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Modeling the Environment

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Florida Lake Conservation

In hopes of conserving lake habitat in Florida, there are two proposed bills from two different members of Congress. Senator Blowsmoke’s Bill is titled the “Big Lakes Bill”. This would require the five biggest lakes, by area, to be preserved and the remaining smaller lakes would be permitted for development. On the contrary, Representative Foghorn’s bill called the “Many Lakes Bill” suggests that the five biggest lakes, by perimeter, will be permitted for development, while the smaller lakes would be preserved.

Provided the area of each lake, we were able to calculate the percent of lake areas that would be preserved under Blowsmoke’s bill. We discovered that by passing her bill, 8,196,813 square meters of lake area would be preserved, or about 58% of the entire lake area. This would result in the remaining 62% being permitted for development. With Representative Foghorn’s bill, we were able to calculate the amount of lake shoreline that would be preserved, provided the perimeter of all the lakes. We found that about 26,655 meters or 62% of the shorelines would be preserved if Foghorn’s bill were utilized. The remaining 38%, the five large lakes, would be permitted for development.

The area of the lake is important for marine life for marine plants and species of fish including the bluegills, largemouth bass, blue catfish, and more (myfwc.com). Preserving large areas of water would provide more space for these organisms to live, and would allow for them to gain access to more necessities like food and shelter. The area is also important for humans, as we tend to use lakes for recreational purposes such as boating, fishing, or swimming. We tend to desire development of lakes where there is a large area of water to utilize.

I recommend following Representative Foghorn’s bill, to preserve the smaller lakes, and allow for development on the largest five (based on perimeter). The more shoreline we can save, the better the lake ecosystems will be. The land where the lake meets the land is vital to the habitat, for it is where 90% of lake life is born, fed, and raised. Some of the shorelines roles include preventing soil erosion, providing shelter and food for the wildlife, and enhancing water quality. The land surrounding the shoreline, known as the riparian zone, is equally as important for preservation (lrconline.com). There are several negative consequences to allowing development on the lakes that have large shorelines. One example is that many species rely on the riparian zone for journeys from the land to the water, and destruction of these lands endangers those animals’ lives. In Foghorn’s bill, only 38% of the lakes shorelines will be open for development. These five bigger lakes are most likely more desirable for recreational purposes anyway. Therefore they would be more difficult to preserve.

With hopes of promoting the diversity of species, allowing for development on only the five biggest lakes appears to be the best option. Smaller lakes, and the species that inhabit them, are more fragile and prone to destruction due to disruptions in their environment. Therefore if we allow for development on only the five biggest lakes, we can expect them to have a greater ability to adjust to change in the ecosystem.

Works Cited

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<http://myfwc.com/wildlifehabitats/profiles/fish/freshwater/>. 22 September 2012.