

JOHNS LAKE ASSOCIATION NEWS LETTER

May 2025

The Johns Lake Association is a Not-for-Profit Corporation with Objectives to:

- Through environmentally appropriate means, reduce the quantity of undesirable aquatic vegetation to an acceptable level.
- Maintain the healthy lake water levels.
- Develop and implement a long-range plan aimed at improving the quality of the lake water.
- Improve all phases of recreation on the lake.
- Provide input to governmental regulation bodies on issues that affect Johns Lake.
- Promote and provide a forum for sharing of information on scientific, administrative and financial aspects of lake and watershed management.
- Affiliate with the Florida Lake Management Society.

The Newsletter is published by the Johns Lake Association and is provided to members and other interested parties to provide information concerning current conditions on the lake and other issues affecting the lake.

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Message from the President

Thanks to our Board VPJB Bricklemeyer, we are now a 501 C3 not for profit organization.

We had a very success Holiday Boat Parade in December and on the next page you will see Karen's overview of the parade.

The lake level has gone down a lot this Winter and Spring, but this is good since the rains have already started and the lake is expected to go up considerably this Summer. Hurricane season begins on June 1 and ends on November 1.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) recently said, *"During our last survey, we didn't see enough hydrilla to warrant a treatment. If you have an abundance of hydrilla, please send us a location where you see a hydrilla problem and also pictures of the "bad plants" so we can assess. FWC will conduct a survey at the end of the growing season to determine if stocking additional carps in the Fall will be needed."* Our contact at FWC is Richard.poole@myfwc.com.

Although Eelgrass is a beneficial plant for Johns Lake, we currently have much higher amounts of it than normal and it is currently a nuisance. Please see page 6 for more details.

Although our lake is very healthy, let's continue to be careful when fertilizing our yards and don't remove the plants on your waterfront.

If your neighbors are not on our email distribution list, please have them go to our website www.johnslakeflorida.com and sign-up.

I hope you enjoy our newsletter and hope to see you on the lake!

Rick Stuebing
President, Johns Lake Association

Johns Lake Holiday Boat Parade

By Karen Quill

On Saturday, December 14th, we celebrated the 23rd annual Johns Lake Boat Parade! We had fourteen (14) beautifully decorated boats who showed their holiday spirit as they motored around the lake for the enjoyment of those on the shore who clapped, cheered, and showed their appreciation for the boaters.

For all the boaters who participated in the parade, you deserve another big SHOUT OUT for taking the time to decorate your boat and putting in the hard work so that so many on the shoreline can enjoy the parade.

THANK YOU to all those boaters who were in the parade. We sincerely appreciate you!

We tried something different last year. For the first time we posted a survey on our Facebook site and asked you whether you preferred the parade to be on a Saturday, or a Sunday. The results were that Saturday was the preferred choice, so we planned accordingly, and the weather cooperated! We'll continue to ask these kinds of questions in the future. If you haven't visited our Facebook page, here is the link: [Facebook](#)

We'd like to thank our sponsors for this event! These are local business owners who are BIG supporters of our mission of keeping Johns Lake clean and healthy! We encourage you to patronize and support these great businesses that reside right here in our own community!

- **Yellow Dog Eats:** www.yellowdogeats.com
- **Carr Flooring America:** www.carsflooringamerica.com
- **Central Florida Boat Lift & Repair:** www.centralfloridaboatlift.com
- **Get Lit Productions:** www.getlitproductions.com
- **McKinnon Groves (no website)**
- **The Larrivee Real Estate Group:** www.LanaLarrivee.com
- **Veterans Marine Repair:** www.veteransmarinerepair.com

Thank you to our past and new Parade Sponsors! Anyone interested in becoming a sponsor for the 2026 Boat Parade please send us an email at admin@johnslakeflorida.com for information.



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Stay Safe in the Sunshine State: Alligator Safety Tips

By Lana Larrivee

The American alligator, found in all 67 counties, is a natural part of Florida's ecosystem. While serious incidents are rare, being aware and taking precautions is key to staying safe.

Alligator Safety: What You Need to Know

Alligators are most active between dusk and dawn, particularly in warmer months (April to October). Whether you're a longtime resident or just visiting, keep these tips in mind when near freshwater bodies:

DO NOT:

- Swim in freshwater lakes or canals at night or in the early morning when alligators are most active.
- Feed alligators—it's illegal and dangerous. Feeding them causes them to lose their natural fear of humans.
- Approach or provoke any alligator, regardless of its size. They can move surprisingly fast on land in short bursts.
- Let pets or children play near the water's edge. Alligators can mistake small animals and children for prey.
- Ignore warning signs posted near lakes, canals, or retention ponds.

DO:

- Stay at least 30 feet away from any alligator you see.
- Keep pets on a leash and far from the shoreline.
- Only swim in designated swimming areas during daylight hours.
- Be cautious during nesting season (May–June) when female alligators may act aggressively to protect their nests. Their nests are usually located in heavy brush on the shoreline.
- Report nuisance alligators (over 4 feet and posing a threat) to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) at 866-FWC-GATOR (392-4286).

Know the Signs of Alligator Presence

- Slides or smooth areas on banks where an alligator has entered or exited the water
- Trails or flattened vegetation near water
- Eyes or snouts poking above the water's surface

Respect Wildlife, Stay Safe

Alligators are a vital part of Florida's environment. By staying alert and following these safety tips, you can enjoy the outdoors while minimizing risk. Share this guide with friends, neighbors, and visitors to help keep everyone safe around Florida's beautiful lakes and wetlands. Stay safe and enjoy the wild responsibly!

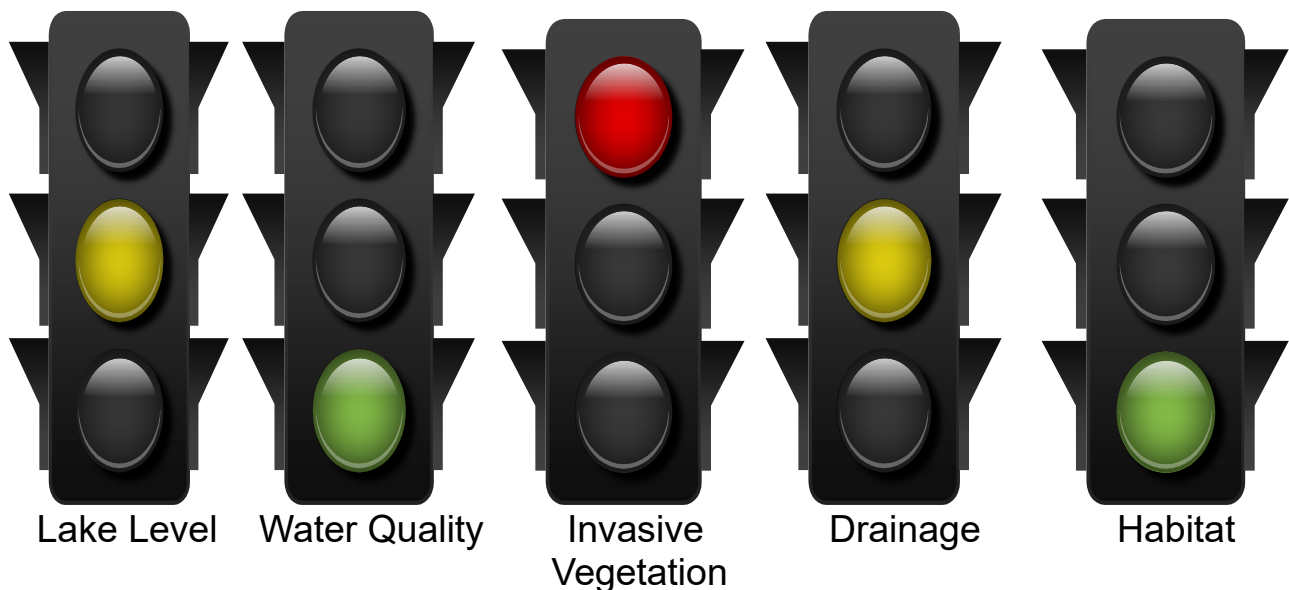
Johns Lake Quality Indicators

By Rick Stuebing

Over the years, the Johns Lake Association (JLA) has dealt with numerous potential problems and threats to Johns Lake. JLA identified five Quality Indicators that are monitored and reported in the newsletters. They included Lake Levels, Water Quality, Invasive Vegetation, Drainage and Habitat.

An easy-to-understand reporting tool has been developed using a stoplight approach with a brief explanation for each quality indicator. The JLA uses data provided from the county and other organizations and will make some subjective measurements. The intent is for lakefront owners to be able to easily see where the JLA feels issues involving the lake need attention or additional discussion in the newsletters.

Johns Lake Quality Indicators - Current Status



Lake Level (Improving)

The lake level has receded significantly from the recent high level caused by Hurricane Milton in October 2024. Significant rainfall and/or future hurricanes will most likely raise it again. It is good that the lake is currently low so there is sufficient room for the level to go up this Summer. This is a normal cycle for Johns Lake.

Water Quality (Stable)

Water quality has been steadily improving during the past thirteen years according to the county testing. As the Orange Groves are replaced with homes, the amount of run-off into the lake has decreased considerably which has contributed to better water quality.

Invasive Vegetation

(Problem)

Hydrilla, Cuban Bulrush and other invasive species are an ongoing concern for Johns Lake. The county will continue to treat as needed and will occasionally add additional grass eating carp to augment their efforts. If you catch a carp, please put it back. This quality indicator is constantly changing, and a combination of weather and treatments can affect the status either way. The hydrilla issue will never go away.

Although Eelgrass is not an invasive species, it is currently a problem. Please see the article on eelgrass in the next page.

Drainage

(Improving)

Johns Lake drainage (aka outfall) into Lake Apopka is an ongoing concern. The canal requires regular maintenance to keep it flowing. When we experience heavy rain and high water the canal is the only way to keep the lake from flooding. Also, we are working with the county and other Government entities to get funding for regular maintenance. The maintenance is expensive, and it takes a lot of effort to get the funding approved.

Habitat

(Stable)

Even with the new developments around Johns Lake it is still a vibrant habitat for wildlife. We have otters, alligators, turtles, bald eagles, osprey, ducks and many other species of waterfowl. And, as always, the lake is a premier fishing site.

Eelgrass

By Rick Stuebing

Currently, Johns Lake has a high amount of Eelgrass. Although Eelgrass is not an invasive species, it is currently a nuisance for navigation and can get wound around boat propellers. Eelgrass, also known as tape grass or wild celery (*Vallisneria spiralis*), is a native, submersed aquatic plant found in Florida. It plays a vital role in Florida's freshwater ecosystems, providing habitat and food for a wide range of aquatic life, including fish, turtles, manatees, and birds.

In fact, eelgrass forms the base of a highly productive marine food web. The unique habitat also produces food and oxygen, improves water quality by filtering polluted runoff, absorbs excess nutrients, stores greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide, and protects the shoreline from erosion.

According to the FWC, FWC doesn't treat eelgrass as it is a native aquatic plant. If you feel you need an access from your shoreline, please apply for an Aquatic Plant Control permit to control eelgrass within an access corridor or amend an existing permit to add eelgrass if you have already an FWC permit.



Eelgrass

Lakefront Fertilizer Guide

Each Spring we are noticing higher levels of algae blooms. With all the new development on Johns Lake we must try to minimize lakefront runoff. One of the causes of algae blooms is improper use of and overuse of fertilizers.

Many fertilizers contain nitrogen and phosphorus. Excess nitrogen and phosphorus are known to cause excessive hydrilla growth, algae blooms, fish kills, and other water quality problems. Anyone applying fertilizer should understand how to prevent pollution from the nutrients they spread on their landscape.

County Lakefront Fertilizer Ordinance Requirements

The County has regulated fertilizer application since 2009 to help protect our lakes, rivers, springs, and groundwater. This ordinance was updated in 2017 and Lake County has a similar ordinance.

- Stores that sell fertilizer must display information about our ordinance
- Never use fertilizer containing phosphorus (unless a soil test proves it is needed)
- Never use fertilizer containing nitrogen in summer months (trained people are exempt)
- If you choose to apply fertilizer with nitrogen, make sure 50% is slow-release nitrogen type
- Keep fertilizer *more* than 15 feet away from wetlands and water bodies
- Use a broadcast fertilizer spreader that has a deflector shield up, fertilizer that spills or could end up on sidewalks, driveways, or streets
- Keep your grass clippings and yard debris out of roads, gutters, and storm drains
- Ensure your landscape contractor complies with the fertilizer ordinance, too!

It is better if you buy fertilizer that contains zero nitrogen or phosphorus. Look for products that contain minerals such as iron and magnesium, or are labeled as containing, “micronutrients”.

When shopping for fertilizer, please use the following helpful information that is found on the fertilizer bag:

- Where to use the fertilizer (turf, trees, plants?)
- Percentage of Nitrogen, Phosphorus, and Potassium
- How much of the nitrogen is “slow-release” type
- How much to apply
- How much area your bag of fertilizer will cover
- Which number to choose on your spreader dial

Soil Tests in Orange County

In Orange County, you must always get a soil test before applying fertilizer that contains phosphorus – all year long, not just during the rainy season. Contact the Orange County Agricultural Extension Service (also known as IFAS) for information about having your soil tested: 407-254-9200.

Together we can all help to keep Johns Lake clean and beautiful. Improper fertilizer application, over fertilizing, and fertilizing within fifteen feet of the lake shore or berm will cause long term problems. ***Improper use of fertilizer is what caused Lake Apopka to become so polluted so let's not let this happen to Johns Lake!***

Let's all continue to do our part to keep Johns Lake an enjoyable place to live!

www.johnslakeflorida.com
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[Johns Lake Association Facebook Page](#)