

Sunset Lake Narrative

The following narrative is based on an interview with Larry Golden at his home on Sunset Lake in July 1998. The interview provided information, which combined with survey, biological assessment, and other agency's data illustrates the past, present, and future trends of the lake.

The Goldens

The Goldens moved to Sunset Lake four years ago from a home in Virginia. Mr. Golden is a retired Navy officer and his children have all settled around Tampa. At their urging the senior Goldens searched out property in Tampa, "...we followed you around for 35 years, now it's time for you to come to Tampa."

The family had lived on lakefront property in other states and knew they enjoyed the type of lifestyle that lakefront living entailed. Mr. Golden related a story about vacationing when his boys were younger. "We lived on a lake in Virginia...one time we took them up to King's Dominion to camp...the second day we were there they came up and said, 'Let's go home, we have more fun at home than we have here.'"

Sunset Lake provides the backdrop for the Golden's lake activities. Mr. Golden comments, "...we have something to experience every day. If it's no less than a view and it's usually more..."

Sunset Lake



Sunset Lake is partially rimmed by undeveloped property

Sunset Lake is a 37-acre lake located in the NW Hillsborough basin. The lake is self contained, flowing to other lakes only when the water level is enhanced by rainfall. In that situation, the lake receives water from Lake Taylor and outlets into Lake Jackson eventually flowing into the Brooker creek system.

Sunset Lake supports a well-balanced variety of vegetation. Mr. Golden comments, "We have pennywort, we have spatterdock, we have water lilies, we have a natural grass, that natural water weed bacopa, cattails. We seem to have a visual representation of vegetation that is indigenous to the area, but none of it is

overpowering any other. I think that what I am saying is that we're happy."

The surrounding vegetation and rainfall affect the clarity of Sunset Lake. On this subject, Mr. Golden comments, "The visibility is quite deceiving. If you look here, you say, 'Wow, it's really quite clear.' But Secchi-disk wise, it's only about four feet...that's probably not as good as a lot of the lakes in the area..."

Development

Sunset Lake is home to approximately 25 residences and the available land around the lake is not fully developed. The eastern and northern sides of the lake maintain an essentially natural state, swamp.



Scary Harry's house on the north shore of Sunset Lake

There is no agricultural land use on the lake and the residential development has historically been low density. The lake seems to be somewhat of a haven for residents. The northwest shore of the lake still sports a 1920's home that supports this observation. The grandchildren of Mr. Golden refer to the abandoned two-story home as "Scary Harry's House". Mr. Golden observes, "I look at that and think it must have been the king of the road when it

was built...it's probably a 1920's vision.

Living on Sunset Lake in the Future

Sunset Lake is home and an important aspect of the environment to the families who live on its shores. Development on the lake began early and seems to have tapered off in the 1990's resulting in a low density conglomerate of single family residents who enjoy the lake and lack a lot of the problems other lakes in the area experience. The residents are friendly, Mr. Golden comments, "We recognize each other...but there's not a lot of neighborly interaction...I guess I can speak from my point of view, that's OK"