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A PUBLICATION OF THE HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY CITY-COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

RIVER NEWS

Serving Tampa, Temple Terrace and Hillsborough County

Setting A Minimum Flow

District Staff Proposes 20cfs Minimum Flow for Lower Hillsborough

Yesterday....and....Today



Flow at Tampa Electric dam in the late 1890s was used for hydro-electric production. An updated structure is operated by the City of Tampa primarily for water supply purposes.



Today, the river's primary role is seen as a regional water supply source. The frequency of no-flow days have increased since the 1970s, limiting freshwater inflows downstream of the dam.

Future expectations for flows in the Hillsborough River were proposed by staff for the Southwest Florida Water Management District in a draft report to the District Governing Board September 26, 2006. The proposed target minimum flow to supply the lower river with freshwater is 20 cubic feet per second (cfs) but that comes with some caveats based on seasonality and rainfall in the Hillsborough River basin. The draft study is an in-depth study of historical conditions in the lower Hillsborough River, downstream of the dam at Rowlett Park. The scientific analysis provides a basis for a proposal to establish a fresh or near-fresh water zone from the dam downstream towards Sulphur Springs. The data analysis cited in the study supports this area between the dam and the spring as deriving the most environment benefits and should be able to be achieved with a high level of frequency.

The study provides caveats for extreme dry conditions when the river would be flowing at a lower rate due to natural conditions. These lower-flow or no flow periods would be based on flow rates at a gage monitoring site in the upper river in an attempt to mimic natural conditions in the river's flow. The study considers a wide variety of scientific data and factors including salinity and dissolved oxygen levels, shoreline conditions and aquatic species use of the river in setting these flexible flow rates.

The study alludes to where a 20cfs downstream minimum flow would come from. A variety of sources could be available including diversions from Sulphur Springs, perhaps Blue Sink, and treated waste water. The issues of a recovery strategy are not part of this study but will be produced as a separate study/document.

This draft proposal now goes to an independent peer review panel for study and the panel's comments should be brought back to the District within 90 to 120 days. At that time further discussion of the proposal will take place before the Governing Board takes action to adopt a rule that would formally establish the minimum flow for the lower river.

Publications

- RIVER NEWS
- Newsletter
- Permits Report
- Economic & Demographic Summary
- Tampa Neighborhood News

Inside

- River Flows, p. 2
- Always Conserve, p. 2
- Meeting Summary, p.3
- Fall River Events, p. 3



Water Conservation Critical All Year

Rainfall in the Hillsborough River basin area fell short of historic norms leaving the area to deal with lower than normal water supply levels and facing fall months when rainfall patterns start to dwindle in frequency. In short, we're going to have to be careful with our water in the near-term to do more for the long haul.

Most folks in the rest of country would think that if any place has an abundant water supply Florida would be the place. Water use in the area would indicate even some people living here have that same misconception. Water is a limited commodity and is becoming more scarce as more people move to the area and there are more demands for its use in irrigation, cleaning, industrial uses, production of a variety of drink brands and other minor uses that when added up accumulate to a fairly large amount of water being used.



This isn't to say that the water being used is wasteful in all cases or even frivolous. But there are limitations that we should all strive for. Local government and the water management district have programs to help us cut our water use, saving the resource and saving us money

in the process. Ask your local officials or the District for a water use assessment. They will come to you and review your water use and make suggestions as to how you can be more water-efficient and save you some money.

Local governments can get on board this water saving train by enacting water use limitations, especially for irrigation. One day a week year-round watering of most outdoor plants is sufficient. Cities and counties in the area should adopt a consistent across-the-board water use rule when it comes to irrigation. That consistency will help residents understand the limitations, encourage self-compliance and help in enforcement efforts.

Every drop of water that is extracted out of the river's natural flow upstream of the dam is a drop that doesn't have the chance in achieving restoration of the lower river. While some are blinded to the environmental benefits derived by freshwater inflows to the lower river by the loss of revenue of a commodity that would normally flow to the bay, there are economic values to having a healthy lower river that flows by homes, businesses and riverwalks. Just ask the fish or manatee.

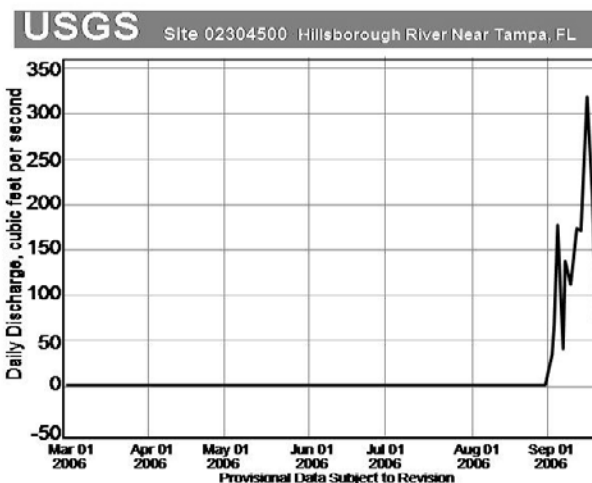
Flow Returns to the Replenish the Lower Hillsborough River



Finally, after a long, relatively dry summer that seemed to stretch on forever with little rain, the Hillsborough River basin started to capture some spotty, precious rainfall in

late August and had a bit more rain in early September. Typically, summer months in Florida produce abundant rains that fill area rivers, lakes and groundwater tables but this year the rains just didn't seem to materialize, leaving the area on the brink of drought yet again.

The following flow graph for the months of March through early September demonstrate that there was no flow released to the lower Hillsborough River for six months. This was due to the lower than normal rainfall received in the area over that time period.



While the area was only short about 2 inches of normal rainfall over the summer, the rains that did come to the area did not occur in the upper river basin where it would have had the most benefit. From this point forward, the next few months are historically drier as weather patterns change, resulting in much fewer rain events and river flows and levels will likely start to drop again. This is yet another reason to start conserving water now and try to stretch the water supply as far as we can.

DO YOUR PART.....CONSERVE WATER TODAY!



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



**CONSERVE WATER NOW
KNOW YOUR DAY
LIMIT OUTDOOR WATERING**

FALL RIVER EVENTS

Mark your calendar and plan to attend the following events along the Hillsborough River!

RiverFest 2006

Saturday, October 21, 2006
11 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

City of Temple Terrace
Riverhills Park

329 S. Riverhills Park Drive
Come and marvel at the beauty of the Hillsborough River and see interesting displays of wildlife, environmental education and other exciting exhibits!

For more information contact Temple Terrace Parks & Rec. Department, 989-7180.



Pops In the Park

Sunday October 22, 2006 7 p.m. - 9 p.m.

City of Tampa & Florida Orchestra
Sulphur Springs River Tower Park
Bird Street & Florida Avenue

Plan to attend this park's premier public event, an evening of music and relaxation along the beautiful Hillsborough River. Watch the tower light up and enjoy the music, friends and neighbors! It should be a magical evening!

For more information contact Tampa Parks & Rec. Department, 274-8615.



19th Annual Tampa Mayor's Hillsborough River & Waterway Clean Up

Saturday, November 18, 2006
8 a.m. - till we're done!

Send-Off/assignments/meet-greet at Lowry Park Boat Ramp Area (East of North Boulevard across from Lowry Park Zoo).

Come take part in this great environmental event! Join the community in helping to clean up the river and its surrounding shorelines! Bring gloves,

sunglasses and friends! For more information contact Tampa Solid Waste Department, 348-1111.

Stay for Roll'n On the River activities, music, and free food following the clean up.

Come have fun & explore the Hillsborough River!



TAC Agenda Set to Discuss a Variety of River Issues at October 17th Meeting

The Technical Advisory Council (TAC) is scheduled to meet at the Tampa Union Train Station. Among discussion items and reports that will be made to TAC are:

- An update on regulatory processes related to Dissolved Oxygen Criteria (ADOC), augmentation, and minimum flow for the lower river with a special report on the SWFWMD Governing Board presentation regarding the draft minimum flows proposal for the lower Hillsborough River.
- A presentation/discussion on Tampa Waterworks Park dedication status in Tampa Heights.
- A presentation by SWFWMD staff on Florida Friendly Landscaping & Benefits for Water Resources.
- Review of five Tampa Port Authority Minor Work Permit Applications.
- A status report on recent Hillsborough River levels.
- An update on a riverfront parcel nominated by the River Board/TAC to the Environmental Lands Acquisition and Protection Program.
- A presentation/discussion on the role of the Nature's Conservancy/Trust for Public Lands.
- A briefing on Tampa Port Authority Sovereign Submerged Lands Grant Program allocations.
- A review of upcoming river-related public events along the Hillsborough River.

TAC meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month. All TAC meetings are scheduled to be held at the Tampa Union Train Station, 601 N. Nebraska Avenue, Tampa, second floor meeting room unless otherwise noticed. TAC 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



Morning breaks across the waters of the Hillsborough River, Sunlight shimmers through the leaves above, reflecting the natural beauty that is the river.

RIVER NEWS

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HAPPY
HALLOWEEN!



No Flow

to Lower Hillsborough River
persisted all summer long....
If Tampa depended on flow at the
dam for electrical power today,
the city, at night, would look like
this....

dark, for more than half the year.
Scary.