

Lakes  
(save our  
Lakes)

# Cleaner lakes become responsibility of Maitland

□ Winter Park has been taking care of the lakes for years, but a five-year project gives Maitland more involvement.

By Ron Patrizio  
and Karen Pankowski

OF THE SENTINEL STAFF

MAITLAND — For years Maitland officials let Winter Park maintain the chain of lakes the two cities share.

But this fall, Maitland will embark on its own program to clean up and preserve 19 lakes within the city.

The five-year plan calls for Maitland to build 122 stormwater traps, remove unwanted aquatic plants and take an inventory of all the pipes that dump storm water into the lakes as part of a master drainage plan. Beginning Oct. 1, city officials have set aside about \$119,000 to pay for work on 19 square miles of shoreline and 1,000 acres of lakes.

The seed money will come out of the city's general fund. City officials said they also are considering creating a stormwater utility fee similar to the one charged by Winter Park to raise money for lake maintenance.

Lakes management coordinator Richard Pirino said the time has come for Maitland to "stand on its own feet."

"We wanted to control our own destiny," Pirino said. "Not that Winter Park wasn't doing a good job — the truth is they have the best program in the county — but it was time for us to take responsibility."

Pirino, who was picked for the new lakes job in April 1990, will take over herbicide control, which had been handled by Winter Park. He also will use an industrial sewing machine to make nets that will help stop trash from washing into the lakes from stormwater pipes.

Public Works Director Tony Lefin said Maitland has been drafting an overall plan to manage the lakes since 1989. Until now, the city had paid Winter Park to spray weed-control herbicides in the lakes they share.

The arrangement was fine until Maitland officials decided they

thru "Bud" Whitehill, who also was a vital link with Winter Park. Whitehill's resignation left Maitland without any representation at Winter Park's lakes and waterways board meetings.

"Since Bud's departure, no one has been to the meetings in Winter Park," Rhoads said. "Right now, no one on the board can spare the time."

Another problem occurred in July, when some Winter Park officials expressed surprise that a member of Maitland's lakes advisory board had started repairing a sea wall in Winter Park, although the city had not received an application for a permit to do the work.

Winter Park officials ordered the member, William Halley of Dockmasters Marine Construction, to stop work temporarily at a Winter Park home on Lake Maitland.

Halley said he was unaware Winter Park had an ordinance concerning sea wall repairs that superseded state guidelines, which he had been following. He also said the homeowner, who had been notified by the city, did not tell him Winter Park required a permit for the job.

Halley said he started working with Winter Park as soon as he learned of the ordinance. The result is a new plan that will combine sea-wall repairs with the addition of aquatic plants and small rocks and protective mesh to stem erosion.



*We're behind Winter Park. [But] we're ahead of every other city in the county that doesn't have this program.*

— Richard Pirino

"I'm very impressed with Winter Park's effort to help lakefront homeowners seek more lake-conscious alternatives to their property erosion problems," Halley said.

Protecting the lakes is serious business in Winter Park, which plans to try several techniques to restore its lakes. The city raises about \$500,000 a year for cleanup projects through its monthly



wanted to do more. Rather than just control noxious weeds, Leffin said the city wants to take a holistic approach. Concentrating on storm water will allow Maitland to help prevent pollutants such as chemicals and metals from washing off roads and into the lakes.

But it hasn't been all smooth sailing to get to this point.

Former Maitland lakes advisory board chairman Ed Rhoads said he's glad to see the city taking charge of its lakes, but he wishes the plan had been put in place sooner.

"Finances have slowed us down," Rhoads said. "And there has been some dissension on the board."

This year differences over new laws governing motorboats prompted the resignation of Ar-

stormwater utility fee.

This summer, Winter Park started work on a \$600,000 project to build a pond behind the Ninth Grade Center. It will help filter pollutants from stormwater runoff into Lake Virginia. In the fall, Winter Park leaders expect to begin a \$200,000 project that will use a super-cleaning chemical to treat stormwater runoff entering Lake Osceola.

Maitland officials acknowledge that it would have been good if the city had started its program earlier, but they said their plan is on schedule.

"We're behind Winter Park," Pirino said. But "we're ahead of every other city in the county that doesn't have this program." Besides, he added, Maitland's lakes are clean enough for people to swim in.

## Boat ramp rules will be rebuilt

### Lake size and noise limits may become part of formula

By Will Wellons

OF THE SENTINEL STAFF

Orange County is revamping its rules that control the construction of all boat ramps. But some lake watchers worry the county is just treading water.

County staff members are drafting a new law that would require commissioners to consider the size of a lake and potential noise problems and water quality damage before approving a ramp.

The law also could regulate how many boats are allowed on lakes.

But at least one commissioner and several lake watchdogs contend the proposed ordinance may be too vague to stop any ramp from being built.

Commissioners examined a boat ramp ordinance at a meeting last week before sending it back for more work. It could be months before there is a public hearing on the proposed law.

Commissioner Vera Carter said she thinks the law needs teeth.

"There is nothing in this language that gives us the clout to turn down a boat ramp," Carter said.

Carter wanted lakes classified. Some lakes, for example, are too small for motorboats, she said.

Dividing county lakes into strict



Carter

categories would be difficult, said Nick Sassic, Orange's environmental supervisor. "You really need to take it on a case-by-case basis."

The proposal worries activists who work to protect the Butler and Conway chains of lakes.

Ann Connelly, secretary of the Butler Chain Conservation Association, said in a letter to commissioners that the proposed standards for ramps are "too subjective and without the substance that will provide the protection to conserve Orange County lakes."

Kay Jones, an activist on the Conway Chain, said county regulators shouldn't make a blanket statement about all the lakes in Orange County. If the county does not protect its good lakes, it will only have bad ones, she said.

Any new law has to regulate more than the number of boats on a lake, Jones said. "It has to deal with water quality."

Sassic called the proposal presented to commissioners "only a start," but he said it is better than the county's current rules, which do not consider water quality.

Commissioners instructed Sassic to meet with lake groups representing the Butler and Conway chains before bringing the draft back to the commission.