Clean Lakes Initiative Program

Our award winning Clean Lakes Initiative Program (CLIP) is in full swing. In 2005 CLIP won a National Association of Counties (NACo) Achievement Award in the Environmental category. CLIP received funding from Mayor Crotty’s Residents and Neighborhoods Empowered to Win (ReNEW) again this year and helped sixteen lakes and numerous citizens. The Lakes Management Section completed over $227,000 worth of lake improvement projects.

The most common and under appreciated projects were the seven (7) lakes that had hydrilla treatments funded through CLIP. If left uncontrolled, overgrowth of hydrilla can destroy a lake’s recreational value in just one growing season. Thanks to CLIP and ReNEW some very nice lakes such as Waunatta, Irma, Rose, Marsha, Sarah, Mary Jess and Lake Reeves received hydrilla treatments that they could not have otherwise afforded.

Two lakes, Anderson and Tyler, had alum treatments scheduled. These treatments, with follow up plantings of submerged aquatic plants will help maintain a beneficial balance of clear water and aquatic plants. These lakes will have high recreational and aesthetic value for many years to come. Lake Speer had hyacinths treated and Lake Mary Jess had a stormwater abatement system created through CLIP. An exotic plant removal and native replanting program was done for the residents of Crooked Lake.

In 2005 two lakes stood out as shining examples of how CLIP works to help lakes and the communities that surround them. Lake Susannah was the first Lake Ambassador in Orange County. Using CLIP/ReNEW funds, massive stands of cattails that prevented lakefront residents from seeing, much less accessing, their lake were removed and the shorelines replanted with native plants. In the spring of 2005 Ron Novy and Lakes Management Section staff met with residents on Lake Susannah and demonstrated how, if they worked together, they could all have showcase lakefronts with natural native beneficial shoreline plants. Ron worked with the residents to obtain state and local permits, arranged to have the cattails removed and all the lots replanted with natural native plants, including pickerelweed and soft rush. The project has been completed and the residents are very happy with the results. In addition, the City of Orlando and the builders of Baldwin Park saw the work being done on the County side of Lake Susannah and implemented their own shoreline restoration project.

The other special CLIP activity was the aquascaping project for the community of Orlo Vista and Lake San Susan. The Orlo Vista Park on Lake San Susan has a large stretch of shoreline that was being taken over by cattails and torpedo grass. Residents looking at the park from their backyards and visiting the lake from the observation pier at the park could only see one or two types of plants and very few birds or other aquatic dependent animals. Lakes Management Staff worked with the park and residents within the community to help the lake and host an
aquascaping educational workshop for residents, professionals and anyone interested in aquascaping. By partnering with the Florida Lake Management Society we were able to provide a quality program, free of charge, to fifty participants that included an expert speaker from the University of Florida, written material, plants for the shoreline and lunch. The participants learned about beneficial plants and how to design healthy littoral zones for the shoreline in the morning. After lunch, they went out to the lake and planted thousands of native plants acquired with CLIP/ReNEW funds. Thus creating a beautiful, healthy and diverse shoreline that benefits everyone.

We have secured another year of funding for CLIP in 2006 and look forward to an even more exciting year of projects. E-mail cleanlakes@ocfl.net to learn more about CLIP.