Chapter 2 Project: Strategies for Florida Lake Conservation

In our evolving world, one thing that is constantly changing is our environment. Sometimes we as humans have to adapt to the environment, and other times we are able to take control of it and manipulate it to fit our needs. With regards to the area near Winter Haven, FL, the concentration of lakes has been considered for development. I believe the most efficient plan proposed was Representative Foghorn’s “A Lake for Every Child.” Under his plan, 62% of shoreline will be preserved along with an abundance of wildlife and vegetation. Also, the public will be in favor of this plan because they have already shown concern for conservation of the lakes in this area.

Winter Haven has been dubbed as “The Chain of Lakes City”[[1]](#footnote-1) because it is home to a southern chain of lakes and a northern chain of lakes. The five largest lakes (by perimeter) near Winter Haven are 6049.71 m, 5694.62 m, 4416.87 m, 3883.97 m, and 5609.85 m. It would make the most sense if these five lakes were to be developed because that would save well over 50% of the shoreline; in fact, it would save 62%. With that said, 58% of lake area would be lost to development. However, this is not as ruinous as it may sound. There is a copious amount of area-dependent species that live in the lake, such as Channel catfish. There is no limit on the number of Channel catfish one can catch because there are more than enough living in the lakes presently[[2]](#footnote-2). If only five lakes were to be developed, the Channel catfish for example, would not become rare in this area and the overall population of them would not become endangered. On the note of thriving plant and animal life, generally lower survival rates of plantings occurred on arid sand tailings and reworked overburden sites, while plant survival in wetter areas was fair to good[[3]](#footnote-3). This affirms that vegetation and plant life would be affected severely if thirty lakes were to be dried up and developed for industrial purposes. These plants depend on the shoreline and they can only grow and thrive if the lakes are there.

Florida’s native people and later colonists began the process of adapting the land to their needs, but as our population exploded to nearly 18 million people, technology has allowed us to increasingly alter the environment; therefore, the need for conservation is becoming critical[[4]](#footnote-4). There are several organizations in existence already that promote awareness and support efforts made on the part of local politicians near Winter Haven, FL and other environmental activists. For example, the Lakes Education / Action Drive (LE/AD) is an organization with a mission to create an awareness and appreciation of the lakes and watersheds in Polk County and Central Florida as well as to promote their protection and wise use. For over 25 years, they have advocated that these lakes are ecologically and economically valuable, and they deserve the appropriate care and protection[[5]](#footnote-5). This is proof that the people of Florida in this area love their lakes and want to preserve them in their natural state of beauty as much as they can. This is why I fervently believe that Foghorn’s plan to develop the five largest lakes (in terms of perimeter) and preserve the remaining thirty lakes is a better option as opposed to Blowsmoke’s proposal to preserve the five largest lakes (in terms of area) and develop the thirty smaller ones. After all, the focus of the proposals is clear in the outline which states: “Senator Blowsmoke and Representative Foghorn are each proposing bills in the Florida State Senate and House (respectively) to conserve lake habitat in Florida.” Therefore, Foghorn’s is both more logically correct and mathematically beneficial because it saves 62% of lake perimeter as opposed to 58% of lake area, even though area and perimeter are different units.

1. <http://www.mywinterhaven.com/documents/WHAreaLakesMap11x1720101109_001.pdf>

*The City of Winter Haven Technical Services Division,* 09/23/12 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <http://myfwc.com/fishing/freshwater/regulations/southwest/>

*Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission,* 09/23/12 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. 3 <http://myfwc.com/media/132383/CMP_Tenoroc_2002-2012.pdf> (page 9) - 09/23/12

*Division of Freshwater Fisheries, Bureau of Fisheries Services, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission*

 <http://myfwc.com/conservation/value/>

*Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission,* 09/23/12 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. <http://www.le-ad.org/>

*Lakes Education / Action Drive,* 09/23/12 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)