Christopher Simpson

Professor Little

Modeling the Environment

September 24, 2012

Straightening out the Confusion

Lake habitat conservation of Winter Haven is a big topic in the Florida State Congress, and the two primary bill proposals are by that of Senator Blowsmoke and Representative Foghorn. Blowsmoke’s bill, if passed, would save the 5 biggest lakes in the area, and would amount to 58% of the total area of all the lakes. Foghorn’s bill, if passed, would develop the five lakes with the five biggest perimeters or shorelines, and save the rest. Blowsmoke has the slogan “Big Lakes = Big conservation. It’s a no-brainer.” Foghorn has the slogan “More Lakes, More Conservation. Do the Math.” Blowsmoke’s bill saves 58% of lake area by calculating total area and subtracting the area of the five biggest lakes. Foghorn’s bill saves 62% of the total perimeter of all the lakes by preserving all but the five lakes with the largest perimeters. Both of these proposed bills fulfill the idea of saving more than 50% of the lakes, but they go about it in different methods.

I personally would support Representative Foghorn in the debate of how to preserve the lakes of Winter Haven. One reason I support this bill is when the bills are examined from the standpoint they do not support as well as the ones they do. It just so happens that the lakes with the five biggest perimeters are also the lakes with the five biggest areas. If 58% of the lake area is going to be preserved with Blowsmoke’s bill, it means that 42% of the area will not be preserved. Likewise if 62% of the perimeter is saved with Foghorn’s bill, it means 38% of the shoreline will not be preserved. Since they are the same lakes in both situations, Foghorn’s bill saves 42% of the area of all the lakes, and saves 62% of the perimeter, whereas Blowsmoke’s bill only preserves 58% of the area and 38% of the shoreline. When making a choice on the matter strictly based on mathematical data, Foghorn’s bill conserves more of the lakes in general. Another reason I support Foghorn’s bill is that much of the ecosystem in a lake is on the shoreline. For example, all of the amphibians that habituate themselves in these lakes must cross the shoreline at some point, and many species lay their eggs on the shoreline. A third reason why I support Foghorn’s bill is that the area of the five biggest lakes may be important in preserving numbers of specific species, as increased area allows for increased population, but it will not help preserve all of the different ecosystems that arise from preserving much more than five lakes. Additionally, allowing development on only the five biggest lakes centralizes the human influence, which is helpful for both the human development as well as the ecological development.

Both of these bills are viable and defendable choices for how to preserve the lakes of Winter Haven, but Representative Foghorn’s bill is better from both an environmental and economic standpoint.