

Time, money to pour into Lake Virginia cleanup

By Mark Andrews

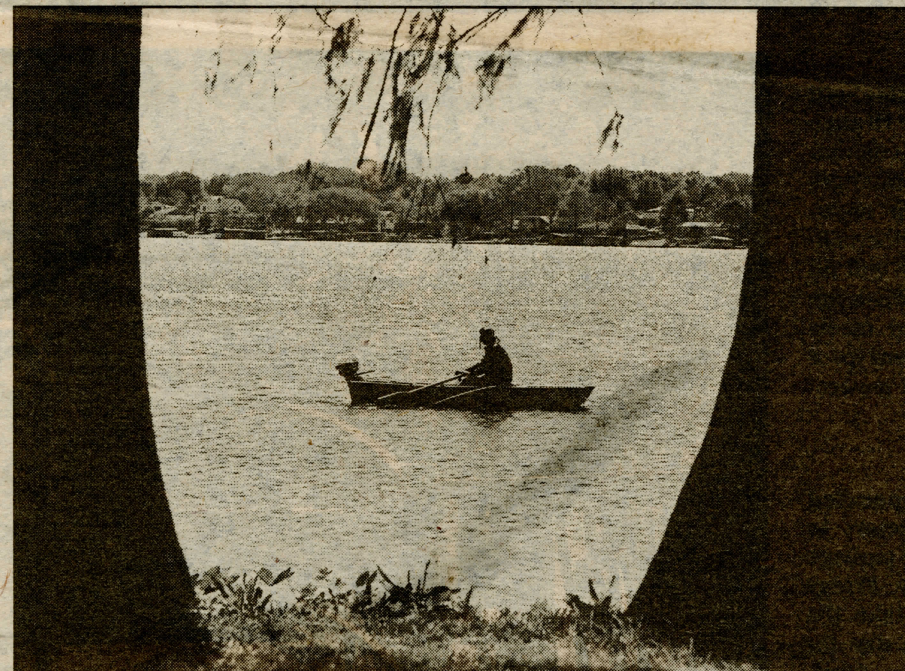
OF THE SENTINEL STAFF

WINTER PARK — Making Dinky Dock Beach at Lake Virginia fit for swimming again will be a long and expensive job. Bacteria contamination has forced the city to close the once-popular swimming area several times in recent years.

The refusal of Rollins College officials to let the city build a holding pond for stormwater drainage on their property has hampered plans to clean up the lake, but engineers want the city commission this week to authorize other work that would improve water quality in Lake Virginia.

Commissioners will be asked Monday to authorize consulting engineers to design a system of stormwater collection pipes and a holding pond for runoff in the area around Ollie Street, which leads to Dinky Dock Beach. When it is built, the pond would filter water that drains across land into the lake.

This is only one of three major sources of stormwater pollution in the Dinky Dock area, said public works director Jim Williams. Two storm drainage pipes carry polluted water into Lake Virginia as well. But adjacent land owned by Rollins College is needed to build another holding pond to trap this water.



SENTINEL FILE PHOTO

Commissioners to vote Monday on system to help clean Lake Virginia

Rollins officials have refused to let the city use the land until the city has investigated other means for lake cleanup and until the college has finished a long-range land-use master plan. Because college property is scarce, Rollins does not want to give up the lakefront site until trustees are sure they can spare it.

Meanwhile, engineers also would check storm sewer pipes in the area to

find out if there are any more cases of domestic sewage being dumped into Winter Park's storm drainage system.

Last November, the city traced the source of human waste that had been contaminating the Dinky Dock swimming area to a convenience store restroom at the corner of Park and Fairbanks avenues. The 7-Eleven store's sewer lines were mistakenly connected to a storm drainage pipe in the 1950s

when a gas station was on the property. That was soon corrected.

A subsequent test in which dye was put into the toilets of other businesses near the drainage pipe did not indicate any other improper sewage connections. But that question will be investigated further.

Briley, Wild and Associates, the city's consulting engineers on the project, also want to study an underwater muck hole near the beach, which is believed to be a breeding area for bacteria. If that muck could be cleaned out and the hole filled with clean sand, another pollution source would be eliminated, Williams said.

Finally, the engineers want city utility crews to flush out storm sewers each month. Periodic testing of water quality throughout the drainage system would determine the effectiveness of all the cleanup work.

The work city commissioners will be asked to authorize this week would cost \$23,775. Construction of the holding ponds believed necessary to filter all the drainage at Dinky Dock Beach, however, is estimated to cost more than \$300,000.

The Lake Virginia cleanup is part of the city's ambitious Save Our Lakes program, to which more than \$1.4 million in city funds have been obligated over the past two years.