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A PUBLICATION OF THE HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY CITY-COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

RIVER NEWS

Serving Tampa, Temple Terrace and Hillsborough County

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Tampa Begins Stormwater Filtration to River

The City of Tampa took a big step towards improving the water quality going into the lower Hillsborough River. In early February a dedication ceremony marked the installation of the first of several stormwater filtration devices designed to cleanse stormwater prior to its release to the river. These first filtration devices are installed in Epps Park and in the vicinity of the park.

The sediment traps don't really look like much. They are round, pre-cast concrete structures with piping that comes out of both ends. On one end the stormwater enters the structure and it is directed into a chamber that slows the water enough to allow sediment pollution to settle out. The water is then released out the other side into the river. The sediment traps are design so that they do not impede drainage. Once it can be determined how often the sediment traps fill up, they will be

cleaned out on a maintenance schedule that keep the trap operating efficiently. These types of devices are not designed to filter out common floatable pollution such as styrofoam or plastics.

Keeping the Hillsborough River clean isn't a cheap proposition. The City, under Mayor Iorio's direction, is planning installation of several more such devices. This year alone, an investment of just less than half-million dollars will go to seeing the river gets cleaner. Funding for these projects will come as a shared expense from sources such as the City of Tampa utility tax and agencies such as the Southwest Florida Water Management District and the Environmental Protection Commission of Hillsborough County.

But it is worth it. As many at the dedication ceremony observed, the Hillsborough River is a thing of beauty, a wonderful asset worth protecting and improving.

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River Board/TAC Meeting Summaries

Shattles & Dingfelder Lead River Board for 2004

The River Board met January 23, 2004 at the Tampa Union Train Station. City of Temple Terrace Councilwoman Linda Shattles was elected River Board Chair for 2004 and Tampa City Councilman John Dingfelder was elected Vice-Chair. The River Board took action on the following:

- Approved 14 Tampa Port Authority minor work permits.
- Supported the TAC proceeding with introducing the concept of the Scavenger 2000 De-Pollution Boat to local governments/agencies and exploring funding alternatives.
- Requested a letter be sent out by each jurisdiction as part of an anti-litter campaign.
- Directed a letter be sent to the Tampa Parks & Recreation Department supporting extension of the Hillsborough River trail northward from Blake High School to Stewart Middle School.
- Supported continued efforts by the TAC to produce an educational brochure focused on river pollution.

The River Board was provided with other informational reports. The River Board was provided with a briefing on the status of the Cypress Creek Town Center development in Pasco County, on recent river levels, public access projects in the downtown area and on public outreach efforts by the TAC.

The TAC met on February 17th at the Tampa Union Train Station.. Among discussion/reports at the meeting were:

: A status report on the City of Tampa Water Use Permit Application renewal by the Southwest Florida Water Management District.

Reviewed and supported 8 Tampa Port Authority minor work permit applications for projects located on the Hillsborough River.

A status report on recent Hillsborough River levels.

An update report on review of the Cypress Creek Town Center development in Pasco County by regulatory agencies.

An update on revisions to an educational brochure for community youth, focused on the effects of pollution on the river.

A presentation of a manatee awareness sign to be posted at the Sulphur Springs Park & Pool. The sign was realized through collaboration between the River Board/TAC and TECO.

Review of a project submitted by the River Board/TAC for consideration to the Planning Commission's 22nd Annual Community Awards Program.

The TAC met March 16th at the Tampa Union Train Station. Issues discussed and reports made at the meeting included:

A report on springs studies by the Southwest Florida Water Management District.

An update on marine contractor licensing in Hillsborough County.

Review of Tampa Port Authority minor work permits.

A Master Water Plan Projects Update from Tampa Bay Water.

A status report on recent Hillsborough River levels.

Discussion on River Board/TAC Public Communication/Outreach Projects, including refinements and production of an educational brochure.

Briefing on a meeting with Tampa Mayor Iorio

All 2004 TAC meeting will be held in the 2nd floor conference room of the Tampa Union Train Station, 601 N. Nebraska Avenue, Tampa, unless otherwise noticed. Meetings begin at 1:30 p.m. To review River Board and TAC agendas visit our website at www.hillsboroughriver.org and click on *Agendas* under the River Board/TAC logo or contact staff at 273-3774, extension 323.

River Levels Keeping Steady

Rainfall brought by relatively strong fronts moving through the area over the past couple of months has helped to keep the Hillsborough River relatively full and flowing. Reservoir levels have

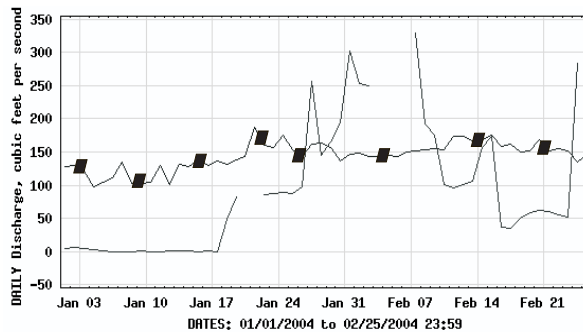


USGS 02304500 HILLSBOROUGH RIVER NEAR TAMPA FL

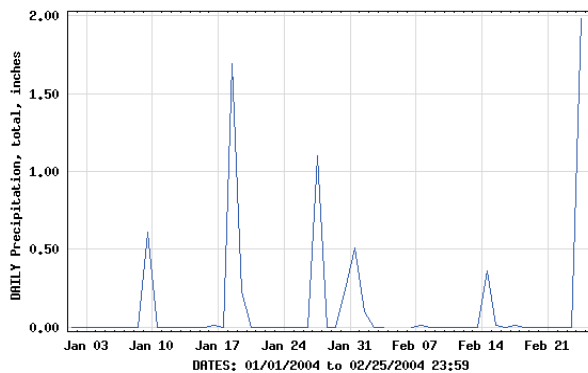


EXPLANATION
 — DAILY MEAN GAGE HEIGHT ♦ Equipment malfunction

Provisional Data Subject to Revision



EXPLANATION
 ■ MEDIAN DAILY STREAMFLOW BASED ON 64 YEARS OF RECORD
 — DAILY MEAN DISCHARGE



fluctuated with rainfalls, dipping below the top of the dam at times. But that hasn't always meant there wasn't a flow as indicated in the middle chart. Flow releases can be seen once enough rainfall was captured, raising the reservoir level to full or nearly full capacity. Rises in the reservoir can usually be seen a few days following rain events, giving time for the rainfall in tributaries upstream to make their way downstream.

Although this is very good news for this time of year, remember to **ALWAYS CONSERVE WATER** no matter how much rain is falling!



The Shape of Things to Come?...Maybe

Charged with helping to improve the over-all health of the Hillsborough River through its enabling legislation, the River Board and TAC are always on the lookout for cutting edge information to achieve that goal. Recently, a new approach to improve a waterway's overall quality was recently shared with the River Board and TAC. This new means of achieving improved water quality is through a multi-purpose craft dubbed the *Scavenger 2000 De-Pollution Boat*.

The craft has the capability to remove petroleum and solid particulate litter from a waterway's surface. The craft can literally scoop up floating objects in its path. The craft is designed such that it can separate out some fluids from the water as it passes through a patented filtration system on board. The litter, oils and greases are stored in containers on the craft and then disposed of properly. The craft can be equipped with a wench that allows for removal of heavier, submerged articles.

In addition, the Scavenger 2000 can be equipped with a specially developed pump system that injects high levels of oxygen into a waterway as the craft is operated. An on-board water cannon can be used in a variety of ways such as in fighting fires or for dislodging litter from shorelines which can subsequently be picked up by the craft. The water cannon can also be used to direct the craft or used as auxiliary propulsion. The craft's design gives it a shallow draft and has the capability to make stationary 360-degree turns if needed, allowing the crafts use in shallow, confined areas. In addition, the craft operates at a relatively slow speed so threats to wildlife, vegetation or other users on a waterbody are minimal.

A craft such as the *Scavenger 2000* has other practical uses in a community surrounded by water or with a river. The craft can serve as an extra set of eyes on a waterway which could improve security and enforcement of marine craft regulatory zones. Cameras are an option for installation. It could be a back-up to law enforcement and emergency services, and particularly helpful in the instance of a fire. Such a craft could allow for monitoring of waterway resources

by local governmental departments such as parks, the Tampa Port Authority or water sampling by various agencies. It would give a higher profile presence on local waterways while doing its cleaning functions.

The *Scavenger 2000* has been in trial use by the City of Miami over the past year and has demonstrated success in helping to keep the Miami River clean. That municipality recently signed a multi-year contract for continued use of the craft. Other Florida municipalities are

considering contracting for their own crafts as well as some European cities.

Cost is a considerable factor in contracting for the use of the *Scavenger 2000*. The company that builds and operates the craft contracts the use of the craft and cover the costs associated with craft operation. That includes the captain, insurance, maintenance, fuel, registration and licensing and any other operational costs. The anticipated cost is somewhere near \$300/hr. A contract specifies that the craft be used a minimum of 40-hours per week annually. Terms are negotiable according to company representatives.

While the concept sounds exceptional, there would be the challenge of finding funding for such a venture. The most logical way to bring such a craft to our river and bays would be to share the benefits the craft provides by sharing the cost. A shared cost schedule would allow the craft to operate in various parts of the area and cost could be allocated in relation to how much time is allotted for the craft to work in various waterways, knowing that it would be on emergency call at all times.

In relation to the Hillsborough River specifically, a *Scavenger 2000* could help to keep the river cleaner from solid pollution and make the river look more appealing. It could invigorate the river downstream of the dam with life-stimulating oxygen when no water flows over the dam. It could be an enforcement and safety tool to keep the community safe.

Further consideration of this new approach to waterway safety is warranted. Understanding all the facts about the craft's capabilities and operation and how it could impact the river based on scientific review is necessary before moving forward. Once those factors are clarified, steps could begin to find partners willing to share in the benefits and the cost.

Each year for 11 years the City of Tampa has sponsored a Hillsborough River clean up for one day and approximately 10-tons of trash and debris are collected. Imagine having a craft picking that trash and debris up on a regular basis. Seems like an attractive proposition, eh?

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



RIVER NEWS

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Change Service Requested

The City of Tampa installs the first of several stormwater treatment sediment traps to help keep the Hillsborough River clean.

