

City of Winter Park
Lakes (General)
Dinky Dock
—Lake Virginia

Winter Park Outlook

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City moves forward in cleaning up lake

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WINTER PARK—After locating and stopping a major source of pollution to the Dinky Dock area of Lake Virginia recently, city officials are hopeful that the popular beach and swimming area will be open for public use for the first time in more than three years.

"I've been wanting to go swimming at Dinky Dock for a long time, and it looks like I might finally be able to," said City Commissioner Peter Gottfried.

A biologist and environmental consultant, Gottfried has made cleaning up the lakes one of his main goals since being elected to the commission three years ago.

"I can remember swimming there (Dinky Dock) as a boy, and I would like for my son to be able to swim there too," said Gottfried.

The Lake Virginia beach, like most other public swimming areas in the city's chain of lakes, has been closed for swimming and other water sports over the years due to high bacteria counts.

Consultants hired several months ago to study the Dinky Dock area discovered a few weeks ago that raw sewage leaking from a pipe underneath the 7-Eleven store on Park Ave. was causing the contamination.

After reconnecting the sewer line to the city's sanitary system, the consultants and city crews followed up by testing lines in the area to see if other businesses may have contained

similar cross-connections.

No such cross-connections were found, so it appears that the Dinky Dock problem has been solved, reported Jim Williams, the city's public works director.

"I think this is an important milestone," said Gottfried. "We've still got a long way to go, but we seem to be headed in the right direction."

Gottfried said the fact that the city has hired several different consultants to study specific problem areas should produce more conclusive results than studies conducted in the past. The proposed storm water management ordinance and storm water utility tax will also benefit the lakes' cause, he added.

Consultants hired to evaluate other lake areas are currently looking into the possibility of sewage infiltration and inflow into the city's storm drain system, and a newly discovered possible cause of pollution—septic tanks—has cropped up.

The city has hired the firm of Glace & Radcliffe to find out if sewage from septic tanks may be contaminating the lakes. Williams said the consultants have located a number of homes which have septic tanks and is now investigating to see which of those septic tanks is in use.

City residences are supposed to be connected to the sanitary sewer system, but Williams said it is possible that some homes, particularly the older ones, were never connected.