

# CONTINENTAL

COUNTRY CLUB



A RESIDENT OWNED-COMMUNITY

MAY 19, 1999

Mr. Bruce C. Wirth, P.E.  
Director, Resource Management Department  
Southwest Florida Water Management District  
2379 Broad Street  
Brooksville, Fl. 34609-6899

Dear Bruce:

First let me thank you and your people for the high level of interest and professionalism demonstrated by your concern for the LAKE OKAHUMPKA problems.

I believe the meeting here at Continental on the morning of May 18th was most valuable and will lead to the best possible solutions in the management of all aspects relative to LAKE OKAHUMPKA.

So that we may follow up with a meeting in early fall of 1999, the following are the subjects we would like to have you investigate and perhaps recommend action thereto:

1. Accurate flow maps of all drainages into and out of LAKE OKAHUMPKA.
2. An analysis of the hydrology of the HOG EYE SINK as it is related to subject lake.
3. An analysis of the effect of the CHITTY CHATY CREEK canal plug, as well as the anticipated effect of removal of the plug.
4. An examination of the Florida Power berm with recommendation as to action that might be taken to replace or repair.
5. Reexamination of the following statement made by Mr. Wirth during the May 18th meeting. "We have not found anything recent to alter the system" (sic)" Refer to comments by Mr. Hank Crull about Flat Woods Road earth berm as well as changes in farm practices and irrigation in the LAKE DEATON AND LAKE HARRIS areas.
6. Investigate possibility that water is being diverted in areas on private land not visited during investigations to date.
7. Update USGS-SFWMD hydrology chart of LAKE DEATON and LAKE OKAHUMPKA, File 80-733 by Simonds and German, 1980.

# CONTINENTAL

COUNTRY CLUB



A RESIDENT OWNED-COMMUNITY

Enclosed for your information is a copy of coverage by the DAILY COMMERCIAL, a local newspaper, and meeting attendance sheet.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Bill Mitchell'.

W. L. "Bill" Mitchell  
Temporary Chairman  
"SAVE OKAHUMPKA" Committee  
54 Seminole Path  
Wildwood, FL 34785  
352-330-2084

/mab

Enclosures

bcc

## LOCAL STATE

### Roundup

#### No injuries in Tampa tornado

TAMPA — A small tornado tore through an industrial neighborhood near Ybor City, Tampa's night club district, Tuesday. The funnel cloud traveled down Adams Drive and touched down at least three times, ripping sheet metal off roofs and knocking down truck trailers. No injuries were reported.

"It hit the residential neighborhood nearby, but we have had no injuries," said Tampa Fire Rescue Capt. Bill Wade. "The wind blows houses there would not have withstood the wind as well as these prefab buildings."

The tornado touched down around 6:12 p.m., he said, several hours after businesses in the neighborhood closed for the day. Wade said the tornado struck earlier, injuries would have been likely.

"We dodged a bullet. Definitely," he said.

Tampa firefighters stationed nearby watched the tornado toss debris into the air.

"If we see something like that going by we know it's time to go to work," said Capt. Fred Green, of Tampa Fire Rescue.

The tornado touched down around 6:12 p.m., he said, several hours after businesses in the neighborhood closed for the day. Wade said the tornado struck earlier, injuries would have been likely.

"We dodged a bullet. Definitely," he said.

Tampa firefighters stationed nearby watched the tornado toss debris into the air.

"If we see something like that going by we know it's time to go to work," said Capt. Fred Green, of Tampa Fire Rescue.

#### Oriental fruit flies found in Tampa

TAMPA — Agricultural workers fanned out across Tampa's interbay peninsula setting and checking fly traps Tuesday after two Oriental fruit flies were discovered.

The fly is "one of the most potentially destructive fruit fly pests in the world, second only to the Mediterranean fruit fly," Florida Agriculture Commissioner Bob Crawford said Tuesday.

The two male flies were found Monday in a single trap near MacDill Air Force Base, he said.

Crawford said the Oriental fruit fly can damage or destroy more than 170 kinds of fruits and vegetables, making it imperative to act quickly.

Adult female Oriental fruit flies will deposit between 10 and 100 eggs under the skin of a host fruit or vegetable. Larvae hatch and tunnel through pulp, rotting it, in much the same fashion as the Mediterranean fruit fly.

Crawford said state and federal agriculture inspectors began intensive trapping in an 85-square-mile area of the find, which was about two miles north of the base.

#### 7 counties to get new area codes

TALLAHASSEE — Seven Florida counties will be split off from the 941 area code in southwest Florida beginning next fall, the Public Service Commission decided Tuesday.

Polk, Okechobee, Hardee, Highlands, DeSoto, Glades and Hendry counties will get a new area code, which hasn't been chosen yet, under the plan approved by a 3-member panel of the PSC.

People in those counties can start using the new area code starting Sept. 20.

Original plans to make the area code 241 were scrapped because of fears that was too close to 941 and would be confusing.

The counties that will remain in the 941 area code are: Manatee, Sarasota, Lee, Charlotte, Collier, and the mainland portion of Monroe County, The Florida Keys will remain in the 305 area code.

The new code will be the 13th in Florida.

Also going into effect next fall will be area code 321 in parts of central Florida.

## Time-Warner airs local television show

### 'News Makers' reaches Sumter County viewers

By DIANNE COPELON  
Daily Commercial Staff Writer

LEESBURG — Television viewers in Sumter and Marion counties can now tune in to The Daily Commercial's News Makers program each day through an arrangement made with Time-Warner Communications this week.

For Sumter County, the programming is a first.

"We're the first Time-Warner

client to provide local television shows in Sumter," said Daily Commercial Publisher Jim Perry, who produces News Makers, a magazine-style half-hour TV show aired seven days a week. "We were also the first on Comcast in February 1997 with a local show for area viewers."

Ron Brumm, Time-Warner's technical operations manager for the Marion, Sumter and Lake area, confirmed that the News Makers' broad-

cast in Sumter is the first local program Time-Warner has aired in any of the three counties.

Time-Warner is providing leased access to Channel 19, Brumm said.

"It took the purchase and rearrangement of some equipment to make it work," Brumm said. The plan will also allow Time-Warner to provide local programming to residents in Clermont, Groveland and Mascotte late in July.

Perry said advertisements promoting "News Makers" in The Daily Commercial were noticed by Sumter residents, who called and wanted to see the show.

South Lake residents have also

expressed interest in the show, he said.

"It's very important to bring 'News Makers' to Sumter County," said Perry. "We're the local newspaper for them and we want to expand that coverage to bring relevant issues now available in print to cable TV."

He said that several "specials" about Sumter County issues are already on the drawing board. Already, the show has dealt with Sumter County topics and personalities, but until now, Sumter residents have had limited access to the program.

"We've had shows on the Lake Panasoffkee restoration project and

Sumter County Commissioner Tiny Rutter has been in our studio discussing the controversial Florida Turnpike exit," he said.

This week's magazine is a special 30-minute edition devoted entirely to restoring Lake Griffin, said Perry.

"News Makers" focuses on the people and quality of life issues that make the area unique.

Hosted by Joe Rada, the program opens with a special guest and moves into video features about people throughout Lake and Sumter counties. The interviews are done by Daily Commercial staff reporters.

Special editions are devoted entirely to...

Please see SHOW, A4



Continental Country Club resident Hank Cr... stands in the grass where Lake Okahumpka was once located. The waters have receded about four feet.

Staff photo by Craig Litten

## Lake level sinking

### Residents voice concerns about Lake Okahumpka

By JIM MOAD  
Daily Commercial Staff Writer

WILDWOOD — State officials say the water level of Lake Okahumpka is low because it hasn't been raining, but area residents wonder if there may not be other causes.

"Lack of rain is the primary reason Lake Okahumpka is low," Bruce Wirth told a filled-to-capacity audience of Continental Country Club residents on Tuesday.

Wirth, the director of resource management at Southwest Florida Water Management District, explained that the water level is "only several hundredths of a foot below what it was in 1982, which was a record low year."

Asked by a resident of the manufactured-home community why nearby Lake Deaton had a higher water level than Lake Okahumpka, Wirth referred to a hydrograph that showed the water level elevations of both lakes from 1975 to pre-

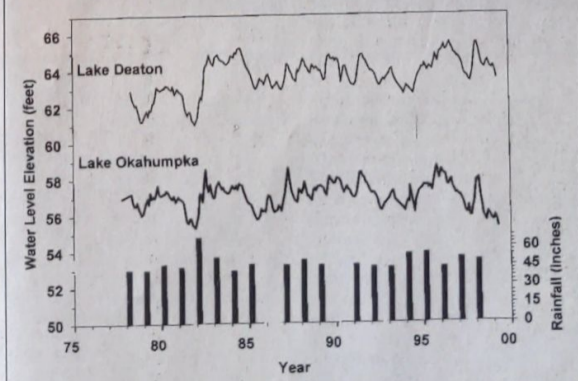
sent, and the rainfall in inches for that same period. "A 20-year record," he said, "is not sufficient to determine a correlation ... besides, it doesn't rain the same everywhere."

Bill Mitchell, a leading organizer of CCC residents to "save" the lake, while agreeing with Wirth that lack of rain may be a contributing factor to the low water level, suggested other causal reasons, such as muck farming and berms (plugs) in surrounding area waterways. He also suggested that the "plug" that had been put in the canal that winds through Continental to the lake be removed.

Several years ago the canal was dredged without authorization. To settle the matter with authorities, the developer of Continental agreed to plug the canal.

In reference to this canal, Sumter County Commission Benny Strickland remarked, "It's impossible to put a boat into it because of the lack

### LAKE WATER LEVELS, 1975-TODAY



of rain."

Wirth agreed that removing the plug might be a partial solution to raising the level of the lake, but he saw others as well.

"We are only in the initial stage of our investigation," he said. "There are many factors to consider. If the plug in the Continental

canal was removed, allowing water to flow freely into the lake, the natural cleansing ability of the surrounding ground would be lost. Also, there's always the chance of unwanted nutrients flowing into the lake."

Many residents of CCC asked

Please see SINKING, A4

## Sumter approves building motions

By JACOB OGLES  
Daily Commercial Correspondent

BUSHNELL

Construction was the main concern at the Sumter County Commission meeting Tuesday night. Motions were passed concerning beginning three new projects in Bushnell and finishing another project in Wildwood.

With the fiscal year coming to a close in June, Tiny Rutter, Sumter County District 2 commissioner, said he was concerned about receiving grant money to pay for three new government buildings being constructed over the next two years in the county seat.

According to Rutter, if construction process doesn't begin before the fiscal year ends, the County Commission will lose a \$100,000 grant. In a project with a budget more than \$2 million, he said this grant is not expendable.

"We need to proceed with all three buildings immediately," he said.

The three buildings are a low-security prison, a tax and property collections office, and a building to house the State Attorney and public defender.

According to Gloria Hayward, Sumter County clerk and auditor, the attorney and defender's offices must be attached via a covered walkway if the county plans on receiving state money for the building.

After the commission approved a motion to begin construction plans, board attorney Randall Thornton said notices advertising engineer positions would be sent out to the appropriate outlets.

A point of controversy arose over a decision made by the commission during last week's meeting concerning a different construction plan. Bids were opened last week from contractors seeking to supervise renovation of the Sumter County Government Office at 901 Industrial Dr. in Wildwood.

D.B. O'Keef Construction presented the lowest bid. However, the commission accepted the bid of R.E. Graham Construction, which was charging more than \$50,000 more for the project.

Thornton said this decision was made because of a clause in the lowest bid adding a condition the other bids did not include.

The D.B. O'Keef Construction contract noted a shortage of drywall in the state and would not be responsible for project delays caused by this shortage.

"We can't award the contract to a

Please see SUMTER, A4

## Summer fun on hold for some in Mount Dora

with such a debilitating condition.  
Egan's attorney, Bob Wesley, objected to the request because of the state's plan to present murder charges to a grand jury, although he told the judge "Ms. Egan does not want to see her daughter suffer."  
The hospital didn't object to the

tent to make the decision.  
"Ms. Smith has made a difficult choice, a choice which she has the right to make," Conrad said. "This court has found that she is competent to make that choice."  
Egan, 68, is charged with two

Smith in an earlier boy friend  
ing for her mother.  
When Smith went to retrieve  
paperwork about the proposed  
Egan shot her and then fired  
boyfriend, missing him, investi  
said.

# SINKING

**Continued from A3**  
what they could do to reduce the contaminates from seeping into the lake.  
"Well, you can start by taking a look at what pesticides and fertilizers you put on your golf course ... what residents put on their lawns" Wirth said.  
"All of these pollutants find their way eventually into the water."  
Henry "Hank" Crull, a CCC resident, who is also committed to "saving" the lake, had heard that Wildwood Estates, which is located on the west bank of the lake, was siphoning out lake water through six-inch pipes to use on lawns and shrubs.

This rumor was denied by Bob Snyder, a Wildwood Estates resident, who also attended the "fact-finding" meeting.  
Wirth pledged that the water district would thoroughly investigate all the concerns of Continental residents.  
"In the event it is learned that lack of rain is the primary cause for the low water level of Lake Okahumpka, this doesn't mean there isn't a possibility for improvement. The culverts along the Florida Power right of way need to be examined more closely. There may be a connection with the Hog Eye sink."  
At the conclusion of the meeting, Gail Bass, State Rep. Everett Kelly's legislative aide, suggested that another meeting be convened in the fall to review progress.

# SUMTER

**Continued from A3**  
company with a conditional advantage," Thornton said.  
Archie Lowry, contractor for O'Keef

would be punished for delays caused by circumstances outside of their control.  
"A contractor is not in control if a supplier does not provide the dry-wall," he said. "The contracts protect all

clause, but Thornton said the mission would then have to be the bidding. Rutter said this needed to be finished within days and that time could not be ed on r

**S**  
**Cont'**  
to one  
"Ne  
dios o  
tion h  
ing in  
viewe  
Make  
La  
Chan  
excep  
LSCC  
at 8 p  
So  
late J

# CONTINENTAL

COUNTRY CLUB 

A RESIDENT OWNED-COMMUNITY

November 18, 1999

Mr. Al Coogler, Chair Ex-Officio  
Withlacoochee River Basin Board  
Southwest Florida Water Management District  
2379 Broad Street  
Brooksville, FL 34609-6899

Subject: FY2000 Funding Request for Lake Okahumpka  
Outfall Retrofit

---

Dear Mr. Coogler:

This letter is a request for assistance in restoring Lake Okahumpka's water surface levels to pre-1997 elevations. The following paragraphs briefly explain sequential events and efforts that have transpired in attempt to address the declining levels of Lake Okahumpka in Sumter County.

In September 1998 Mr. Dick Meek, a resident of the Continental Country Club and member of the Save Okahumpka Committee, requested the District to investigate the declining level of Lake Okahumpka. In response, the District launched an investigation and for the past year I have had the pleasurable opportunity to work with District staff in earnest efforts to determine the cause. My active participation in the investigative process enabled me to spend many hours accompanying staff during field investigations.

The investigation included a comprehensive look at the conveyance system and the watershed. This necessitated coordination efforts with St. Johns River Water Management District and Lake County Water Authority. Two public meetings were conducted at the Continental Country Club with the most recent being on October 14, 1999. During this meeting District staff presented the investigative findings to Mrs. Gale Bass of State Representative Everett Kelly's office, Sumter County Commission Chairman Benny Strickland, and approximately 75 citizens. The staff investigation concluded that the 1997 replacement and subsequent failure of two culverts, which allow water to both enter and exit the lake, to be a major contributing factor in the recent lake level decline.

# CONTINENTAL

COUNTRY CLUB



A RESIDENT OWNED-COMMUNITY

These culverts are in the berm situated along the southern edge of the lake and link the lake to the wetland to its south which in turn flows to Hogeye Sink. The erosion induced lowering of these culverts has created a draining effect on the lake. From this, public use and enjoyment of the lake has been restricted due to loss of boat ramp access, increased aquatic vegetation, and navigational difficulties associated with low water levels. Staff recommended that one corrective option would be to replace and modify the culverts which would then retain water on the lake side of the berm instead of allowing the water to flow into Hogeye Sink. This would aid in restoring the lake to previous levels.

Please consider this letter as a formal request for the Withlacoochee River Basin Board to take on this project in efforts to restore the water surface elevations of Lake Okahumpka to pre-1997 levels. Implementation of this project would aid in restoring the public use and enjoyment of the lake.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'W. L. Mitchell', written in a cursive style.

W. L. "Bill" Mitchell  
Chairman

Save Lake Okahumpka Committee of The Continental Country Club  
Board of Directors

cc: Representative Everett A. Kelly, House District 42  
Withlacoochee River Basin Board Members  
E.D. Vergara, Executive Director, SWFWMD  
Bruce Wirth, P.E., Director, Resource Management Department  
Gene Altman, E.I., Project Manager, Resource Management Dept.  
Benny Strickland, County Commissioner, Sumter County