



Road work to ease traffic on South Orange Blossom Trail, page 3

The Orlando Sentinel

Sunday, July 26, 1987

# Orange Sentinel

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## Algae plaguing Winter Park's lakes

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OF THE SENTINEL STAFF

WINTER PARK — Lake Osceola has had a familiar pea-green tinge to it for the past two months. It is the color of algae and a sign of a lake in bad health.

"If you go out on my boat dock now, you definitely would not want to jump in. You would look at it [the lake] and go 'Yuck!'" said Allan Keen, who is building a house at 800 Greentree Drive, on Lake Osceola.

Although the lake has improved substantially in the past few weeks, the algae bloom started earlier this year and this summer is the city's worst.

Lakes division chief Pierre Deschenes said the lack of vegetation around Lake Osceola, combined with a warmer-than-usual winter and a period of no rains, created conditions for the bloom, which began in May.

Such blooms are common in urban polluted lakes during the warm summer months, said Commissioner Peter Gottfried, an environmentalist. But they are not as troublesome in places such as the Butler Chain of Lakes, in part because of the large number of aquatic plants.

The plants, Deschenes said, use up the high concentration of nutrients and phosphorous that results from pollution and are more active during the warm

summer months.

"That's why, when you have a lake loaded with aquatic plants, the water will be crystal clear. We're trying to form a happy medium," Deschenes said.

Deschenes and Gottfried say the city is trying to keep its lakes clear and clean.

The new lakeshore protection ordinance, for example, helps curtail the problem of annual large algae blooms by forbidding lakeshore residents to clear vegetation from more than 30 feet of their shoreline.

It also will force those who now have more than

Please see LAKES, 18

## LAKES

From 1

that cleared to allow the natural revegetation of that part of the shoreline or replant it themselves.

Some residents, though, see little hope for improvement.

Lester Hoover, a Trismen Terrace resident who has fished in the Winter Park lakes since 1966, said he always sees a lot of trash in the lakes, as well as the algae, and he is not optimistic about saving the lakes.

"I've been on the lakes 21 years and I don't have any question they have deteriorated. . . . I believe the city is doing as much as they can be expected to do. There's too much people, too much traffic. You can't expect the lakes to live with that," Hoover said.

Catherine Ioffredo, who has lived along Lake Osceola for 17 years, is equally frustrated.

"We would like to see the lakes nice and clear and healthy, but there's not much we can do, it seems," she said. "I just hope someday they find a way to clean up the lakes. I know they are working on it. I guess it's just not an easy thing."

Keen said what the city needs is to alert more people to the condition of the lakes.

"A lot of people don't think there's a problem until it's too late. We want the city commission to know it's serious and there are things that can be done," Keen said.

Lake Osceola is not the city's only troublesome spot. Lake Mizell has a large algae bloom, Lake Virginia a smaller one and Maitland's Lake Minnehaha, which connects to the Winter Park Chain of Lakes, a severe one.

Lake Virginia has another problem, too. Tests show the entire perimeter of the lake is polluted with fecal coliform bacteria, which is produced by human or animal waste. More tests are expected to be done to pinpoint the source of the bacteria.

Gottfried said he may ask the commission to put a sign at Dinky Dock, which has been closed all summer because of pollution, alerting people to the contamination before they head out in boats.

"My concern is the people who ski on the lake and may not know it's polluted," he said.

Gottfried said he is looking forward to the report the city's consulting engineers, Professional Engineering Consultants Inc., are to submit to the commission by Aug. 10 on the state of the city's lakes.

That report will look at studies done by Rollins College, and other information about the lakes and the city's storm water drainage system, and recommend further actions the city can take to improve its lake system.