

**Spring Lake Improvement District
2019 FSA Excellence Award Nomination
Stormwater Treatment area and ECO Park**

Spring Lake has a population of just under 4,000 people and is located on the north shore of Lake Isktopoga, and the western side of Arbuckle Creek. The District has a pump station that discharges over a billion gallons of storm water a year into the Creek and then on to the Lake.

The project, as constructed and completed, was to satisfy SFWMD compliance concerns regarding the deficiencies of the original storm water system as planned and permitted by the original developer, Westinghouse Corporation. Continued non-compliance would have resulted in fines to the District and disruption in future development plans. Rather than do battle with SFWMD, the Board decided to correct the problem once and for all. Staff efforts secured grants from FDEP and a loan from SRF, and the use of reserve funds made this \$7 million project possible. All maintenance and operating costs for the system are now part of the District budget and its non-ad valorem assessments, and all work is performed by District staff.

Seven of our personnel have FSA Level One certification, and all are in the process of completing Level Two. A project of this magnitude was going to take a concerted effort during and after construction to maintain a viable system, and manage critical goals and objectives:

- *The project provides needed water quality treatment and nutrient reduction while creating an environmentally sound ecological system to enhance wildlife in the area.

- *The project mitigates and re-established lost flood plain and provides greater flood protection to all within the pumped area as a result of increased water storage.

- *The project provides for economic development opportunities by providing more efficient use of lands north of US Rt. 98.

- *The District has an on-going monitoring program to identify Total Suspended Solids and the removal of Phosphorous, Nitrogen, and Biological Oxygen demand.

The most unique aspect of this Stormwater Project was to not just have a body of water for retention, storage, and water quality; but rather, do something the residents could enjoy. With a little thought and creativity, it was decided to turn the 1.7-mile maintenance road into a bike and walking path, and have shelters, rest rooms, picnic tables, grilles, and benches at the entrance and call it an ECO Park instead of a Storm Water Treatment Area. It was immediately endorsed by the community and quickly became the most used park in our area.

This project shows that storm water management, environmental issues, resident needs, and a little ingenuity can produce a very creative result. Our small community has achieved what much larger areas have still not addressed, and we are very proud of our achievement.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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MORE THAN \$1 MILLION COMMITTED TO RESTORATION PROJECT FOR LAKE OKEECHOBEE

~ DEP and Spring Lake Improvement District continue efforts to improve water quality with stormwater project ~

SEBRING – The Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the Spring Lake Improvement District (SLID) together have committed more than \$1 million to a stormwater system improvement project that will help reduce pollution reaching Lake Okeechobee. The department's contribution to the project is \$624,000. The project includes the construction of a 70-acre stormwater treatment area including treatment pond and wetland marsh.

"I would like to thank the Spring Lake Improvement District for their environmental leadership," said Tom Frick, director of the Division of Environmental Assessment and Restoration. "This project is evidence that dedicated communities of any size can leverage their resources to make great strides for Florida's waters."

Water that flows off the land and into creeks, streams or rivers after a rain is referred to as stormwater runoff. Stormwater runoff typically contains fertilizers, pesticides, oils, grease and other pollutants. Without treatment, stormwater carries these pollutants directly into Florida's waterbodies. Capturing and retaining runoff from storm events allows for control over the quality and quantity of the stormwater reaching nearby waterbodies. Natural physical, biological and chemical processes work over time to remove pollutants.

Currently runoff from the residential areas surrounding Arbuckle Creek receives treatment through a system of cascading lakes. After project construction, stormwater runoff will continue to travel through the lakes before undergoing additional treatment through the marsh. The proposed project should reduce the pollutant load in Arbuckle Creek, and consequently positively impact the Kissimmee River, Lake Istokpoga, and ultimately, Lake Okeechobee.

Florida has historically been at the forefront of the nation in addressing stormwater management, as one of the first states to implement a statewide stormwater program. Florida was also one of the first states to address agricultural and urban stormwater management through its water quality restoration program.

About the Florida Department of Environmental Protection

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection is the state's principal environmental agency, created to protect, conserve and manage Florida's environment and natural resources. The department enforces federal and state environmental laws, protects Florida's air and water quality, cleans up pollution, regulates solid waste management, promotes pollution prevention, and acquires environmentally sensitive lands for preservation. The agency also maintains a statewide system of parks, trails and aquatic preserves. To view the department's website log on to www.dep.state.fl.us.

Spring Lake Improvement District Storm Water Treatment Area



FACTS AND FIGURES

• 105 Acres of Land Purchased	\$750,000
• Sink Hole and Sea Wall Repair at Pump Station	\$450,000
• Grants, Appropriations, and State Revolving Funds for STA	\$3,600,000
• District Operating Funds and Reserves for all STA projects	\$1,250,000
• Legislative Appropriation for Pump Station	\$500,000
• District Operating Funds and Reserves for all Pump Station projects	<u>\$250,000</u>

Total Costs \$6,800,000

- 750,000 cubic yards of fill removed from 70-acre STA
- 25,000 dump truck loads
- 1.47-mile diameter of STA has been paved for walking and biking
- Receives storm water from just under 4,000 acres
- Retains 9.5 million cubic feet of storm water prior to discharge

- Initial monitoring took place August 2018
- 10,781 lbs. of Total Suspended Solids identified
- 18.3 lbs. of Phosphorus removed
- 589 lbs. of Nitrogen removed
- 1500 lbs. of Biological Oxygen demand removed which allows oxygen levels to remain high

- Eco Park installed at STA with shelters, picnic tables, grilles, benches, and restroom with County Grant of \$75,000

Storm Water Treatment Area

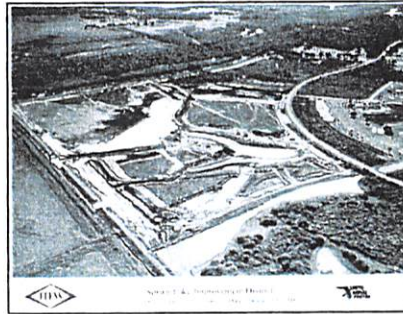


The multi-million dollar STA is progressing steadily towards a September 30th completion date. The project is being hailed by numerous agency and government officials as one of the most proactive and

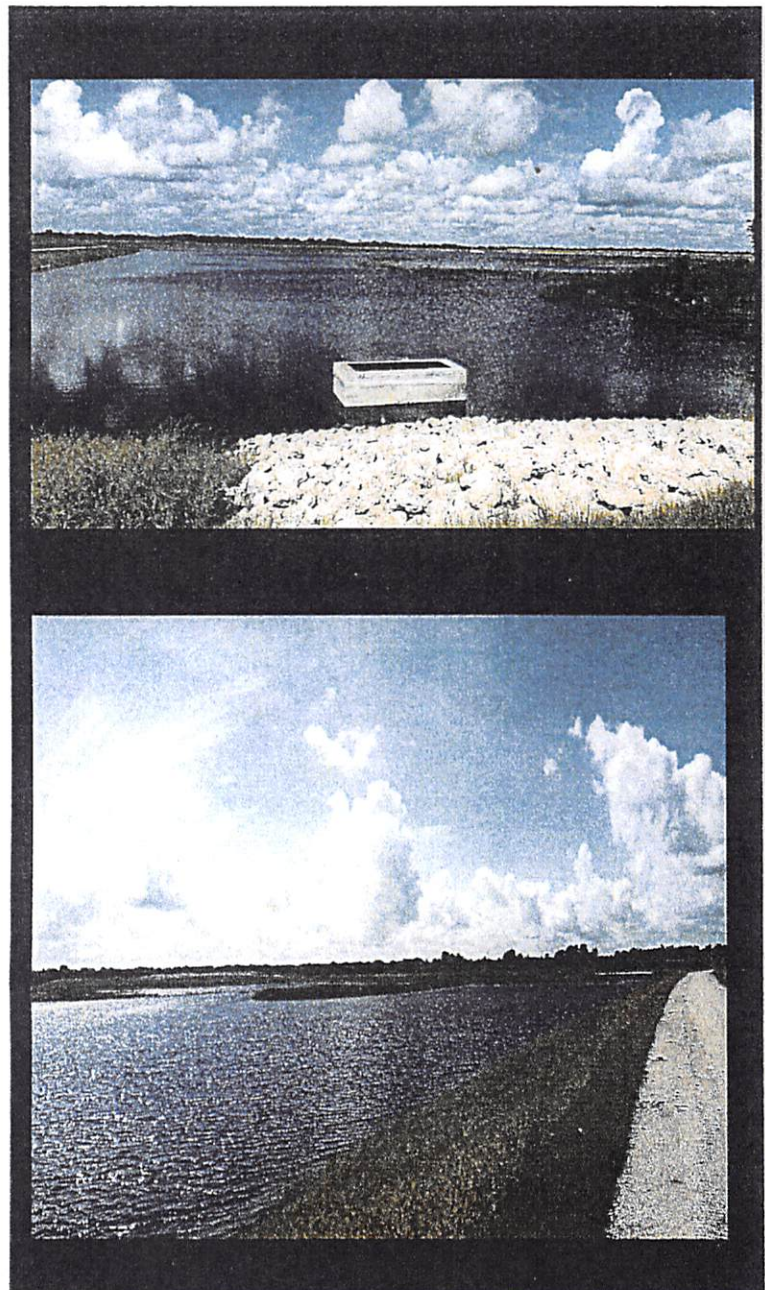
valuable community projects in the entire Northern Everglades area. The retention, storage, and water quality that this STA will create has the potential of protecting our community for generations to come; regardless of future rules and regulations on water quality that regulatory agencies will create and enforce. This is a huge plus for future developers.

Edens Construction has been extremely diligent in working on this project and has been very accommodating in some of the changes we have requested, such as the widening of the levee and designing the entire area so it can be utilized as a potential Park.

This project was made possible by grants from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection in excess of \$1 million, a Legislative Appropriation for \$416,000, and a 30 year no interest loan from the State



Revolving Fund. It is optimistically projected that future grants will lower the need to use loan funding. Overall, the taxpayers of Spring Lake have saved millions of dollars in the development of this area and the subsequent levee certification that takes our District out of being a flood zone and lessens the need for any flood insurance.



SpringLake



Spring Lake Improvement District Eco-Park

VISITOR'S WINTER CHECKLIST



Welcome to
Spring Lake Improvement District's
Eco-Park

We hope that many people and families will visit, picnic and explore the beauty of the area. What started out as a necessity for drainage of 4,000 acres has turned into a wonderful place for people to come and see what ecological restoration is all about. Over the years this area will grow and improve to support even more species.

Come and Enjoy!

Winter Bird Checklist

- PIED-BILLED GREBE
- ANHINGA
- DOUBLE-CRESTED
- COMORANT
- MOTTLED DUCK
- BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING DUCK
- GREAT BLUE HERON
- GREAT EGRET
- WOODSTORK
- OSPREY
- BALD EAGLE
- RED-SHOULDERED HAWK
- CRESTED CARACARA
- AMERICAN KESTREL
- COMMON GALLINULE
- AMERICAN COOT
- SANDHILL CRANE
- LIMPKIN
- GREATER YELLOWLEGS
- KILLDEER
- COMMON GROUND DOVE
- RED-BELLIED WOODPECKER
- EASTER PHOEBE
- AMERICAN ROBIN
- NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD
- TREE SWALLOW
- EASTERN MEADOWLARK
- RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD
