

UORB monthly project status report
For January Board

Emeralda Marsh

The contractor completed construction related to reconnection of the K cell and a pump station at Emeralda Marsh in mid-December. Plans for the box culvert under Emeralda Island Road are with Lake County Road Department for review. The culvert will reconnect Areas 6 & 7 to Area 2 and thence Lake Griffin. 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 UORB and Lake Apopka:

Shad harvesting on Lake Apopka ended for the season at the end of November because of low catches and small fish. The fishermen harvested almost 400,000 pounds of gizzard shad. The fishermen did not catch significant numbers of sunshine bass, a fish that was stocked in the lake last year by the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission. The District plans to expand the harvest to Newnans Lake in February 2010.

UORB Lake Level Management

Lake levels throughout the basin continued to rise over the summer and recently, discharges over the minimum were made at both the Burrell and Moss Bluff dams. These are the first major discharges from the basin since February 2006, finally ending the extended drought. Planning continues on implementation of enhanced lake level fluctuations for the Harris Chain of Lakes and Lake Apopka. Establishment of MFLs for these lakes will be incorporated into the project. Staff anticipates that this major project will require 4 years to complete.