

# Partners in Planning

A PUBLICATION OF THE HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY CITY-COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

## RIVER NEWS

*Serving Tampa, Temple Terrace and Hillsborough County*

### FLOW RETURNS to LOWER HILLSBOROUGH RIVER AFTER NEARLY a YEAR



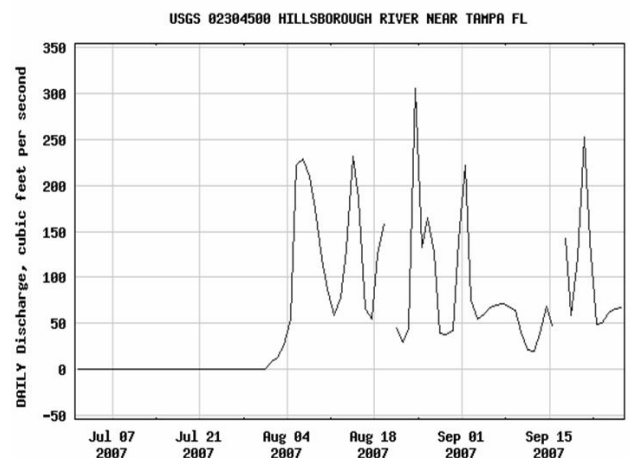
Finally, flow from the river upstream of the dam to the lower river resumed in early August 2007. These freshwater inflows are a welcomed relief from the lack of freshwater flows that lasted nearly a year.

Persistent daily rainfall events brought the moisture needed to replenish the creeks, streams and river to the point that the reservoir overflowed, spilling the much needed freshwater to the river downstream of the dam. As shown

in the graph below, the highest flow spiked around 300 cubic feet per second (cfs) and dropped below 50cfs in mid-September when rain events tapered off. Because of the near daily rains, water demands in the area were reduced for irrigating outside plants. The river in the Temple Terrace area upstream of the dam has regained its vitality and made a significant rebound with river levels rising to more normal ranges.

Although gains have been made in the river's recovery for now, the District Governing Board voted at its September meeting to extend the current Water Shortage Order, which restricts lawn watering throughout the District to one-day-per-week, until Nov. 30. The water shortage order went into effect Jan. 16 and was slated to expire July 31. It was extended through October 30 at the Board's July meeting. Rainfall this September totaled only about 4.5 inches which falls below the historic average rainfall total of 6.5 inches typical for the month. In other words, the Hillsborough basin needs more rain to keep a flow downstream of the dam.

The shortfall of rain, dry atmospheric conditions and subsequent rise in water demand once again suggests we need to maintain our water saving ways and conserve wherever possible. While we head into historically dry months we will need every drop to see the region meet its water needs. Hope for rain in the near future and follow prescribed water restrictions for your area. Together, we can get through another dry season and keep the river moving.



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## WE ARE NOT ALONE

When it comes to potable water shortages, the Hillsborough River area has not escaped persistent dry weather conditions and increased demand for water. We have been successful, so far, in meeting the water needs of the area by a multi-source approach, depending on rivers, the by-pass canal, a second reservoir in south county and very little on desalination. And we know we can always fall back to ground water sources if forced to. Having this multitude of water resources makes this area somewhat secure in meeting the area's current and near future needs. Continued conservation measures and expanded treated re-use programs should help in more water savings into the future.

In the meantime, drought has engulfed nearly a third of the U.S., creating some of the worst water supply shortages in years. In the north east, New York and Baltimore are using temporary water supplies not usually tapped. Thousands of shallow wells in New Hampshire and Georgia have gone dry. In the mid-west, water supply conditions are not any better.

On a short trip to Georgia, Mr. River saw low water conditions in lakes, reservoirs and dry fields and lawns. Athens-Clarke County, located east of Atlanta, is struggling with a dwindling water supply that finds that community with about a month's water supply available. Residents are subject to draconian measures to save what little water is available. **No** outdoor watering is allowed, not even for new plantings. That has impacted businesses providing landscaping for new projects in the area and will likely have a trickle-down effect economically. The lack of water supply won't encourage new development to come into the area but it may get existing residents thinking about changing their outdoor landscaping. Either way, water managers for this area of Georgia get a black eye for lack of foresight and proactive leadership. Oh, and by the way, the fine for illegal watering is \$1,000. No warnings are issued!

Fortunately for us here in the Hillsborough River basin area we have received enough water over the last couple of months to sustain a bit of flow in the river and to replenish area water supplies. Still, not all water supply sources are back to full capacity. The Young reservoir in south county is still struggling to fill back up but weather conditions and demand keep it lower than water managers would like. And rivers, while flowing now, are barely maintaining that flow.

So that we don't find ourselves with only a month's water supply available and even more stringent outdoor water use imposed on the area, we must practice water conservation now. We don't want to find ourselves scraping bottom and

not having enough water to sustain those of us here now and those who come to the area in the future.

The dry season is coming fast and we must save up as much water as we can now for future use. What you do today will impact your water use tomorrow.



## LOWER HILLSBOROUGH GAINS MINIMUM FLOW FOR FUTURE

The Governing Board of the Southwest Florida Water Management District approved the new minimum flows and levels for the lower Hillsborough River, Sulphur Springs and Tampa By-Pass Canal at its September meeting. In addition, a recovery strategy was approved that is expected to provide the water to meet these minimum flows. But don't go looking for a strong downstream current in the river any time soon. Some of the plans to achieve continuous flow aren't due to be implemented until 2015.

Much of the water proposed to achieve the lower Hillsborough River minimum flow is proposed to be taken from Sulphur Springs. Additional withdrawals, depending on the season and weather conditions, are believed to be environmentally sustainable and won't have an impact on the spring's functionality that it has provided for that portion of the river for numerous years. In the future Sulphur Spring could be pulling double duty in helping to meet a minimum flow and to augment water supply. The minimum flow set for the Tampa By-Pass canal doesn't raise much expectation for a revitalization of the old Palm River. The minimum flow passed by the governing board is zero. Can't get much more minimum than that. There is part of the plan that calls for re-hydrating lands in that area of the bay where the canal now makes erratic outfalls into the bay using highly treated waste water.

The benefits of a near-constant freshwater zone downstream of the dam for 2 miles are understandable and desirable. After the last few years with no flow days at the dam stacking up to amount to more than half the days in a year we needed to assure that the lower river will get some relief with an influx of freshwater, however minimum that amount happens to be.

It is also important to note that a gain in one place means a loss in another. Sulphur Springs and the by-pass canal will both contribute to the river's minimum flow. The effects of redirecting or moving those waters' distribution point into the river will be worth watching. Wisely, this minimum flow plan includes extensive study ahead of time and monitoring as the plan progresses. It can be revised or suspended at any point if environmental data signal a negative impact is occurring in the river or from a donor water source.

Hopefully, nevermore shall the lower Hillsborough River be lacking some level of freshwater inflow that mimics natural conditions. It has been a very long time in achieving but worth the effort and wait.

**YOUR River Board wants to hear from YOU! Call the River Hotline at 272-5940 or visit our website at [www.hillsboroughriver.org](http://www.hillsboroughriver.org)**



## **River Board Considers TAC Recommendations**

The Hillsborough River Interlocal Planning Board met at the Tampa Union Train Station May 15, 2007. Among discussion items and reports made at the meeting were:

- An update report regarding the adopted Hillsborough River Minimum Flows & Recovery Strategy. The River Board was briefed and discussed how this strategy may impact manatees' access to the Sulphur Springs lagoon.
- A discussion on Cities of Tampa and Temple Terrace Comprehensive Plans updates progress.
- A report on the City of Temple Terrace River Watch Task Force's activities and goals.
- A report on Upper Hillsborough River issues including a proposed landfill in Pasco County proximate to Hillsborough River, extraction of uranium ore at CF Industries in Hillsborough County and Cypress Creek Town Center Mall construction problems.
- The River Board supported the TAC recommendation supporting nine Tampa Port Authority Minor Work Permit Applications.
- A briefing on recent Hillsborough River Flows and Levels.
- An update on the River Board ELAPP nomination of the Lopez Property located in Hillsborough County and City of Tampa. The TAC expressed concern about the amount of time a nomination takes to be processed.
- Notice of Upcoming Hillsborough River Events:
- City of Temple Terrace RiverFest Event - 10/20/07 - Riverhills Park
- City of Tampa Mayor's 20th Annual Hillsborough River & Waterway Clean Up 11/17/07 - Lowry Park

## **TAC Discusses River Issues at September Meeting**

The Technical Advisory Council (TAC) met at the Tampa Union Train Station September 18, 2007. Among discussion items and reports made at the meeting were:

- An update on District action regarding Lower Hillsborough River Minimum Flows, Sulphur Springs and the Tampa By-Pass Canal.
- Discussion on Recovery Strategy relating to Sulphur Springs and Manatee access. The TAC sent a letter of recommendation to the River Board supporting continued lagoon access by manatees.
- A briefing on proposed reduction of state manatee assistance/funding.
- A briefing on City of Tampa/University area drainage problems related to Hillsborough River.
- An update on Cities of Tampa/Temple Terrace Comprehensive Plans Processing.
- A discussion on water conservation issues as they relate to deed restricted communities.
- An update on recent Tampa Bay Water reservoir structural integrity study findings.
- The TAC supported one Tampa Port Authority Minor Work Permit Application.
- A status Report on Recent Hillsborough River Flows & Levels
- Notice of Upcoming Hillsborough River Events

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. Meetings begin at 1:30 p.m. To review River Board and TAC agendas, visit our website at [www.hillsboroughriver.org](http://www.hillsboroughriver.org) and click on *Agendas* under the River Board/TAC logo or contact staff at 273-3774, extension 323.

## Up Coming Fall River Events



RiverFest 2007 City of Temple Terrace Riverhills Park  
Saturday, October 20th



Tampa Mayor's 20th Annual Hillsborough River &  
Waterways Clean Up Lowry Park Boat Ramp  
Saturday, November 17th

# RIVER NEWS

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US POSTAGE

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TAMPA, FL  
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& Technical Advisory Council  
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**Change Service Requested**

## WHAT MANATEES ARE THINKING THIS HALLOWEEN....

What are you coming as  
to the big Hillsborough  
Halloween Ball?

The way I see it I can come as  
one of two things....endangered  
or threatened.

