

STATEMENT OF THE LEON COUNTY COUNTY-WIDE WATER RESOURCES CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Leon County Board of County Commissioners specifically charged the County-Wide Water Resources Citizens Advisory Committee with the responsibility to recommend policies that would strengthen the linkage between water resources and land use. Based on this charge, the Committee reviewed a proposed resolution regarding Porter Sink within Lake Jackson, and has the following recommendation:

Although Lake Jackson is at full pool (86' NGVD) now, and that the efforts of Leon County, in partnership with other state and local agencies, to restore and protect this valuable resource have been effective and productive, the hydrology of Lake Jackson appears to be not yet fully understood by the public.

During extended periods of low rainfall, Lake Jackson can completely disappear by draining into Porter Sink, a natural geological feature underlying Lake Jackson. This natural draining of Lake Jackson rejuvenates the lake by exposing the dry lake bottom to sunlight and oxygen, which decomposes accumulated organic sediments and other materials that can negatively impact water quality if allowed to accumulate. Absent these naturally occurring dry cycles, Lake Jackson would experience many of the same problems other local lakes whose outlets have been impounded suffer from, including low dissolved oxygen levels, thick layers of organic mud that offer poor habitat for fish and other native species, and "floating islands" of vegetation. Although Lake Jackson has some continuing water quality issues in certain areas of the lake, natural water level fluctuation keeps Lake Jackson in overall good health.

Regardless, Porter Sink is sometimes seen an impediment to maintaining a constantly full pool or as a conduit for pollutants to enter the aquifer as the lake levels decrease with each dry period. During these dry periods, invariably there are proposals made to construct a permanent structure around Porter Sink so that the lake will not go dry again.

However, a permanent control structure is not advisable under any circumstances, based on issues including cost, permitting, jurisdiction, potential flooding, and the likelihood of another sink opening up in a different location. Additionally, the act of impeding the natural fluctuation of water levels in Lake Jackson in order to create a permanent pool will eventually hinder boating by the creation of "floating islands" as experienced in other nearby lakes.

The Committee therefore submits the attached resolution to the Board stating their opinion that a permanent control structure around Porter Sink is inadvisable, and that the Board of County Commissioners should not support any proposals to construct such a structure, permanent or otherwise, around this natural sink. The Committee also recommends that the Board consider passing a similar resolution supporting the natural cycles of Lake Jackson and the beneficial effects of periodic water fluctuations.

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the above statements were duly approved by the Leon County Countywide Water Resources Citizens Advisory Committee at its meeting on May 4, 2015.



Mr. Robert Scanlon, Chair

Dr. Jim Cavanagh
Dr. Jennifer Cherrier
Mr. John Folks
Mr. Eric Friall
Mr. Lee Killinger
Mr. John Labie
Mr. Robert Scanlon

cc: Leon County Board of County Commissioners
Vincent S. Long, County Administrator