

# SpringLake BREEZE

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



## **Attorney General Opinion**

### *Suspends Mosquito Spraying*

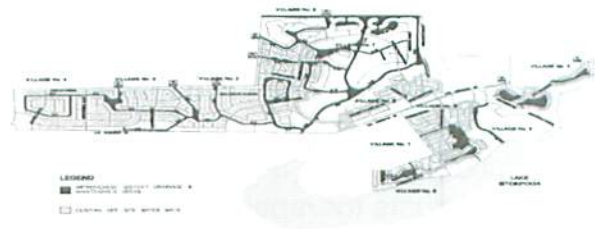
The District Board of Supervisors have been notified in an opinion by Florida Attorney General Pam Biondi that the District Charter does not allow the Board to use district funds for the control of arthropods. The Board had included this power in the Charter revisions that were part of the recent Referendum, and voters turned down the revisions. According to State Law, the Referendum was an all or nothing vote; thus, no more mosquito spraying.

To read the complete opinion from the Attorney General simply follow these steps: go to <http://myfloridalegal.com> and AG opinions will appear in a list on the left side of the page. Click on it and go to recent opinions. The Spring Lake opinion is listed towards the top as AGO 2011-02.

At their March 9th meeting, Board Attorney Bill Nielander led a discussion on this opinion and the Board agreed to accept the decision and not seek a second opinion. Any surplus monies that may exist in the mosquito control fund will be held in a restricted account until the Board has pursued all their options in bringing this service back to our community.

## **New Flood Maps**

An aggressive, multi-year initiative to update the nation's flood hazard maps, called Map Modernization, is under way in Florida and across the nation. Highlands County flood maps have not been updated since 1986 and are considered outdated, severely limiting their usefulness. There is a partnership between FEMA and state and local governments to update all Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs), which will help outline where local flood risks are. Spring Lake staff has been involved with both Water Management Districts, as well as Highlands County staff, as this program has progressed thru the various required stages.



When Spring Lake was last mapped in 1983 the levee and pump station appeared on the FIRM as providing protection from at least the 1% annual chance of flood. As a result, the areas south and west were shown to be of moderate risk and listed as Zone B. To maintain this classification and not be placed into a Flood Zone, the District has had to work with FEMA on continued certification of the levee. On February 6, 2009, FEMA agreed to provide a 12-month correction period to address maintenance only deficiencies on the levee. In February of 2010 the District received what is called a Provisionally Accredited Levee (PAL) agreement, and on January 31, 2011 submitted a PAL update to FEMA. The District now has until February 6, 2012 to show FEMA that our levee continues to provide necessary protection, and a Zone B designation should remain.

It should be noted once again that this mapping process and levee certification is an unfunded mandate and all engineering and inspection costs are being paid out of our General Fund. If the District had chosen to ignore this mandate, residents would have seen flood insurance rates skyrocket! There is still much to be done in becoming certified, and all efforts are being directed to satisfy the FEMA requirements.

## **Staff Appreciation**

For the past five years Spring Lake resident "Irishman" Tim McKenna has hosted an appreciation St. Patrick's Day luncheon for our District Staff. Tim, pictured second from left, stated: "I sincerely appreciate the hard work and effort put forth by our District staff and can't think of a better way to celebrate my favorite holiday, St. Patrick's Day!"



## **Meter Tampering**

District Water Department personnel J.R. Clarke (left) and Josh Nolen regularly conduct inspections on customer water meters and boxes and make repairs to those that have been damaged, especially by lawn mowers. **IT IS ILLEGAL** for residents to tamper with meter boxes or the utility shut-off valve.



By Resolution, the Board of Supervisors made tampering subject to a \$100 penalty. This includes: operating a tagged or locked meter valve; removing a meter; hooking up a meter illegally; or any action performed to change a meter's reading. There are additional costs for repairs if the meter valve or piping is damaged. The homeowner is responsible for payment prior to the restoration of water service.

The District Utility Department will turn your water service on or off during normal business hours (8-4:30 M-F) free of charge. After hours, weekends, or holidays, the service charge is \$40.



**Homeowners or plumbers are NOT ALLOWED to turn off/on water valves**

## **Flood Maps**

### **Affect Insurance**

It is imperative that all residents realize the implications of new flood maps for Highlands County. While the District has every intention of certifying the levee and maintaining Zone B status, there is always the chance that we are unable to complete the necessary requirements by the time required. The levees will then be shown on the DFIRM as not providing the minimum protection and consequently our community will be mapped as a high-risk flood area. Flood insurance will then be required for those properties with mortgages from federally regulated or insured lenders. Even if this is not your situation today, when you try to sell your home the next person may need flood insurance and the rate will be very high.

All homeowners should look into flood insurance NOW. The National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) is a Federal program enabling property owners in participating communities to purchase insurance protection against losses from flooding. This program is designed to provide an insurance alternative to disaster assistance to meet the escalating costs of repairing damage to building and their contents caused by floods. Participation in the NFIP is based on an agreement between local communities and the Federal Government, and Highlands County has such an agreement.

For complete information on how you can secure flood insurance and lock in rates to the current Zone B status, you can call 1-888-724-6620, or visit [www.floodsmart.gov/mud](http://www.floodsmart.gov/mud) for a complete flood risk profile of your current residence and the estimated annual premium cost; some as low as \$119 per year. Just type in your address and the site does the rest.

# **Bits & Pieces** *Useful information and data for our residents*

**Correction...** our last issue stated that everyone who pays a water bill receives The Breeze in the mail. That is not the case for Village I, as this newsletter is paid out of the General Fund and residents in that area do not pay into the General Fund. They can still access it on the web site.

**Congressman Rooney** has notified Spring Lake that he is not supporting any appropriations or earmarks in his Congressional District. We had asked the Congressman to support funding to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to assist Spring Lake with the levee certification process. He has agreed to write FEMA on our behalf and support a site visit to our levee.

**While signs may not appear** throughout the community, please remember that fishing, swimming, or boating in District canals and lakes is prohibited. If violators are on or near your property, the sheriff should be notified and they will respond to citizen complaints.

**Our water department** initiated a phone tree program over a year ago. This automated phone system alerts customers that they have not paid their water bill, and have 72 hours to pay the bill or have their water turned off. Our records can determine whether the call was answered by someone, went to voice mail, or was hung up prior to the full message. This system has reduced the number of water turn offs.

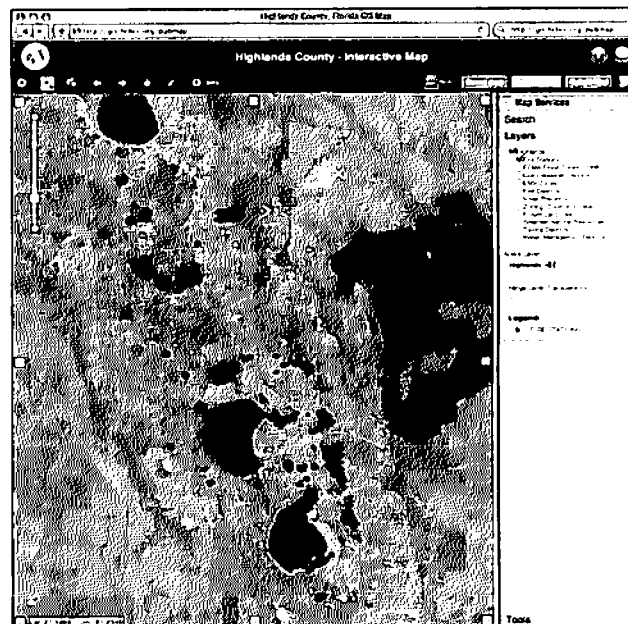
**Additional security** fencing will be installed at the water plant and maintenance building area in an effort to better secure our valuable assets. A wellhead protection study and general security study was recently conducted by Florida Rural Water Association and the Board is moving forward with their findings.

**At their March 9th meeting** the Board of Supervisors began to discuss user fees for individuals and groups using the community center. The Board directed staff to secure some additional information prior to making any changes or revisions in the current system. Staff was further directed to gather data on the use of the Gazebo, which houses the lending closet.

## **Highlands County Interactive Maps**

<http://gis.hcbcc.org/pubmap>

The Highlands County Interactive Map is a user-friendly tool that enables anyone with Internet access to view FEMA flood zones, as well as other aerial and street maps. You can find a specific property by using the toolbar to locate it on the map or you can use the search tool under map services on the right hand side of the page using the property's Parcel ID number, owner name, physical address, or street name.



## SPRING LAKE

### IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

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## 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.



## Certification of Levee

As part of the Provisionally Accredited Levee designation, District staff must perform on-going maintenance and inspection of the levee. An update provided to FEMA on January 31, 2011 outlined the various inspection and maintenance schedules being followed and monitored.

Without levee certification by February 6, 2012 Spring Lake could receive a flood zone status and higher flood insurance rates. All efforts are being made to meet the requirements of this unfunded mandate by FEMA.

## Credit Card Payments



### Residents may now pay their water bills with credit cards.

This is another convenience to ensure that your bill is paid on time and avoids late fees or possible water shut off. While the District still accepts cash and checks, our preference is for you to be on the ACH program or to use a credit card.