

SpringLake BREEZE

Florida... the way it should be!



Message from the Board

April is the start of the District's budget process beginning with Personnel costs for the Fiscal Year 2014. This includes salary and wages; health insurance; workmen's compensation; and unemployment compensation. Forecasting costs for a budget that does not begin until October 1st of each year can be a challenge, especially as it relates to health insurance costs. All line items, capital expenses, and reserve needs are analyzed and discussed over the next 4 months, leading up to a Public Hearing on August 14th, 10:00 a.m. in the District Office. The Board approves the next fiscal year's budget at the September 11 meeting, and the assessments are then sent to the Highlands County Tax Collector. The Board has been very diligent in controlling expenses over the years, and since 2006 the total assessments paid to the District has risen less than \$20 over this 7 year period. The current assessment of \$303.91 comes to .83 cents a day.



Pictured left to right are: Secretary, Tim McKenna; Chairman, Brian Acker; Arlene Klingbiel; Past Chairman, Bill Lawens; and Gary Behrendt, Vice-Chairman.

The Board continues to work on the water control plan, a process that will protect Spring Lake for many generations to come. While many smaller projects are already underway using District staff, the larger and more involved projects will have to be permitted by the South Florida Water Management District and overseen by our District Engineer. Funding to underwrite our projects are continuing to be solicited thru proposals and grant requests to the United States Department of Agriculture; Florida Department of Environmental Protection; Highlands County Water and Soil Conservation District; Lake Iskotopoga Management Committee; and a Legislative appropriation to upgrade our pump station jointly submitted by our District and the Airport.

A long awaited Welcome Packet is now available to all residents who come in to the office to secure a water account. The Packet describes all the services and programs offered by the District, ACH forms, a phone directory published by the Property Association, and other items. If you would like a Packet simply stop by the office.

The Board would like to especially thank Highlands County and all the work that they are performing in Spring Lake. This issue of The Breeze is highlighting that work, and we are grateful for the working relationship we continue to have with them. County Commissioner Don Elwell, who resides in Spring Lake, has been most supportive of these efforts, as well as all the County Department Heads that our District Manager communicates with.

County Projects



Over the past five years Spring Lake has had a very cooperative and supportive relationship with Highlands County. There are not many departments that our District has not worked with, and the spirit of providing assistance permeates thru all of them. Past issues of The Breeze have described some of the help we have received, and presentations to the Board of County Commissioners have personally expressed our appreciation. It is always a challenge to list names of people who should be recognized without forgetting someone, but certain County staff needs to be pointed out to our residents. We sincerely thank the following individuals who have gone above and beyond to help our Manager and his staff:



Ramon Gavarette	County Engineer
Elius Nortelus	Assistant County Engineer
Kyle Green	Road and Bridge Superintendent
Henry High	Road and Bridge Unit Supervisor for Spring Lake
Ralph Whisler	County Surveying Supervisor
Justin Jackson	County Surveyor
Eddie Cordoba	Traffic Operations Manager



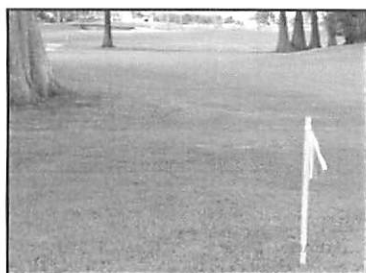
Highlands County owns and maintains all roads in Spring Lake and the District, thru an inter-local agreement, mows and maintains all the right of ways. For the past several years County Road and Bridge has increased their efforts in the resurfacing of Spring Lake roads. This year was no different, and 5 miles of roadways have been resurfaced on: Floral Drive; Valencia; Pine Glen; Brook Lane; Cozumel Lane; Maple Lane; Kenwood Place; Prado Court; Sun Valley Drive; Garden Terrace; Longbow Drive; and Sagewood. Along with paving, the County installs and maintains all the street and traffic signs and recently completed the frequently used traffic lines around Duane Palmer Blvd. and all entrances on the north side of Rt. 98.



Paving projects not only improve the roads, but oftentimes trees and their roots have to be removed to avoid further damage to a road. County staff had such a problem in the Pine Glen Cul de Sac and additional personnel and equipment had to be utilized for the project.



Many culverts in Spring Lake are as much as 40 years old and are beginning to deteriorate. Maintaining an effective infrastructure is imperative to an effective storm water management program. While smaller culverts and drainage projects can be worked on by our District staff, the County has handled all of our larger culvert replacements. Over the next five years residents will notice an extensive effort to upgrade deteriorating culverts and catch basins. This picture shows the culvert work that took place on Honeysuckle.



The County surveying teams have been very active in Spring Lake, assisting the District as they work with the golf course and several villa associations where easements and right of ways need to be revised, replaced, or added. The District has saved a large amount of money by using County teams that have provided us with maps, legal descriptions, and individual surveys for each parcel.

Arbuckle Creek Park is one of the hidden treasures within Spring Lake. Deeded to the District many years ago by Florida National Properties this beautiful park lies at the mouth of Arbuckle Creek and Lake Isktopoga. The County recently graded the entrance road and installed shell rock near and around the boat dock and fishing pier. You must be a resident of Spring Lake to use the park and codes to unlock the entrance gates are available at the District Office

- You may have read in the newspaper that the County is still going thru the new flood map process. Most of Highlands County is in the SOUTHWEST Florida Water Management District. Spring Lake is in the SOUTH Florida District and our flood maps and levee accreditation have been approved already by FEMA. We are not designated as a flood zone, nor will the maps for Spring Lake change. Certifying our levee, a three year process, was the key to this result. An official letter from FEMA accrediting our levee hangs on the wall in the public records room.
- The newly formed Neighborhood watch group for ALL DISTRICT VILLAGES is actively seeking volunteers for this valuable program being coordinated by Nell Hays from the Highlands County Sheriff's Department. Committee Chairman Paul Paton (655-1112) and Vice Chairman Michael Smith (655-2525) will be hosting a meeting along with Nell on Wednesday, April 17th, 6:00 p.m. at the Community Center.
- Residents continue to receive solicitations from Florida Water Analysis for a water quality inspection. We once again caution you; this is NOT recommended or endorsed by the Spring Lake Improvement District. Some of our residents have invested thousands of dollars and found out too late that it was not necessary.
- A huge thank you to Supervisor Tim McKenna for hosting his 7th annual St. Patrick's Day party for District staff. Tim provided food and drink as staff helped him celebrate his favorite day!
- The basketball court at Pine Breeze Park has been re-coated and several new baskets installed.

Lake Impact on Water Control Plan

The issue of water quality throughout the State of Florida has communities reviewing their water control plans and developing strategies that will meet the stricter regulations that will be forthcoming. Your District Board has been diligent in ensuring that the plans being developed will more than meet whatever water retention, storage, and quality rules that are mandated. We are not going to leave this problem for future Boards and residents to deal with; we are going to put Spring Lake on solid ground for generations to come.

The biggest concern in Florida is what is happening to Lake Okeechobee and the quality of the water that flows to it. Water from our community (including Rt. 98 and the Airport) goes thru the pump station into Arbuckle Creek. From the Creek it flows into both Lake Isktopoga and Okeechobee. All upstream contributors to these lakes are going to be scrutinized more and more by the water regulatory agencies such as the Department of Environmental Protection; Environmental Protection Agency; Florida Fish and Wildlife Services; and South Florida Water Management District to name a few. These groups, along with some local entities such as the Lake Isktopoga Management Committee; Highlands County Water and Soil Conservation District; and the Friends of Isktopoga lobby very hard to ensure that waters flowing into the lakes do not carry harmful nutrients.

Spring Lake has NOT been a recipient of funding from any of the groups mentioned above, yet our residents have been taxed to meet the requirements of these unfunded mandates. For many years our District was "not in the loop" with these and other groups who were passing out monies to ranchers, farmers, and other's. Just recently it was announced that another \$6 million was going to assist with the Isktopoga Marsh project. We have made great strides in the past few years and just in the last month received notice that we may be eligible for funding from DEP thru their 319 grant program. Additionally, State Senator Denise Grimsley and State Representative Cary Pigman are lobbying for a Legislative appropriation in the amount of \$450,000 to upgrade and renovate the pump station. The United States Department of Agriculture has been working with the District for over two years in preparation for a major low interest loan to help pay for the water control plan and lessen the tax burden of our residents.

While we have taken a number of baby steps to position the District to attract funding from outside sources, the Board and staff are optimistic that support is just around the corner.

SPRING LAKE IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

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

Maguire Pond Completed —

The Maguire Trust, Orlando, Florida, secured nearly 14 acres of land thru the Tax Deed process that is just south of Rt. 98 and was once part of the golf course. A 1.73 acre pond area is in the middle of the property and was completely overgrown with weeds and bushes. The Trust recently gave the District a dedicated easement for the pond that includes full access. District staff completed the restoration of the original pond using District equipment, and the new appearance has received many accolades from our residents. This pond is now connected to the nearby canal and will provide some additional retention and storage for our water control plan. The District thanks the Maguire Trust and Raymer Maguire in particular, for working cooperatively with us. It certainly provides drivers on Rt. 98 a better impression of our community by having a visible and well maintained pond as they drive by.



Public Records and District Web Site —

If you have recently visited our web site at www.springlakefl.com you have noticed a new look. The design has gone thru some updating, as well as the colors and pictures. A new feature of the web site is the ability for residents to fill out a work order and send it electronically to the District Office for immediate attention. Vistalogix Corporation hosts our web site and each month we receive a detailed analysis of web site usage as it pertains to new and returning visitors, as well as page reviews. Over the last year the site has averaged 130 visits per month; 78 new visitors each month, and 52 returning visitors each month.

In the interest of Public Records accessibility the District has included in the documents section the Board minutes and District financials for every Board meeting that has ever been conducted in Spring Lake, going back as far as the early 1970's. Additionally, residents can access past issues of The Breeze, review the District Audit, peruse the water control plan, and search thru the various sections for other data and information. If a resident is not able to find what they are looking for on the web site, the District has maintained a Public Records Room for the last several years. The room contains original copies of the minutes and financials, as well as all the documents and data contained on the web site. Many residents stop by the District office and meet with the Manager and staff about a myriad of situations and questions. There is no cost for searching the archives or meeting with staff. Copies of documents, if you choose to have your own are .15 per page. If a document or information does not exist and the District has to create your public records request you will be given a cost to produce that information. A District Records Management and Public Records Request Policy was adopted by the Board of Supervisors on July 14, 2010 as Resolution 2010-06, and the District Manager is responsible for all requests submitted to the District.