

Partners in Planning

A PUBLICATION OF THE HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY CITY-COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

RIVER NEWS

Serving Tampa, Temple Terrace and Hillsborough County
Lower Hillsborough River to Be New Home for International Mermaid School and other April Fools' Tall Tails

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



Following efforts to bring more culture and pizzazz to the downtown waterfront, the recent announcement of the opening of the FLorida International Performance School for mermaids, FLIPS, was received with quite a splash. Plans for the school include several public access points along the riverwalk and riverfront hotel lobbies. Class instructional training will include solo swimming, group performances and boat-dodging safety courses. Course evaluation will be on sliding scales.

For further information or to register for next season's classes, contact the FLorida International Performance School, at 904-567-FLIPS.

In other news, a recent discovery in the Upper Hillsborough River has revealed previously undiscovered plant life that mimics faces of children in the flower's face. These plants, rooted in and along the river near Nature's Classroom, appear to have evolved following decades of Tampa area school children making visits to the area. This new species seems to reflect the joy and excitement of area children that visit Nature's Classroom and exude a bright glow from just being near the Hillsborough River. One difference between this new plant species and the children that they emulate is that the plants tend to stay in one place, unlike the kids that take part in the Nature's Classroom experience. Also, the plants are much quieter. Scientists say studies will continue on this new phenomenon.



Inside

- River Board Meets, p. 3
- TAC Meeting Summary, p. 3
- River Flows, p. 2
- Water Conservation, p. 2



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And finally, on an experimental basis, Mr. River was trans-muted into a very large fish. Having followed river-related events for years from the surface, Mr. River wanted a first-hand look at how things really are in the Hillsborough River. This condition should only last for one day and there are no expected side-effects except he may not remember a thing about the experience. Happy April Fools' and have a good Spring!

A Fish Out of Water -

We love the river but are only willing to give it the hope of minimal minimum flow?

Just think, when the citizens in Tampa are limited to one-day watering of their yards, the water savings realized is nearly as much as is needed to provide a meaningful minimum freshwater flow to the lower Hillsborough River.



Imagine starving for a drink on the hottest day you can remember and how cool and refreshing you were once you got

some hydration. Now, think the same way about the lower Hillsborough River, and even the middle river in Temple Terrace, where freshwater is no longer a given. Try not drinking for more than half the year. You and I can't go without freshwater that long but we expect the river to sustain itself and all the creatures that live in and along the river to make it on very, very little freshwater supply.

A historic step will be made soon to set a new, hopefully improved, and slightly higher minimum flow for the lower river. This should be viewed as a first step, not an end

product. We as a river community must strive to raise the bar and keep trying to find ways to ensure all the lower Hillsborough River is given an opportunity to rebound, regenerate, revive. WE CAN start today by conserving water in any way we can, at all times, not just in times of drought or dry seasons.



We can see now the adverse affects OUR over-dependance for water supply has had on wetlands, groundwater and rivers. We as a community, charged with protecting water resources, must demand more of ourselves and our leaders. Continued dependence on non-drought proof groundwater and river resources is a path to an unsustainable future. Constant diversions of water's natural path to the sea precludes many other natural water-dependant processes from unfolding and may lead to a very different future where water is the most precious commodity and success is based on the greatest level of resource protection, not growth.

Water conservation is the wave of the future. Why not start now? Lets lead the way by example.

CONSERVE WATER NOW

KNOW YOUR DAY

LIMIT OUTDOOR WATERING

RAIN SHORTFALL CONTINUES WATER WOES IN AREA

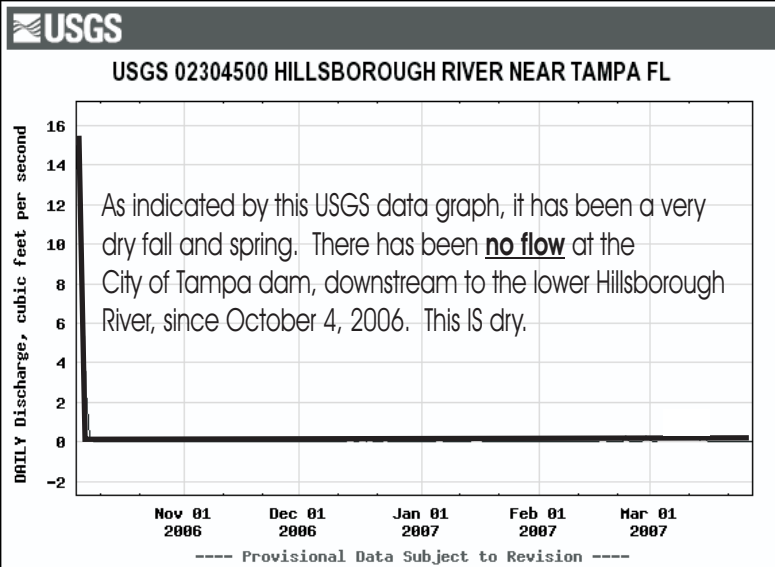


"No rainfall in the foreseeable future" has been the standard statement of area weather reporters over the past couple of months. Scant precipitation in the southeastern US has moved the area into serious water shortages. Not only has it not rained but spring temperatures began ratcheting up over the past months into the 80s, making the already dry conditions even more prevalent. Here in the Hillsborough River basin tributaries that normally contribute relatively significant flows are measuring at well below historic average flow rates for this time of year.

Monitoring trends, weather reports and higher than ever demand for water for irrigation will continue to pull river levels lower. Water managers are carefully watching and calculating just how much water we have and may need to

institute even more stringent water use for the area. So be prepared to cut back further if need be. Reducing our consumption may help but rain is what we need.

And as the man above has done, maybe now is the time for us to embrace change and make the best of it. Conserve water, always.



YOUR River Board wants to hear from YOU! Call the River Hotline at 272-5940 or visit our website at www.hillsboroughriver.org



River Board Meeting Summary

The River Board met at the Tampa Union Train Station February 9, 2006. Among discussion items and reports made at the meeting were:

- The River Board elected Tampa Councilman John Dingfelder as 2007 Chair and Temple Terrace City Council woman Alison Fernandez as 2007 Vice-Chair.

- An update on processes related to river flows: minimum flow, river augmentation and alternative dissolved oxygen criteria (ADOCs) -

The River Board was briefed on impacts to the basin as they relate to Temple Terrace and the City of Tampa. There was discussion regarding recent low water levels in the river in the Temple Terrace area and the impacts that has had on recreation, wildlife and aesthetics in the community. There was discussion regarding the proposed minimum flow for the lower river and other impacts due to withdrawals in the upper Hillsborough River basin on the entire river.

- An update regarding deployment of de-pollution craft in Hillsborough River -

The TAC suggested this issue be approached from another direction. The issue of trash and debris in the river is more of a solid waste issue. The TAC suggested asking the Tampa Solid Waste Department be approached and requested to help direct the deployment of a de-pollution craft in the river. There was discussion regarding contracting with the "Green Armada" on a trial basis to see how effective such an effort would be. River Board Chair Dingfelder asked that a meeting be coordinated with Tampa's Solid Waste and Stormwater Departments, TAC representatives and himself to discuss this project.

- A TAC recommendation supporting Tampa Port Authority Minor Work Permit Applications -

The River Board supported approval of 19 Tampa Port Authority Minor Work Permit Applications as recommended by the TAC.

- A status report on recent Hillsborough River levels -

Water level data for the past year was reviewed. Discussion focused on the past few months' river water levels. There has not been flow at the dam since October 4, 2006. The reservoir has fluctuated but is back up to near-normal levels. Flow into the river from tributaries has been on the decline resulting in lowered river levels. The Temple Terrace area has experienced visible low water conditions over the past month. Continued water conservation and possible rainfall will have to sustain the river in the near-term.

- Former River Board Chair Linda Shattles was recognized for her work and dedication to the River Board. A plaque was presented to Ms. Shattles. She stated she intends to stay involved and informed on river issues.

**Don't be a water-waster!
Fixing leaky piping and
faucets help to protect our
water resources and saves
money!**



DON'T BE A DRIP!

TAC Covers River Issues at January Meeting

The Technical Advisory Council (TAC) met at the Tampa Union Train Station January 16, 2006. Among discussion items and reports made at the meeting were:

- A briefing on the peer review panel report process and the TAC was advised the report on the Lower Hillsborough River would be returned to the Southwest Florida Water Management District (District) within the month.

- A briefing on a Temple Terrace City Council Meeting regarding low water levels in the river. Staff is working with Temple Terrace to improve coordination with the District.

- A briefing on the draft Upper Hillsborough River Minimum Flow Report & Recommendations produced by the District staff. This draft report has been sent to an independent peer review panel for review.

- An overview of the local comprehensive plan updates as they relate to the Hillsborough River. The presentation focused on the City of Tampa plan process.

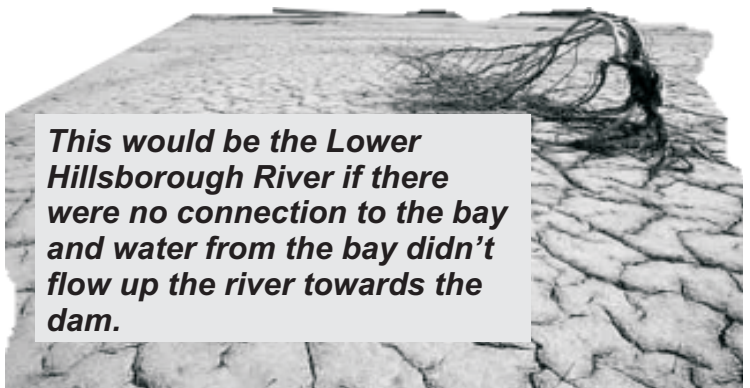
- A review and support for 5 Tampa Port Authority Minor Work Permit Applications.

- A status report on recent Hillsborough River levels

Staff reviewed rainfall data and river levels for the past month. The lack of rainfall was shown to be the primary reason for continued low water conditions in the river. There has been no flow over the dam since October 4, 2006.

- A briefing on an article focused on minimum flow issues for the river that appears in the most recent Tampa Bay Estuary Program's *Bay Soundings* publication.

TAC meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month. All TAC meetings are 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 River Board/TAC logo or contact staff at 273-3774, extension 323.



This would be the Lower Hillsborough River if there were no connection to the bay and water from the bay didn't flow up the river towards the dam.

What you see isn't always what you think it is. Of course the river downstream of the dam seems to always have water in it. But most of the time that is salt water that has filled up the river with water from the bay. While it isn't necessarily always a bad situation, it is when the lack of freshwater inflows that provides for a healthy river lasts for more than half the year. Think about it the next time you want to wash your car or boat....is it worth it? **SAVE WATER NOW!**

RIVER NEWS

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US POSTAGE

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Change Service Requested

Where are you going honey? Off to play
Indian Princess again out in the yard?



Nope, I'm meeting some water
management friends from
Tampa Bay Water and the
Water Management District and
were doing some rain dances to
try to break this dry spell. Have
you noticed how the yard
crunches when you walk on it?!

