

LAKE ASSESSMENT REPORT FOR LAKE ROCK IN HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY FLORIDA

Date Assessed: June 1, 2006
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Reviewed by: Jim Griffin, Ph.D.

INTRODUCTION

This assessment was conducted to update existing physical and ecological data for Lake Rock on the Hillsborough County Watershed Atlas (<http://www.hillsborough.wateratlas.usf.edu/>). The project is a collaborative effort between the University of South Florida's Center for Community Design and Research and Hillsborough County Stormwater Management Section. The project is funded by Hillsborough County and the Southwest Florida Water Management District's Northwest Hillsborough, Hillsborough River and Alafia River Basin Boards. The project has, as its primary goal, the rapid assessing of up to 150 lakes in Hillsborough County during a five year period. The product of these investigations will provide the County, lake property owners, and the general public a better understanding of the general health of Hillsborough County lakes, in terms of shoreline development, water quality, lake morphology (bottom contour, volume, area etc.) and the plant biomass and species diversity. These data are intended to assist the County and its citizens to better manage lakes and lake centered watersheds.

Figure 1. General photo of Rock Lake (6/8/2006).



The first section of the report provides the results of the overall morphological assessment of the lake. Primary data products include: a contour (bathymetric) map of the lake, area, volume and depth statistics, and the water level at the time of assessment. These data are useful for evaluating trends and for the development of management actions such as plant management where depth and lake volume are needed.

The second section provides the results of the vegetation assessment conducted on the lake. These results can be used to better understand and manage vegetation in your lake. A list is provided with the different plant species found at various sites around the lake. Potentially invasive, exotic (non-native) species are identified in a plant list and the percent of exotics is presented in a summary table. Watershed values provide a means of reference and are derived from the lakes assessed during the 2006 lake assessment project in that watershed.

The third section provides the results of the water quality sampling of the lake. Both field data and laboratory data are presented. The trophic state index (TSI)ⁱ is used to develop a general lake health statement, which is calculated for both the water column with vegetation and the water column if vegetation were removed (adjusted TSI – Adj_TSI). These data are a combination of the water chemistry and vegetative submerged biomass assessments and are useful in understanding the results of certain lake vegetation management practices.

The intent of this assessment is to provide a starting point from which to track changes in your lake, and where previous comprehensive assessment data is available, to track changes in the lake's general health. These data can provide the information needed to determine changes and to monitor trends in physical condition and ecological health of the lake.

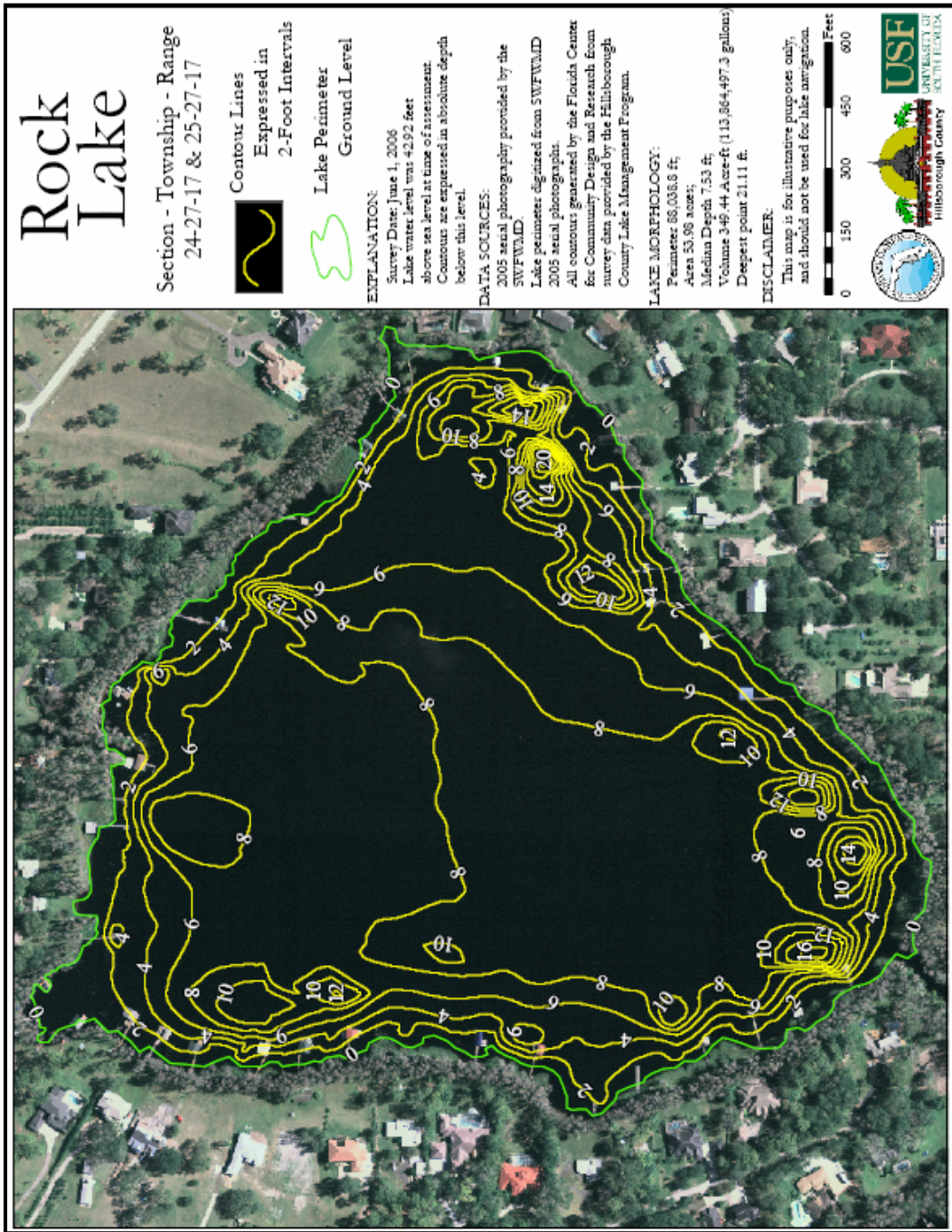
Section 1: Lake Morphology

Bathymetric Mapⁱⁱ. The bottom of the lake was mapped using a Lowrance LCX 26C HD Wide Area Augmentation System (WAAS)ⁱⁱⁱ enabled Global Positioning System (WAAS-GPS) with fathometer (bottom sounder) to determine the boat's position, and bottom depth in a single measurement. The result is an estimate of the lake's area, mean and maximum depths, and volume and the creation of a bottom contour map (Figure 2). Besides pointing out the deeper fishing holes in the lake, the morphologic data derived from this part of the assessment can be valuable to overall management of the lake vegetation as well as providing flood storage data for flood models. Table 1 provides the lake's morphologic parameters in various units.

Table 1. Lake Area Depth and Volume

Parameter	Feet	Meters	Acres	Acre-Ft	Gallons
Surface Area (sq)	2,351,368.80	218,449.31	53.98		
Mean Depth	7.53	2.295144			
Maximum Depth	21.11	6.434328			
Volume (cubic Gage Reading (feet above datum)	15,221,475.87	431,024.20		349.437	113,864,546.81
	42.92				

Figure 2. Contour map for Rock Lake. The lake was mapped during the 2006 lake assessment project. A differential global positioning system and fathometer combination instrument was used to obtain simultaneous horizontal and vertical measurements.



Section 2: Lake Ecology (vegetation)

The lake's apparent vegetative cover and shoreline detail are evaluated using the aerial shown in Figure 2 and by use of GPS. Submerged vegetation is determined from evenly spaced contours sampled using a Lowrance 26c HD, combined DGPS/fathometer described earlier. Ten vegetation assessment sites were used for Lake Rock (Figure 3) as dictated by the *Lake Assessment Protocol* (copy available on request) for a lake of this size. The site positions are set using a DGPS and then loaded into a GIS mapping program (ArcGIS) for display. Each site is field sampled in the three primary vegetative zones (emergent, submerged and floating). The latest aerials (2005, 6 inch resolution, SWFWMD aerials) are used to provide shore details (docks, structures, vegetation zones) and to calculate the extent of surface vegetation coverage. The primary indices of submerged vegetation cover and biomass for the lake, percent area coverage (PAC) and percent volume infestation (PVI), are determined by transiting the lake by boat and employing a fathometer to collect "hard and soft return" data. These data are later analyzed for presence and absence of vegetation and to determine the height of vegetation if present. The PAC index is determined from the presence and absence analysis of 100 sites in the lake and the PVI index is determined by measuring the difference between hard returns (lake bottom) and soft returns (top of vegetation) for sites (within the 100 analyzed sites) where plants are determined present.

The data collected during the site vegetation sampling include vegetation type, exotic vegetation, predominant plant species and submerged vegetation biomass. The total number of species from all sites is used to approximate the total diversity of aquatic plants and the percent of invasive-exotic plants on the lake (Table 2). The Watershed value in Table 2 only includes lakes sampled during the lake assessment project begun in May of 2006. These data will change as additional lakes are sampled. Tables 3 through 5 detail the results from the 2006 aquatic plant assessment for your lake. These data are determined from the 10 sites used for intensive vegetation surveys. The tables are divided into Floating Leaf, Emergent and Submerged plants and contain the plant code, species, common name and presence (1) or absence (blank) of species and the calculated percent occurrence (number sites species is found/number of sites) and type of plant (Native, Non-Native, Invasive, Pest). In the "Type" category, the term invasive indicates the plant is commonly considered invasive in this region of Florida and the term "Pest" indicates that the plant has a greater than 55% occurrence in your lake and is also considered a problem plant for this region of Florida, or in a non-native invasive that is or has the potential to be a problem plant in your lake and has at least 40% occurrence. These two terms are somewhat subjective; however, they are provided to give lake property owners some guidance in the management of plants on their property. Please remember that to remove or control plants in a wetland (lake shoreline) in Hillsborough County the property owner must secure an [Application To Perform Miscellaneous Activities In Wetlands](http://www.epchc.org/forms_documents.htm) (http://www.epchc.org/forms_documents.htm) permit from the Environmental Protection Commission of Hillsborough and for management of in-lake vegetation outside the wetland fringe (for lakes with an area greater than 10 acres), the property owner must secure a Florida Department of Environmental Protection permit (<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/lands/invaspec/>).

Table 2 Total diversity, percent exotics, and number of EPPC pest plants

Parameter	Lake	Watershed
Total Plant Diversity (# of Taxa)	48	84
Total Non-native Plants	9	15
Total Pest Plant Species	4	6

Figure 3. 2005 six inch resolution aerial and vegetation assessment sites on Rock Lake.

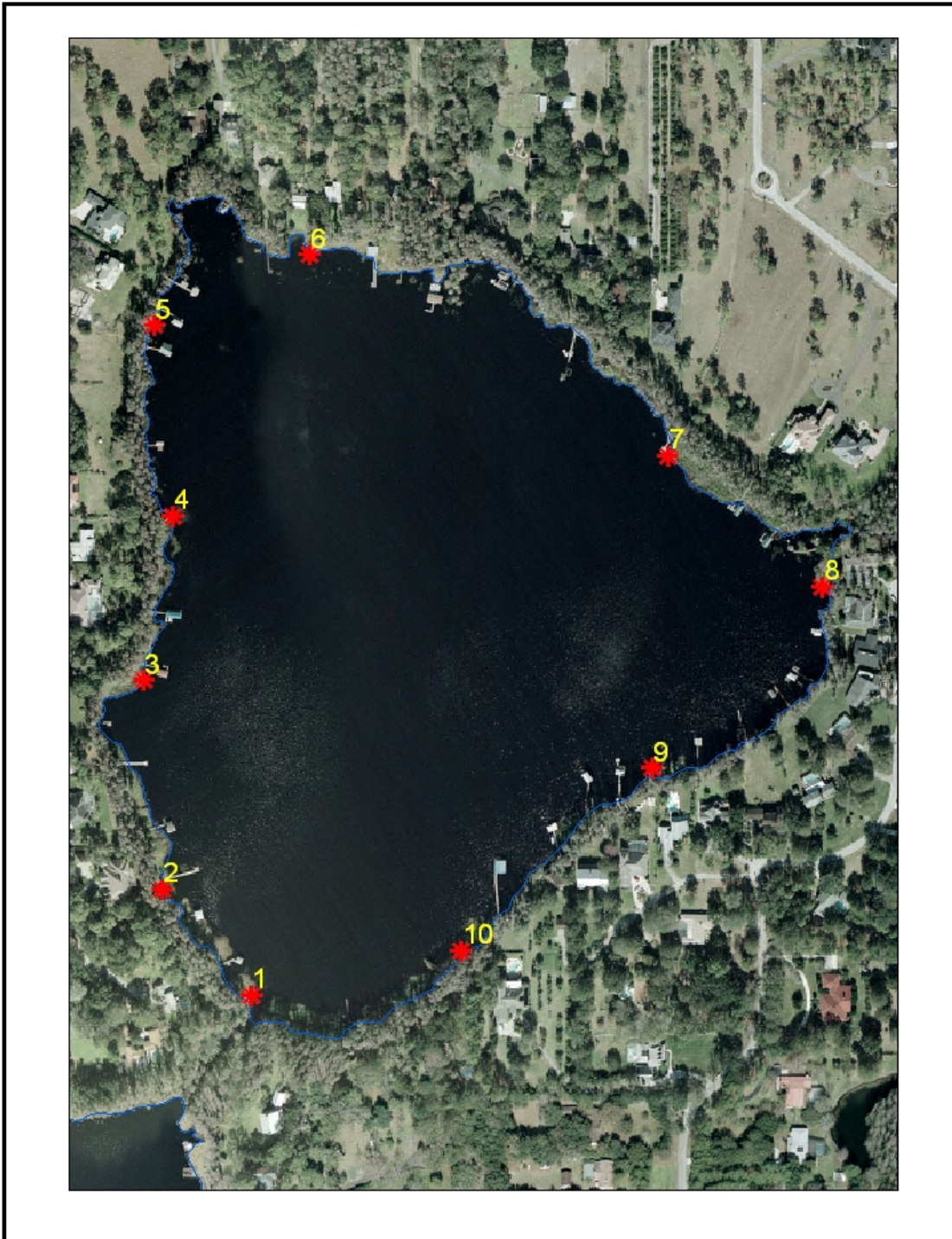


Table 3. List of Floating Leaf Zone Aquatic Plants Found in Lake Rock.

Code	Plant Species	Common Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	% Occurrence	Native(N), Non-native (NN), Invasive (I), Pest (P)
HYE	Hydrocotyl umbellata	Manyflower Marshpennywort, Water Pennywort	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	90%	Native
NLM	Nuphar lutea var. advena	Spatterdock, Yellow Pondlily	1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	1	90%	Native
SMA	Salvinia minima	Water Spangles, Water Fern	1	1	1	1			1	1	1	1	80%	NN-I-P
ECS	Eichornia crassipes	Water Hyacinth		1		1			1		1	1	50%	NN-I-P



Figure 4. Water Hyacinth (*Eichornia crassipes*) and Alligator Weed (*Alternanthera philoxeroides*) on Rock Lake; both are non-native invasive pest species.

Table 4. List of Emergent Zone Aquatic Plants Found in Lake Rock.

Code	Plant Species	Common Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	% Occurrence	Native(N), Non-native (NN), Invasive (I), Pest (P)
SCI	Scirpus spp.	Sedge	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	100%	Native
TDM	Taxodium distichum	Bald Cypress	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	100%	Native
APS	Alternanthera philoxeroides	Alligator Weed	1	1	1	1			1	1	1	1	80%	NN-I-P
COS	Cephalanthus occidentalis	Common Buttonbush		1	1	1	1		1	1	1	1	80%	Native
PHN	Panicum hemitomon	Maidencane		1	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	80%	Native
POL	Polygonum spp.	Smartweed, Knotweed	1	1	1	1	1		1	1	1		80%	Native
BLS	Blechnum serrulatum	Swamp Fern	1	1	1	1	1		1			1	70%	Native
LOP	Ludwigia spp.	Water Primroses, Primrosewillow	1		1	1			1	1	1	1	70%	Native
SCS	Scirpus cubensis	Burhead Sedge, Cuban Scirpus	1		1		1	1	1	1			60%	Native
ACE	Acer rubrum var. trilobum	Southern Red Maple	1		1	1					1	1	50%	Native
PCA	Pontederia cordata	Pickerel Weed	1	1		1	1	1					50%	Native
ELE	Eleocharis spp.	Roadgrass, Spikerushes	1		1	1	1		1				50%	Native
BMA	Urochloa mutica	Para Grass	1		1	1						1	40%	NN-I-P
CCM	Cicuta maculata	Water Hemlock		1	1		1	1					40%	Native
MSS	Mikania scandens	Climbing Hempvine			1	1	1		1				40%	Native
RF	Osmunda regalis	Royal Fern							1		1	1	30%	Native
SAL	Salix spp.	Willow							1	1		1	30%	Native
WAX	Myrica cerifera	Wax Myrtle		1	1				1				30%	Native
LEL	Leucaena leucocephala	Lead Tree									1	1	20%	NN-I

MEL	Melaleuca quinquenervia	Punk Tree, Melaleuca	1			1								20%	NN-I
PRS	Panicum repens	Torpedo Grass				1							1	20%	NN-I
CJE	Cladium jamaicense	Jamaica Swamp Saw Grass			1							1		20%	Native
ECM	Eriocaulon compressum	Flattened Pipewort					1	1						20%	Native
MGM	Micranthemum glomeratum	Manatee Mudflower, Baby's Tears				1		1						20%	Native
LSA	Limnobium spongia	American Spongeplant, Frog's Bit				1						1		20%	Native
IAA	Ipomoea aquatica	Water Spinach	1											10%	NN-I
SSM	Sapium sebiferum	Popcorn Tree, Chinese Tallow Tree											1	10%	NN-I
BMI	Bacopa monnieri	Common Bacopa, Herb-Of-Grace			1									10%	Native
COM	Commelina spp.	Dayflower						1						10%	Native
CYO	Cyperus odoratus	Fragrant Flatsedge											1	10%	Native
LRS	Ludwigia repens	Creeping Primrosewillow, Red Ludwigia					1							10%	Native
HCS	Luziola fluitans	Watergrass											1	10%	Native
PIN	Pinus spp.	Pine Tree										1		10%	Native
SAB	Sabatia spp.	Rosegentian			1									10%	Native
SLA	Sagittaria lancifolia	Bulltongue Arrowhead, Duck Potato				1								10%	Native
TGA	Thalia geniculata	Fireflag, Arrowroot		1										10%	Native
TYP	Typha spp.	Cattails			1									10%	Native

Figure 5. Fireflag (*Thalia geniculata*) on the shores of Lake Rock.



Figure 6. Cattails (*Typha* spp.) growing on Lake Rock.



Table 5. List of Submerged Zone Aquatic Plants Found in Lake Rock.

Code	Plant Species	Common Name	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	% Occurrence	Native(N), Non-native (NN), Invasive (I), Pest (P)
MYR	Myriophyllum spp.	Watermilfoil, Parrot Feather	1		1	1	1		1	1			60%	Native
ALG	Algal Spp.	Algal Mats, Floating	1						1				20%	Native
NGS	Najas guadelupensis	Southern Waternymph	1			1							20%	Native
NIT	Nitella spp.	Nitella					1						10%	N-I
PIS	Potamogeton illinoensis	Pond Weed							1				10%	Native
SPY	Spirogyra spp.	Filamentous algal mats			1								10%	Native

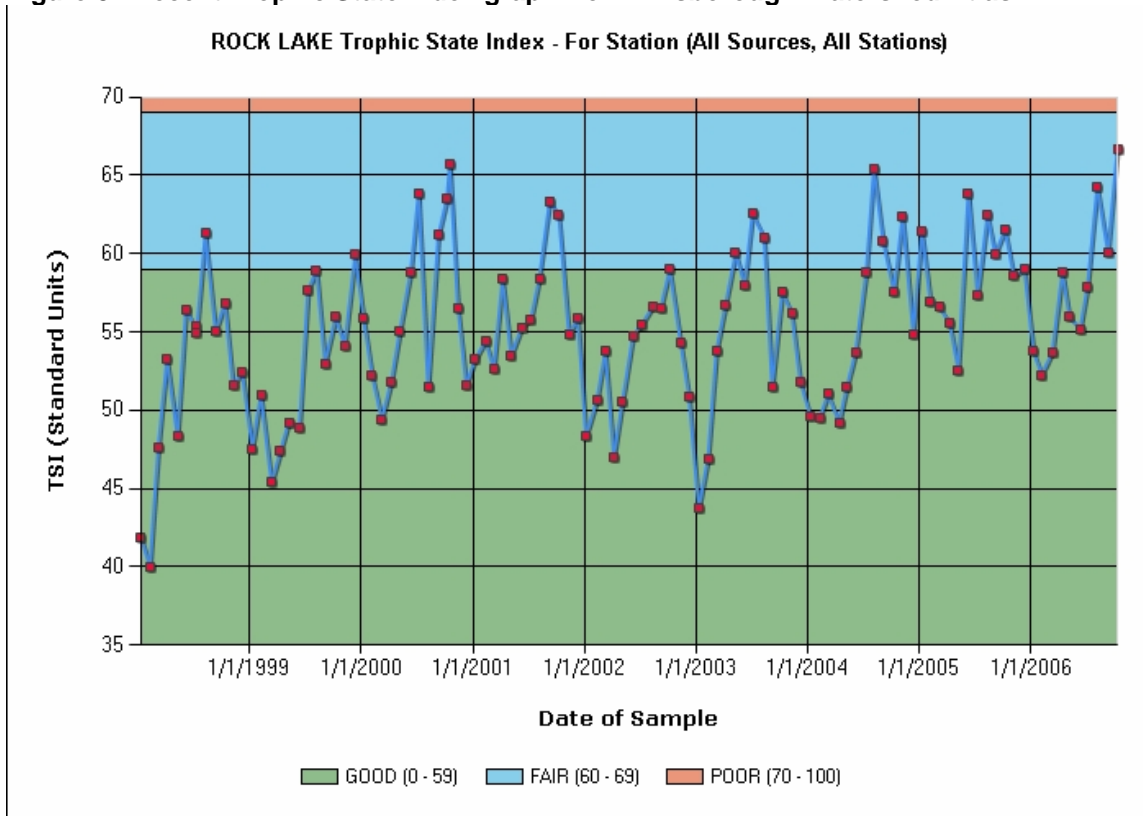
Figure 7. Filamentous algal mats (*Spirogyra* spp.) growing in Lake Rock.



Section 3: Lake Water Chemistry

A critical element in any lake assessment is the long-term water chemistry data set. The primary source of water quality trend data for Florida Lakes is the Florida LAKEWATCH volunteer and the Florida LAKEWATCH water chemistry data. Hillsborough County is fortunate to have a large cadre of volunteers who have collected lake water samples for significant time period. These data are displayed and analyzed on the Water Atlas as shown in Figure 8 for Lake Rock. Additional data, when available, is also included on the Water Atlas; however, the LAKEWATCH data remains the primary source. By the trend data shown in Figure 8, the lake may be considered in fair health in terms of the trophic state index. Lake Rock is a “dark water” lake and as such it must maintain a TSI of below 60 to not be considered impaired by the State of Florida guidelines^{iv}. Lake Rock’s long term water quality data indicates enough violations of these criteria to be classified by Florida DEP as impaired. During the last major El Nino event (1997-98), the mean TSI increased from about 40 to just below 50 indicating a possible shift in water quality. The TSI trend indicates a slight increase in TSI over time. The general trend seen in Figure 8 may indicate a relationship between periods of heavy rainfall and increased TSI for this flow through lake.

Figure 8. Recent Trophic State Index graph from Hillsborough Watershed Atlas.



Note: The graph above includes benchmarks for using verbal descriptors of "good", "fair" and "poor". The verbal descriptors for these benchmarks are based on an early determination by stakeholders of the generally acceptable and understood terms for describing the state of lakes. The same benchmarks are used for nutrient graphs (Nitrogen and Phosphorus), chlorophyll graphs and trophic state index (TSI) graphs. The TSI is a calculated index of lake condition based on nutrient and chlorophyll (a) concentrations (please see "Learn more about Trophic State Index"). The benchmarks are established based on the TSI range that relates to a specific descriptor. The source for the TSI concentration relationships is the [Florida Water Quality Assessment, 1996, 305\(b\)](#) (Table 2-8). For many lakes there is more than a single source of water quality data. You have the option with the "Select Data Source" drop down to select any available data source and create the graph using that source or you may select "All" to graph all available data. The graph header will also change to reflect the source used.

As part of the lake assessment, the physical water quality and water chemistry of a lake are measured. These data only indicate a snap shot of the lakes water quality; however they are useful to comparing to the trend data. Table 6a contains the summary water quality data and index values and adjusted values calculated from these data. The total phosphorus (TP), total nitrogen (TN) and chlorophyll (a) water chemistry sample data are the results of chemical analysis of samples taken during the assessment and analyzed by the Hillsborough County Environmental Protection Commission laboratory. These data compare well with the mean data from the LAKEWATCH data set for the lake. The trophic state index (TSI) calculated from the sample data (54.33) is well within the values shown in Figure 8 and very close the TSI for LAKEWATCH samples taken during the same month as the assessment (55.18). Table 6B contains the field data taken in the center of the lake using a YSI Corporation – 6000 multi-probe which has the ability to directly measure the temperature, pH, dissolve oxygen (DO), percent DO (calculated from DO, temperature and conductivity) and Turbidity.

Table 6a. Water Quality Parameters (Laboratory).

<i>Summary Table for Water Quality</i>		
<i>Parameter</i>	<i>Value</i>	<i>Comment</i>
TP ug/L	35.00	
TN mg/L	0.91	
Chla ug/L	21.70	
Chla TSI	61.11	
TP TSI	47.73	
TN TSI	54.15	
Secchi Disk (ft)	4.4ft	
TSI	54.33	Balanced
PAC	6%	
PVI	4%	
Adj TP	0.25	P from Veg Added
Adj TN	3.30	
Adj TSI	54.33	No significant TN/TP Added TSI

Table 6b. Water Quality Parameters (Field Recorded Values).

Sample Location	Time	Temp (°C)	Conductivity (mS/cm ³)	Dissolved Oxygen (%)	DO (mg/L)	PH (PH)	ORP (ORP)	Tubidity (NTU)	Secchi Depth
Mid Lake	13:43	31.22	0.206	101.1	7.43	7.8	239.92	4.8	4' 4"

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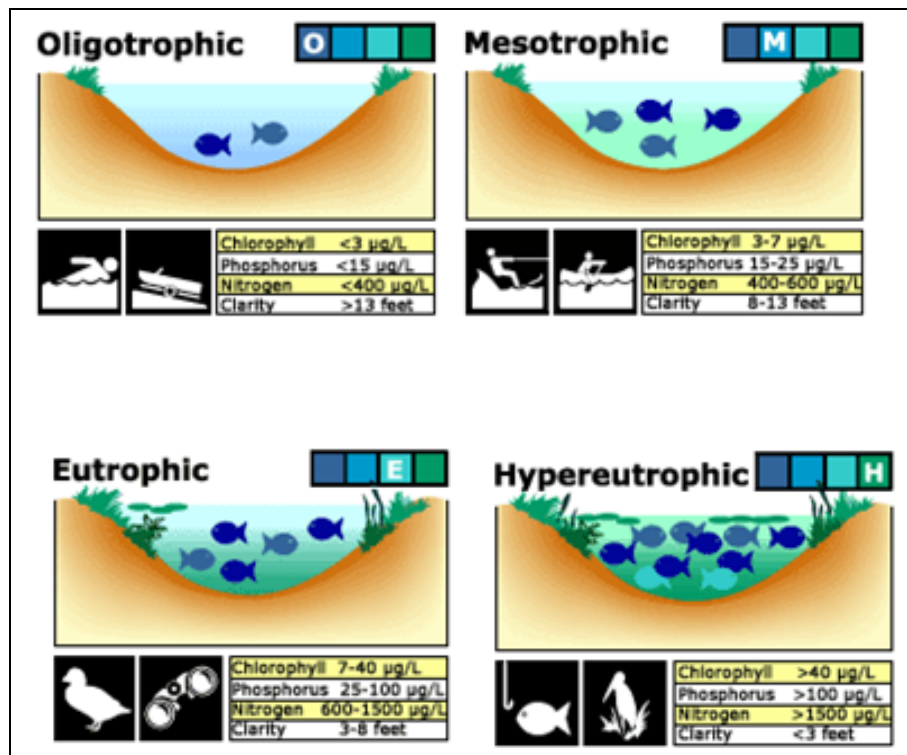
Table 6b contains the field data taken in the center of the lake using a YSI Corporation – 6000 multi-probe which has the ability to directly measure the temperature, pH, dissolve oxygen (DO), percent DO (calculated from DO, temperature and conductivity), Oxidation and Reduction Potential (ORP) and Turbidity. These data are listed for the surface (0.5 m depth) level in the lake. DO and pH values indicate moderate activity for a mid-day sample. Turbidity, the measure

of suspended particles (algae is a suspended particle) is normal for a dark water lake. The ORP is normal for a surface measurement.

Section 4: Conclusion

Rock Lake is a medium to small sized lake (54 acres) that would be considered in the low eutrophic (good to fair) category of lakes based on water chemistry. It has a lower than normal concentration of aquatic vegetation, but not unusual for a dark water lake system. Only 6% of the open water areas contain submerged vegetation. The lake is mostly open water and supports various types of recreation and has a good diversity of shoreline plant species. The primary nuisance plants in the lake include: Water Hyacinth (*Eichornia crassipes*) and Alligator Weed (*Alternanthera philoxeroides*). For more information and recent updates please see the Hillsborough Watershed Atlas (water atlas) website at:

<http://www.hillsborough.wateratlas.usf.edu/lake/waterquality.asp?wbodyid=5116&wbodyatlas=lake>

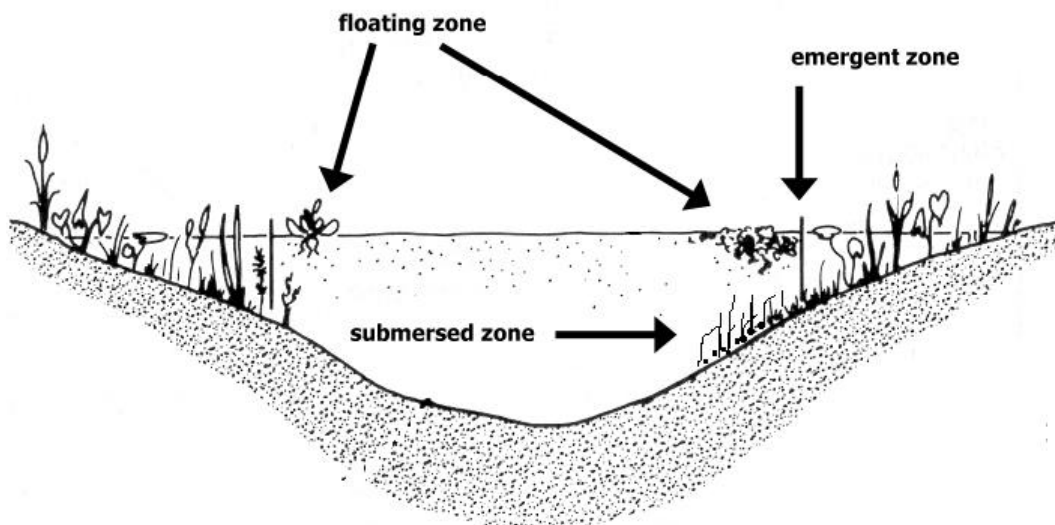


i" Trophic" means "relating to nutrition." The Trophic State Index (TSI) takes into account chlorophyll, nitrogen, and phosphorus, which are nutrients required by plant life. For more information please see *learn more* at: <http://www.hillsborough.wateratlas.usf.edu/lake/default.asp?wbodyid=5116&wbodyatlas=lake>

ii A bathymetric map is a map that accurately depicts all of the various depths of a water body. An accurate bathymetric map is important for effective herbicide application and can be an important tool when deciding which form of management is most appropriate for a water body. Lake volumes, hydrolic retention time and carrying capacity are important parts of lake management that require the use of a bathymetric map.

iii WAAS is a form of differential GPS (DGPS) where data from 25 ground reference stations located in the United States receive GPS signals from GPS satellites in view and retransmit these data to a master control site and then to geostationary satellites. The geostationary satellites broadcast the information to all WAAS-capable GPS receivers. The receiver decodes the signal to provide real time correction of raw GPS satellite signals also received by the unit. WAAS enabled GPS is not as accurate as standard DGPS which employs close by ground stations for correction, however; it was shown to be a good substitute when used for this type of mapping application. Data comparisons were conducted with both types of DGPS employed simultaneously and the positional difference was determined to be well within the tolerance established for the project.

iv The three primary aquatic vegetation zones are shown below:



v A lake is impaired if " (2) For lakes with a mean color less than or equal to 40 platinum cobalt units, the annual mean TSI for the lake exceeds 40, unless paleolimnological information indicates the lake was naturally greater than 40, or For any lake, data indicate that annual mean TSIs have increased over the assessment period, as indicated by a positive slope in the means plotted versus time, or the annual mean TSI has increased by more than 10 units over historical values. When evaluating the slope of mean TSIs over time, the Department shall use a Mann's one-sided, upper-tail test for trend, as described in Nonparametric Statistical Methods by M. Hollander and D. Wolfe (1999 ed.), pages 376 and 724 (which are incorporated by reference), with a 95% confidence level."

Excerpt from Impaired Water Rule (IWR). Please see:
<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/water/tmdl/docs/AmendedIWR.pdf>