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RIVER NEWS

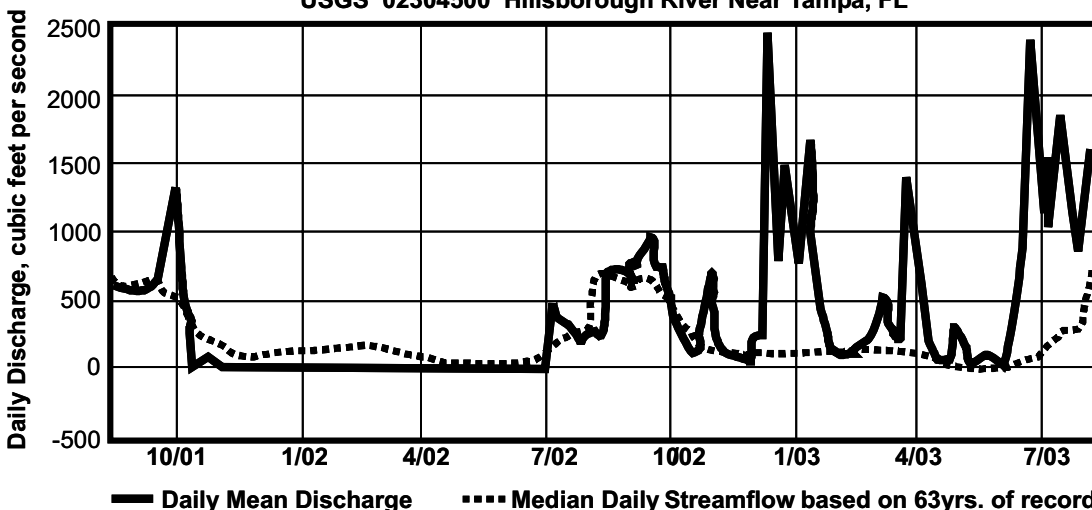
Serving Tampa, Temple Terrace and Hillsborough County

Publications

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- RIVER NEWS

What a Difference a Couple of Years Can Make!

USGS 02304500 Hillsborough River Near Tampa, FL



Recent flow levels in the Hillsborough River reached well above the historic median levels recorded over the past several years. Nearly daily doses of widespread rainfall has helped to stoke the river's supply of water which helps to continue to meet the area's potable water demand. A visit to the City of Tampa's dam at Rowlett Park leaves no doubt about the seemingly endless supply of water that currently is available thanks to the return of the summer rainfall pattern. The roar of water going over the dam is a welcome sound in comparison to the quiet that resulted from no-flow conditions not that long ago. What a difference a couple of years can make.

The strong and frequent freshwater inflows into the lower Hillsborough River have been a welcome sight to those downstream of the dam. However, small boats going upstream of Sulphur Springs have had to fight a constant strong downstream current, making upstream travel difficult. Another off-shoot of freshwater flows has been reports of alligators moving farther downstream than usually found in the river corridor.



Recent reports of alligator sightings as far south as Dr. MLK Boulevard have been made. Residents along the river are advised to always be aware of the

Frequent rains reduced the need for use of the river's water for irrigation. In fact, many places along the river have had standing water due to strong storms that moved through the area, at times dropping several inches of rain.

possibility of alligators in the river. They should especially be alert now that they seem to be expanding their territory thanks to freshwater flows reaching farther down the river.

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River Board & TAC Meet to Take Up River Issues

TAC Meeting Summaries

The TAC met on July 15th at the Environmental Protection Commission of Hillsborough County. Among discussion and reports at the meeting were:

An extensive briefing on the state's Impaired Waters Rule Development;

A briefing on a comprehensive shoreline restoration plan under development by the City of Tampa Mayor's Beautification Committee for waterways within Tampa;

An update report on the 40th Street Widening Project in relation to TAC recommendations for improved stormwater treatment techniques;

Continued discussion regarding the City of Tampa Parks Department plans for upgrading the Hillsborough River canoe launch facility at Rowlett Park and related security concerns;

A report/discussion regarding the proposed agency action by the Southwest Florida Water Management District in regard to Two Rivers Ranch and Crystal Springs water use permits;

The August 19 TAC meeting was held at the Tampa Port Authority. Items presented and discussed included:

Updates by the TAC Chair on the August 1st River Board meeting and recent river-related activities;

Continued discussion regarding the Two Rivers Ranch/Crystal Springs permits which are under administrative hearing process;

An update report regarding the upgrading of the Hillsborough River canoe launch facility at Rowlett Park;

Review of ten Tampa Port Authority Minor Work Permit Applications; Briefing on upcoming Hillsborough River public participation events; and

Briefing on recent Hillsborough River levels.

The September 16 TAC meeting will be held at the Temple Terrace Public Works Department and the October 21st meeting will be held at Lowry Park, Shelter 118. Both meetings begin at 1:30 p.m. To review the most up-to-date River Board and TAC agendas visit our website at www.hillsboroughriver.org and click on *Agendas* under the River Board/TAC logo or contact the River Board/TAC staff at 273-3774, extension 323.

RIVER BOARD MEETS & COVERS A WIDE ARRAY OF TOPICS

The Hillsborough River Interlocal Planning Board met on Friday, August 1, 2003 at the historic Tampa Union Train Station. The River Board was provided with a number of briefings and reports including:

A briefing on the state's Impaired Waters Rule development;

A briefing on the Southwest Florida Water Management District's proposed agency action in regards to Crystal Springs/Two Rivers Ranch;

A report on four Tampa Port Authority permit applications, including the 40th Street Widening Project;

A status report on recent Hillsborough River levels;

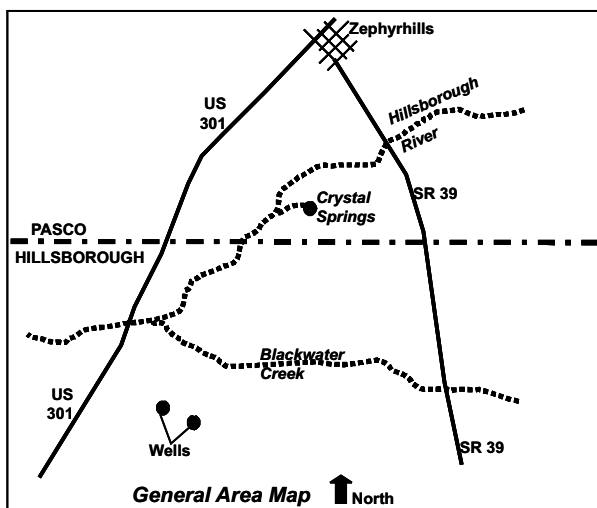
A status report regarding upgrading of a canoe launch facility at Rowlett Park and objections to the project in relation to the project's proximity to the City of Tampa dam and other security concerns;

Reports on public communication/awareness projects including the posting of signs marking the river along roadways;

A briefing on a City of Temple Terrace greenway trail that proposes to incorporate a bridge crossing of the Hillsborough at Whiteway Drive;

A report regarding the provision of public access at Blake High School along the waterfront.

To review the most up-to-date River Board and TAC agendas visit our website at www.hillsboroughriver.org and click on *Agendas* under the River Board/TAC logo or contact the River Board/TAC staff at 273-3774, extension 323.



A Sense of Place on the Hillsborough River

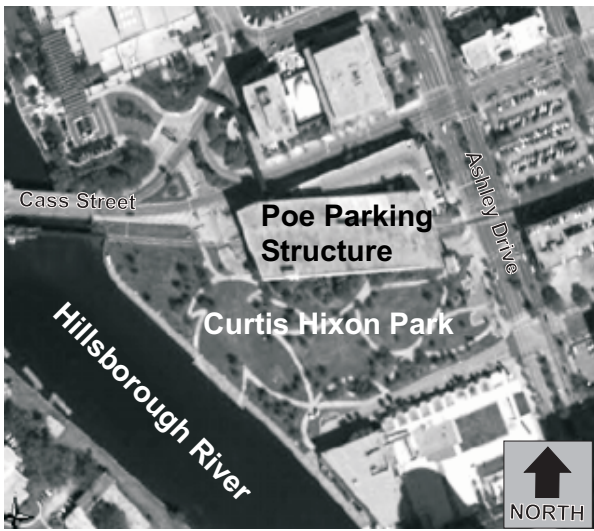
One issue the River Board & TAC have been monitoring over the past few months is a proposed agency action by the Southwest Florida Water Management District that would allow more withdrawal of water from Crystal Springs while reducing withdrawals at two wells on Two Rivers Ranch. The water withdrawn at Crystal Springs is used for commercial bottling/distribution. The wells are used for irrigation purposes in operation of the ranch.

The importance of these considerations to the Hillsborough River can be appreciated by knowing where the wells and spring are located in relation to the river. Both the wells and spring are located in the upper reaches of the river. Crystal Springs provides the river's base flow, especially during dry periods and ground water in the area of the wells is believed to contribute to the river's flow as well.

The applicant maintains that by reducing groundwater withdrawals at the wells that those reductions will mitigate the proposed additional spring water withdrawals, essentially not having any effect on the river. The proposal was challenged and is to be reviewed in a state hearing process.

Coming Soon to a River Near You RIVERFEST 2003

Make plans now to attend the 2003 City of Temple Terrace *RiverFest* which will be held on Saturday, October 18, 2003. *RiverFest* will be held at Riverhills Park in the City of Temple Terrace along the shores of the Hillsborough River. The one-day event will feature canoe rides and races, educational displays, environmental exhibits and demonstrations by various aquatic teams. Be sure not to miss out on this fun-filled day to spend along the river! For more information about *RiverFest* contact the Temple Terrace Parks & Recreation Department at 989-7180 or 989-7181 and ask for Marshall Duncan.



Taking Another Look

Plans for downtown Tampa's waterfront area are being reviewed by city officials. Planning efforts directed to the redevelopment of the downtown area, including Curtis Hixon Park, have been in the works for a number of years. A new arts district with a new Tampa Museum of Art, History Museum and other public amenities have been under consideration. Plans proposed a high-rise residential tower as part of the new look to help spur interest and activity in the downtown urban core as well as a reconfigured park space. The plans worked around the existing Poe parking garage structure located on the park's north perimeter.

New consideration is being given to removing the parking structure and reconfiguring the residential component of the plan so that it reduces encroachment into the public park space, fits more with the scale of that area's other features and doesn't impede the view vista across the river to the unique skyline provided by the University of Tampa's minarets. Revisions to the plans are intended to safeguard the public's continued access and enjoyment of the waterfront along the Hillsborough River as well.

The face of downtown Tampa has changed many



times over the years. This 1924 photo shows the downtown riverfront when it used to be a working waterway with commercial docks and warehouses

lining the shore. Recent plans will certainly improve on the aspects of public access and enjoyment of this great natural resource, the Hillsborough River!

BEAUTIFUL RIVER! TAC Recognized for River Clean Up Efforts

Keep Hillsborough County Beautiful recognized the Hillsborough River Technical Advisory Council as 'Group of the Year' for its on-going efforts in helping to clean up the Hillsborough River. TAC Chair Sylvia Espinola accepted the award on behalf of the River Board and TAC.

The TAC initiated annual Hillsborough River clean ups in 1987 with a small clean up event in the Sulphur Springs area of Tampa. The TAC sponsored another event the following year which grew in



scope and participation. The City of Tampa, Temple Terrace and the County now sponsor the events.

Over the past 17 years, well over 100 tons of trash and debris have been collected as a result of river clean up efforts throughout the river corridor. What started out several years ago as a small band of individuals pulling mattresses and shopping carts out of the river has evolved into several events where everyone in the community can show their appreciation of the river and the environment through their participation. Be watching for news of the upcoming Tampa Mayor's Hillsborough River & Waterways Clean Up coming in November 2003!



**YOUR River Board
wants to hear from YOU!
Call the River Hotline at
272-5940**

RIVER NEWS

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Scientists uncover further evidence of hydrologic connections between Florida springs, rivers and other water bodies....

