

Hillsborough County Lake and Stream Management Program Policies and Procedures

I. Purpose

Promote environmentally sustainable management strategies for lake and stream ecosystems, and cooperate with property owners and other stakeholders to accomplish improvements in water quality and ecosystem integrity in unincorporated Hillsborough County.

II. Background

Substantial development and human population within a given watershed can result in increased pollution, such as: chemical fertilizers, pesticides, petroleum based products, household chemicals, and bacteria from human and animal waste. These can often lead to a decline in water quality and/or the proliferation of nuisance vegetation. Because this pollution comes from diverse daily activities, there is often no single entity to hold responsible, and no single solution to resolve the problem. Stakeholders must work together to accomplish comprehensive solutions.

The County does not perform maintenance on private property solely to improve the aesthetic appearance of a lake or stream or for recreational benefits. The County may participate in the management of lakes and streams if the County determines it is necessary to improve drainage in order to protect public rights-of-way or to address water quality degradation as prescribed below in Section III.

III. Lake and Stream Management Program Policies and Procedures

- A. As resources allow, the County will provide education and expertise to residents to assist in developing an appropriate management strategy and obtaining necessary permits.
- B. Upon written request, Hillsborough County may provide staff resources to evaluate the feasibility of initiating cooperative Lake or Stream Management Projects in the watershed of the requested lake or stream.

The Hillsborough County Lake and Stream Manager will evaluate requests according to:

1. Date of request.
2. Degree of coincidence with County goals, including but not limited to: waterbody impairments, Total Maximum Daily Loads, or other NPDES program priorities.
3. Level of cooperation available from stakeholders.

Each request will be evaluated to determine the best and most efficient use of public resources. Hillsborough County reserves the right to make all determinations regarding allocation of County resources in the management of lakes and streams within its legal jurisdiction. The County is in no way obligated to assist citizens in the management of private property, including lakes and streams, except as explicitly stated in Board of County Commissioners approved policies or as required by applicable local, state or federal laws.

Requestors will be notified in writing of the determination to proceed with their Lake and Stream Management Program request.

- C. If the Lake and Stream Manager determines that cooperative projects would be beneficial and feasible, the program will work with the requesting resident(s) and the affected community to evaluate the watershed and propose a set of management actions. These actions will involve the County and other stakeholders and may include but are not limited to:

- Water quality improvements
- Low Impact Development
- Drainage improvements
- Vegetation management
- Data gathering and assessment
- Education and Social Marketing
- Participation in related programs such as Lakewatch and Adopt-A-Pond

The proposed cooperative management actions will be presented to the affected community. Residents will have an opportunity to comment and provide input on projects as proposed. In this way, the proposed plan may be amended, however the final plan must sufficiently address County goals and have sufficient public support.

If public support, alignment with County goals, and County resources are sufficient, the program will begin implementation of the plan according to the schedule proposed in the plan.

As a cooperative initiative, proposed actions are entirely voluntary. Participation will be required from the affected community. If at any time funding is not available and/or participation is insufficient, the plan will be discontinued.

NOTE: Discontinuation of a plan due to lack of participation or support after implementation has begun may affect the ranking of future requests in that area.

All decisions regarding the evaluation of requests, acceptance of applications, scoping of projects, and any other matters related to the Lake and Stream Management Program will be at the sole discretion of Hillsborough County Public Works Department and the Public Works Lake and Stream Management Program Coordinator. The County reserves the right to terminate any assistance or project funding at any time.