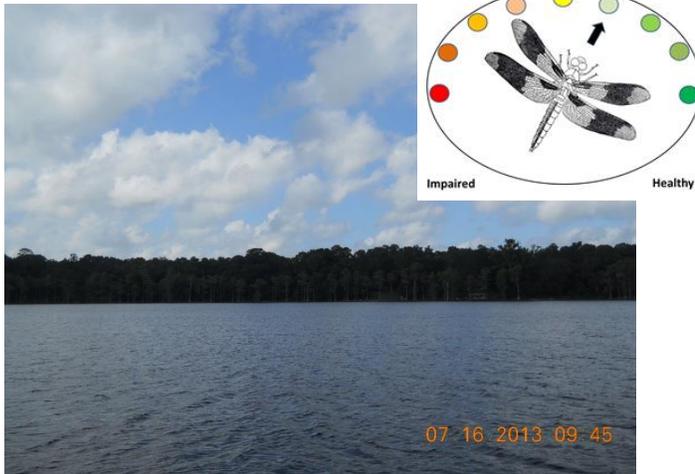


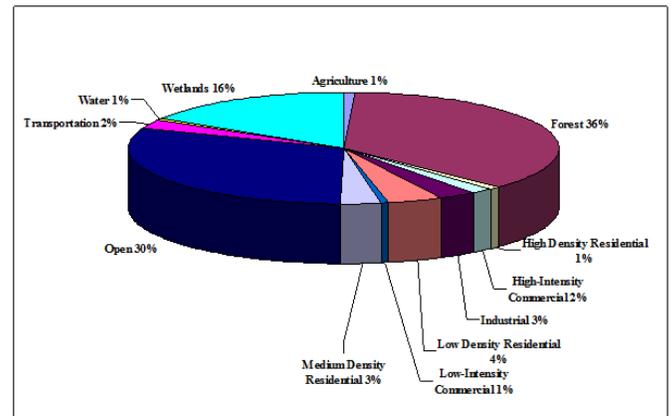
Waterbody: Lake Bradford



Basin: Lake Munson

The Bradford Brook Chain of Lakes is composed of the cypress rimmed Lakes Bradford, Hiawatha and Cascade and is located in western Leon County. Water typically flows east via Bradford Brook into Lake Cascade. Lake Hiawatha receives flow from Lake Cascade via a culvert beneath Capital Circle Southwest. Much of the water entering Lake Bradford is via Lake Hiawatha, though at times Grassy Lake flows into Lake Bradford. On occasion, flow is reversed and Lake Bradford flows into Lake Hiawatha which then flows into Lake Cascade. In addition, groundwater sources of flow are possible.

As shown in the pie chart, approximately 17% of land uses in the 11,148 acre Bradford Brook watershed are agricultural, residential, industrial, commercial or transportation. Increases in stormwater runoff, and waterbody nutrient loads can often be attributed to these types of land uses.



Background

Healthy, well-balanced lake communities may be maintained with some level of human activity, but excessive human disturbance may result in waterbody degradation. Human stressors may include increased inputs of nutrients, sediments, and/or other contaminants from watershed runoff, adverse hydrologic alterations, undesirable removal of habitat or riparian buffer vegetation, and introduction of exotic plants and animals. State water quality standards are designed to protect designated uses of the waters of the state (*e.g.*, recreation, aquatic life, fish consumption), and exceedances of these standards are associated with interference of the designated use. Leon County also conducted a vegetation survey to evaluate the health of floral (plant) communities.

Methods

Surface water, sediment samples and a Lake Vegetation Index (LVI) were collected to determine the health of Lake Bradford and met the requirements of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP).

Results

Nutrients

The nutrient thresholds and results are found in Table 1. According to FDEP requirements, Numeric Nutrient Criteria (expressed as an annual geometric mean) cannot be exceeded more than once in a three year period.

Table 1. FDEP's chlorophyll *a*, total nitrogen and phosphorus criteria for lakes applied to Lake Bradford.

Colored Lake	Chlorophyll- <i>a</i> (20 µg/L)	Total Nitrogen Threshold 1.27-2.23 mg/L	Total Phosphorus 0.05-0.16 mg/L
2004	3	0.34	0.01
2005	3	0.35	0.02
2006	2	0.46	0.02
2007	2	0.68	0.03
2008	5	0.75	0.03
2009	3	0.64	0.03
2010	4	0.61	0.03
2011	11	0.83	0.05
2012	12	0.59	0.03
2013	13	0.67	0.02
2014	3	0.69	0.02

While state numeric nutrient criteria were not exceeded, the upward trend of chlorophyll *a* results (2011-2013) should be noted. Lake levels were low at the time, so nutrients were concentrated, possibly enhancing algal growth. Chlorophyll *a* results dropped back to historical levels in 2014.

Metals

Lead levels in Lake Bradford have consistently exceeded Class III water quality standards and are thought to be due to both relict and potentially current sources. Relict anthropogenic sources of lead in the area include a former shooting range and the former Dale Mabry airfield, while possible current sources include the Tallahassee Regional Airport (aviation fuel). The acidic nature of these lakes causes increased lead due to the enhanced solubility

of lead under low pH conditions. Because acidic systems like the Bradford Chain of Lakes are more susceptible to metals contamination, exceedance levels tend to be lower than a similar metal level in a more alkaline system.

[Click here for more information on metal levels in Leon County waterbodies.](#)

Floral Assessment

The Lake Vegetation Index (LVI) score for Lake Bradford was 68, placing the lake's vegetative community in the healthy category.

Twenty four plant species were found during the survey. The native species, pond cypress (*Taxodium ascendens*), was the most dominant plant followed by red maple (*Acer rubrum*), needleleaf Ludwigia (*Ludwigia arcuata*) and maidencane (*Panicum hemitomon*). Other native shoreline vegetation included lesser creeping rush (*Juncus repens*), buttonbush (*Cephalanthus occidentalis*) and dotted smartweed (*Polygonum punctatum*).

Unfortunately, torpedo grass (*Panicum repens*), water spangles (*Salvinia minima*), and Chinese tallow (*Sapium sebiferum*), all listed as Category I Invasive Exotics by the Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council, are invasive exotics that are a concern in Lake Bradford. Alligator weed (*Alternanthera philoxeroides*) was the only Category II Invasive Exotic found in the lake.

[Click here for more information on the Lake Bradford LVI.](#)

[Click here for more information on common exotic and invasive plants in Leon County wetlands and waterbodies.](#)

Other Parameters

Other water quality parameters appear to be normal for the area and no other impairments were noted.

Conclusions

Based on ongoing sampling, Lake Bradford met the nutrient thresholds for the East Panhandle Region; and the floral community is considered “healthy” by the LVI. Rising chlorophyll *a* levels were a concern but values fell to historical levels in 2014. Lead levels in Lake Bradford have consistently exceeded Class III water quality standards and are thought to be due to both relict and potentially current sources.

Thank you for your interest in maintaining the quality of Leon County’s water resources. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions.

Contact and resources for more information

www.LeonCountyFL.gov/WaterResources

[Click here to access the results for all water quality stations sampled in 2014.](#)

[Click here for map of watershed – Sample site BOB.](#)

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