maintained by the County. Country Club Villas, Waterway Villas, Oak Leafe, several streets in Village One, and Clubhouse Lane that goes into the Resort are some. Also included, and in the worst shape, is the Blue Heron area. Unfortunately, this situation has occurred because the original developer did not want to build roads to County specifications, and as time has gone by the roads have deteriorated. It is the responsibility of the appropriate Homeowners Association to maintain the roads, and the cost for these roads to be replaced and put under County maintenance is cost prohibitive. In the case of Oak Leafe and Blue Heron, if a new developer buys the remaining lots, they will most likely upgrade the roads; or one would hope. Any new development that comes into Spring Lake would be required to have roads to County specifications.

