

UORB monthly project status report
For May Board

Emeralda Marsh

The contractor completed construction related to reconnection of the K cell and a pump station at Emeralda Marsh in mid-December. A work order was issued for installation of the box culvert under Emeralda Island Road. The culvert will reconnect Areas 6 & 7 to Area 2 and thence Lake Griffin. Construction is planned to start in June. Recent aerial photos from Area 2 show significant expansion of beds of spatterdock, a water lily-like plant that once dominated large areas of Lake Griffin. This is a welcome development and an important habitat to return to the Lake Griffin/Emeralda system.

Shad Harvesting in the ORB and Lake Apopka:

Shad harvesting on Lake Apopka ended for the season on November 30th because of low catches and small fish. The fishermen harvested almost 400,000 pounds of gizzard shad. The District began the harvest on Newnans Lake near Gainesville on February 1, 2010. By mid-April, they have removed 180,000 lbs of rough fish. Catches have been lower than expected, but the Leslie Depletion Curve generated from catch data indicates depletion of shad biomass that is catchable with 4-inch nets. The District requested allowing the use of 3.5-inch nets in mid-March, but after 1 month of evaluation, FWC has not yet approved the change. Staff expect the Newnans harvest to end for the season on April 30th.

Lake Griffin Water Quality

Lake Griffin water quality continues to improve with total phosphorus concentrations at about the TMDL target (31 ppb) for the past year. Chlorophyll concentrations have begun to decrease substantially as well with levels below 10 ppb for the past 3 months. Water clarity has improved substantially with Secchi depth visibility routinely exceeding 1 meter. Native submersed aquatic vegetation is expanding particularly for eelgrass (*Vallisneria*) stands.