

City studies using carp to save lakes

By Sharon Carrasco

OF THE SENTINEL STAFF

WINTER PARK — The city's lakes are dying from weed-killer treatments and should be stocked with weed-eating hybrid grass carp, said Commissioner Donald Wright.

"If we don't find another way to control our weed

Amur may stay in Altamonte lake: page 35

killing problem, we will kill these lakes," Wright told other commissioners at Monday's work session.

Commissioners, though sympathetic, weren't sold on stocking the hybrid, particularly since there is little evidence they are effective in controlling weeds. The sterile carp were first developed in 1979.

With a record year of weed growth predicted, commissioners told staffers to prepare a presentation on specifics of a carp program and its costs.

Wright said he, Orange County Administrator Jim Harris and Lowell Trent, area botanist for Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, plan to travel to Lee County where the hybrid fish are bred.

If the hybrid program is adopted, it may be more economically feasible for municipalities and the county to grow their own supply of the weed-eating fish, Wright said.

Commissioner David Currie said lakefront residents are the "major beneficiaries" of the lakes and should pay more for weed control than residents living away from the water.

Mayor Hope Strong said he was leery of the program and needed more information. He was upset when he learned that the hybrid carp had been put into Lake Sue, at the expense of lakefront residents. About 25 percent of the lake is in the city, the rest in the county.

"A lot of people in Winter Park aren't convinced the pluses of the hybrid outweigh the minuses," said Strong. "I am surprised the fish were introduced into Lake Sue. That is Winter Park."

Trent told commissioners that barriers were built on Lake Sue and two others to prevent the fish from spilling into Winter Park's chain of lakes.

Trent called the carp a "usable tool" for weed control, but advised commissioners against reducing the current weed-control program.

"The most effective way is to reduce the weed mass chemically and then stock the fish," Trent said.

The botanist predicted Winter Park would have a "banner year" in weed growth on its chain of lakes this year.

The city spent \$180,486 to chemically treat its lakes in 1978-79 but only \$66,438 in 1980-81, said Bill McClintock, the city's environmental consultant.

"The weeds last year died from natural causes," said McClintock. "We don't know why. We can't explain that."

Since 1970, the city has been treating its lakes with hydrothol, using the city's airboat, McClintock said. For deeper water, a combination of diquat and copper complex is spread from a barge.

Through an interlocal agreement, Winter Park is responsible for weed control in the Winter Park-Maitland chain of lakes.

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