

Clearer water translates into better aquatic habitat, fisheries, and public-use and economic opportunities for the Harris Chain of Lakes

An overarching (action) goal for the Harris Chain of Lakes

Objective 1 – Control nutrient and sediment inputs

- a. Continued long-term support for the Lake County Water Authority (LCWA) Nutrient Removal Facility (NuRF) for treating non-flood discharges from Lake Apopka to the lakes downstream.
- b. Minimize direct releases from Harris Bayou into Lake Griffin with the construction of by-pass infrastructure.
- c. Continued long-term support for agricultural, urban, and other categories of structural and non-structural best management practices (BMPs) as part of the total maximum daily load (TMDL) program, which the key implementation strategy under the Upper Ocklawaha Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP).

Objective 2 – Continue to improve aquatic habitat and water quality

- a. Directly connect marshlands within the North Shore Restoration Area (NSRA) to Lake Apopka in those areas where the St. Johns Water Management District is not subject to land/water use restrictions as part of the agreement with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- b. Support a pilot program to allow hydrilla to grow naturally in selected areas of Lake Apopka in an attempt to stabilize lake bottom sediments, improve water clarity, and provide important fisheries habitat. Hydrilla would be controlled to prevent encroachment into areas of the lake with public access and navigation opportunities, private docks, and habitat supporting the crappie fishery.

Objective 3 – Capitalize on habitat and water-quality improvements

- a. Gain the support of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) for designating the Harris Chain of Lakes as Trophy Bass Resource by implementing a catch-and-release only regulation for largemouth bass of 16 inches or greater in length.
- b. Improve public access to Lake Apopka, particularly in the deeper sections of the lake along the western shore.