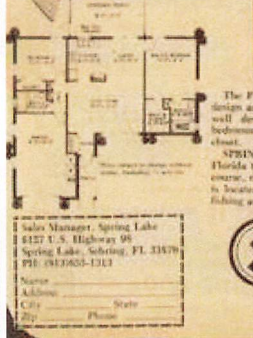


SPRING LAKE  
CEMENT SURVEIL-8292  
REMOVAL  
14 MO  
380E



**THE GOOD LIFE  
IS STILL AFFORDABLE  
IN SPRING LAKE**

Compare our price and exceptional  
where the air is clean and the land



HOUSE and LOT  
FOR ONLY  
**\$44,900**

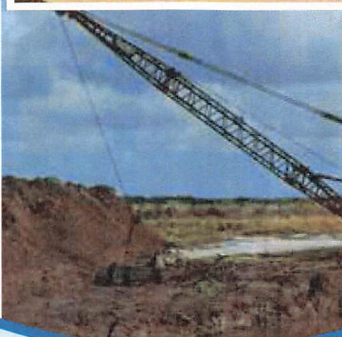
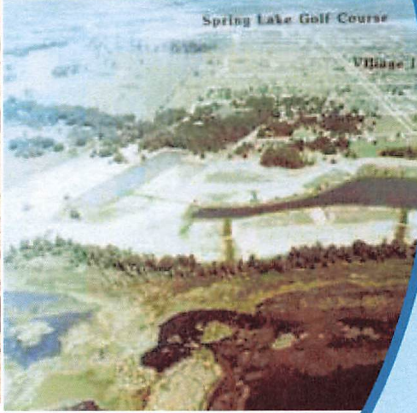
The FINECREST has proven  
design and floorplan. It is truly  
well designed attractive and  
bedroom plan with large Master  
bath.

SPRING LAKE is an established  
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course, racquet club, shopping at  
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Florida, the way  
it should be.  
A community of Spring Lake  
Developed by David...



1971-2021

**50**  
**SPRINGLAKE**  
**YEARS**



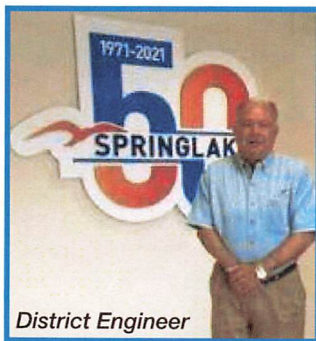
Spring Lake Improvement District Board of Supervisors

L-R: Tim McKenna, Kay Gorham, Sue Dean, Brian Acker, Bill Lawens



Administrative Staff

L-R: Cindy Bacon, Joe DeCerbo, Diane Angell



District Engineer

Gene Schriener



District Attorney

Bill Nielander



Spring Lake Staff

Front L-R: Torrey Riley, Tres Cleveland, Matt Thompson, Randy Nelson  
 Back L-R: Lamar Blount, Alan Verdier, Jerry Van Gruensven, Jackie Deese, Clay Shrum, Israel Serrano, Kyle Murray

A big thank you to the Anniversary Committee for helping to plan, organize, and conduct all the special events during this Anniversary Year:

- Monica Griffith
- Kristi McGathey
- Priscilla Cutler
- Sam Heede
- Karen Palino
- Lark Gilfus
- Phil Gentry
- Nelly Ford
- Virginia Nicholson
- Joanne Read
- P.J. Steeby
- Lynn Kohler-Glowatz



This Anniversary edition is dedicated to all the individuals and businesses that helped create the Spring Lake Improvement District. From the time Spring Lake was chartered by the State of Florida until today, many individuals had an impact on the community. The faces, pictures, and stories contained in this issue represent the history of Spring Lake, and no community can grow and expand unless they understand and appreciate the history. We hope this issue will be a part of that history, and the people and businesses that made Spring Lake will live in the community forever.

## How It All Began

In 1971, the Spring Lake Improvement District (SLID) was created by a special act of the State Legislature. Throughout Florida, special districts were established to promote development. As a unit of government, SLID acts like a municipality, except in the matters of land use, zoning, development codes, and police or fire protection; all services are provided by Highlands County. Westinghouse Electric took the leadership role in the development of Spring Lake. After a long, involved process with the State of Florida, approval was given to allow two subsidiaries to oversee construction. Florida National Properties were owners of the land and Coral Ridge Properties handled the development and sales in Spring Lake.



Without some sort of drainage system, the land of Spring Lake would be mostly uninhabitable. The area was originally designed to have gravity flow drainage through water control structures that spread from west to east at the pump station. The system drains more than 3000 acres through seventeen miles of canal networks. Westinghouse began the project after permits were issued by The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD). A pump station was built, a water plant and infrastructure were completed, and roads, fire hydrants, and streetlights were installed. Coral Ridge Properties began building homes and sales were brisk. A Community Center was built, several parks were opened and a District Office began to coordinate services. By the mid 1980s, growth did

not meet Westinghouse's expectations and they began to sell their property. SFWMD allowed them to sell the property and leave Spring Lake without completing the reclamation plan. Numerous canals, ponds and lakes were incomplete and the expense and work to complete the project was left to the next generation of residents.

By 1985, leadership of the District was in the hands of Coral Ridge Properties, who used a management company to oversee programs and services. As a subsidiary of Westinghouse, Coral Ridge was not interested in pressuring them to spend millions to complete the reclamation plan. State statutes provided that three supervisors form the board and the original supervisors appointed earlier by Westinghouse remained in office for many years. When the management company began to oversee the District, all the groups associated with Westinghouse exited Spring Lake as fast as they could!

In the late 1980s and through the 90s, several Charter changes and litigations took place and in 1998, two seats were added to the Board of Supervisors because of increased population. The make-up of the Board remains the same to this day; three positions are Landowner Supervisors, and two are elected by popular vote. There have been 31 different individuals who have served as District Supervisors since the first Board in 1971.

In early 2006, the Board decided they no longer wanted a management company overseeing the District and employed a full-time on-site District Manager. Joe DeCerbo, a resident and former board member was chosen. He felt he could utilize his skills to organize the District and implement needed systems and procedures in a few years. As more needs arose, that two year projection has expanded and Joe continues today in his role as District Manager.

Over the past 12 years, the District has focused on numerous projects that were a result of the management company postponing action and Westinghouse leaving the property without completing the reclamation of the area. Major items that needed attention were levee certification; water control plan; retention and storage areas for storm water; water quality; upgrading the pump station; construction of a new sewer plant; acquiring a second water plant; securing grants, appropriations, and loans; and maintaining a high level of services and programs from our Field and Utility Departments.

The next 50 years will see many changes to our community with more people, businesses, and development. The foundation has been laid for a bright future for Spring Lake.

## The First Lady of Spring Lake



Those who live on or have traveled Duane Palmer Boulevard; perhaps wonder where the name came from. This boulevard was named after Duane Palmer, husband of the lady who is pictured. Unfortunately, the District does not have a picture of Mr. Palmer. The land Spring Lake is built on was a part of the Palmer Ranch, which was a working ranch.

The Palmers sold their farm near Wampsvill, New York and in 1935 moved into the vicinity of Orlando on 20 acres of a small lake at a cost of \$200. In 1941 the Palmers decided to move south because their fruit trees froze and sold the land for \$3,000. The Palmers purchased land, built a ranch home with cypress from the land and begun raising cattle. The 275 acres is located on the south side of Rt. 98, at the curve across from the old golf course driving range. This ranch home still exists on the property. Today, that property is owned by Fr. Robert Graves, whose family purchased it from the Palmer family.

The Palmers also owned most of the land north of Rt. 98, all the way to the airport. In the early 1970's the Westinghouse Corporation purchased the land that is now called Spring Lake. They received a Charter from the State Legislature to create the Spring Lake Improvement District and the rest is history!!

## Historical Documents Preserved



No one knew more than Lollie Norris about the history and development of Spring Lake. When she first arrived in Spring Lake in the 1970's, Lollie personified the real estate broker of that time. Lollie was the Queen Bee!!!

Lollie kept everything that was ever written about Spring Lake from in-the newspapers, pamphlets developed by builders, legal notices, pictures, newsletters, and community papers. Some of the maps on her walls were so old, the only homes shown were the ones in Village I.

Lollie, seen here in a 1975 picture, passed away in 2010. All of her collections have been preserved by the Spring Lake Improvement District Office. Many items are on the website, some are in this commemorative booklet. Some maps and photos are on the walls in the office.

We sincerely thank Lollie for preserving our history, and for her family in trusting us to preserve her legacy.

## Spring Lake Heritage

Mr. Duane Palmer came to Spring Lake from the north in 1941 and bought most of his property from the Davis family and several other local families. Mr. Palmer owned most of the land north of Rt. 98, and sold it to Westinghouse when they wanted to build the community of Spring Lake in the 70's. Mr. Palmer kept Pine Ranch, which is the land directly across Rt. 98, at the curve, across from the old driving range; the Graves family now owns that land. Duane Palmer Blvd. is named after Mr. Palmer.

On a past visit to the District Office, Barry Smith, the daughter of Duane Palmer shared a lot of history with staff. As a young girl she remembered coming to Spring Lake when there was nothing but dirt roads along Rt. 98. Ranching, hunting, and riding horses took up most of her days, and the vacant land stretched from the Lake all the way up to the Airport. Ms. Smith passed away in 2016 at the age of 95.



# GREAT OPENING

March 2nd  
**VILLAGE II**  
 Spring Lake

This "CitiCar" can be seen at the Sebring Historical Society.



Register for  
**GRAND PRIZE**  
 \$2,300  
 "CitiCar"  
 The Vanguard Electric Vehicle

Everything you could want is in Spring Lake, a 6,000 acre community of fine homes, 8 miles south of the picturesque town of Sebring.

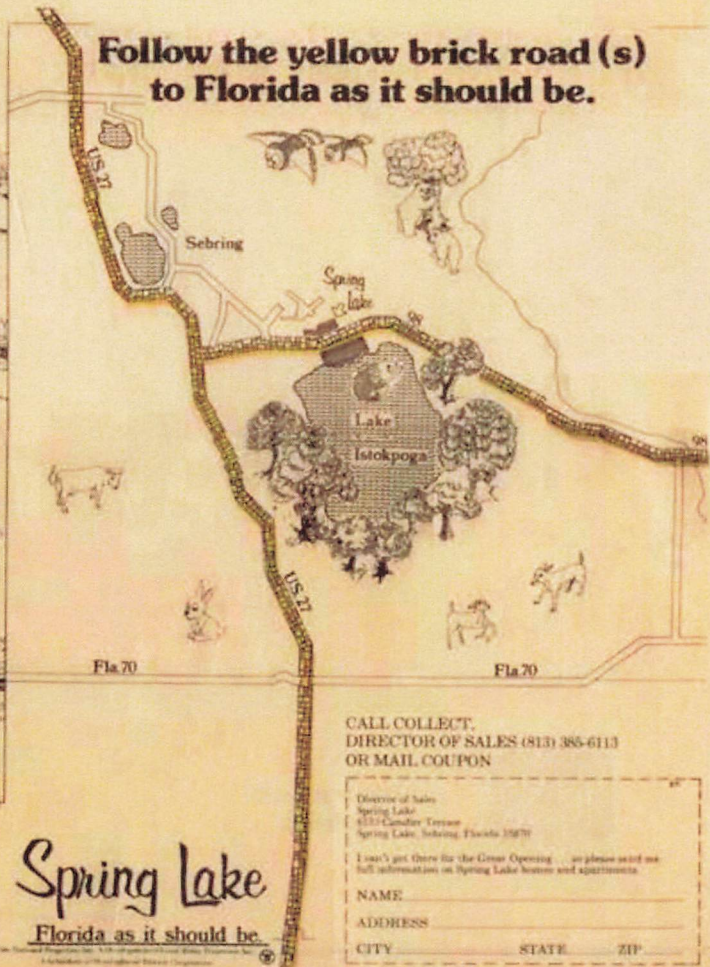
Beautiful homes are now available in Village II—part of a comprehensive plan which includes homes and apartments.

A shopping center will be completed in April, and a tennis club is ready for play. There are community parks, boat docks and picnic facilities. The land abounds in natural beauty. The fishing is fantastic. The pace is relaxed and friendly.

Spring Lake is by Florida National Properties, Inc., a development of Coral Ridge Properties, Inc., a subsidiary of Westinghouse Electric Corporation.

You are cordially invited to visit Spring Lake. Or write or call collect: Director of Sales, (813) 385-6113.

**Follow the yellow brick road (s)  
 to Florida as it should be.**



 Briarwood II 2 Bedrooms/2 Baths	 Sierra 2 Bedrooms/2 Baths
 Whittington II 3 Bedrooms/2 Baths	 Sterling 2 Bedrooms/2 Baths
 Moonraker 3 Bedrooms/2 Baths	 Valencia 2 Bedrooms/2 Baths
 Sandpiper 2 Bedrooms/2 Baths	 The Classic 3 Bedrooms/2 Baths

**NEW MODELS FROM \$34,500 TO \$43,000**  
 Large lot included

Live Country Music  
 plus  
 Personal Appearance by  
 50 Piece  
 Coral Springs Community Band

**Spring Lake**  
 Florida as it should be.

CALL COLLECT,  
 DIRECTOR OF SALES (813) 385-6113  
 OR MAIL COUPON

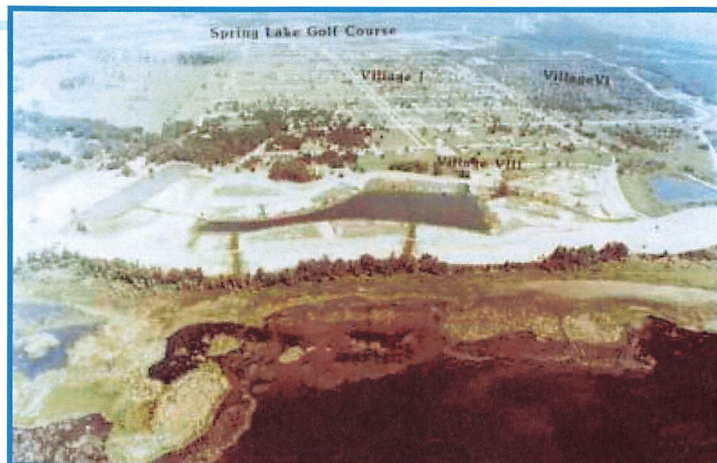
Director of Sales  
 Spring Lake  
 4333 Candy Cane  
 Spring Lake, Sebring, Florida 33870

I want to get there for the Great Opening... so please send me full information on Spring Lake homes and apartments.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
 CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

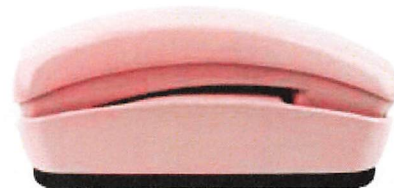
## Lakeside Estates

Village VIII, located in the bottom portion of this photo as white sand, was nothing but vacant land waiting to be developed. Originally owned by Toby Martin, the Village property was sold to Joe Kurzawa, a Canadian investor. A local contractor, Russ Kern, was involved with a number of the original building units, as well as Sam Ogg, who still builds homes in Spring Lake today. As a result of a land donation from Kurzawa, the Lakeside Estates Homeowners Association owns and maintains an eight-acre park, shelter, and tennis courts. There are 186 lots, of which approximately 70 have homes built on them.



The Lakeside Estates Homeowners Association for Village VIII was created in 1987 by the developer, New Properties, Inc., as a membership organization for owners. The Association is comprised of all owners of property in Village VIII, and its Board of Directors is elected by the members.

In December 1977, a new 655 dialing prefix replaced the original 385 prefix. And in 1999, the 941 Area Code was replaced by 863.

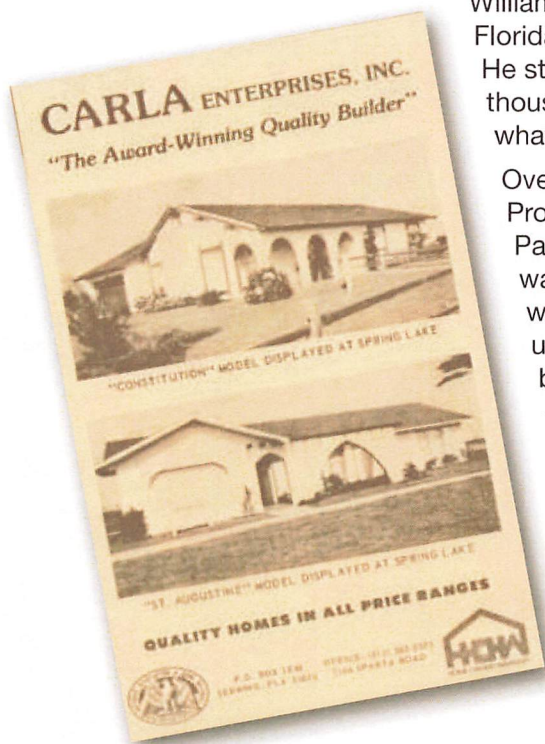


## Britton Island

A news article from August 28, 1975 described anthropologists visiting Spring Lake to inspect what was thought to be an early settlement Indian Mound. The land is directly across from what is now Spring Lake's Pump Station and extends to Arbuckle Creek. Due to the high cost of actual excavation a formal dig never took place. A Dr. J.R. Williams, Associate Professor of anthropology at the University of South Florida, spent several weeks inspecting the site and offered an opinion. He stated, "Undoubtedly the area around Spring Lake was inhabited for thousands of years, yet we know nothing about the inhabitants except what might be guessed."

Over the next few years, the story grew and in June of 1977 Coral Ridge Properties honored its Vice-President in charge of land development, Paul Britton, by naming the land after him. At one time the land was suitable for living on but today, the land is a huge wetland and when the rainy season comes the area is constantly flooded. It is uninhabitable but remains a natural beauty and is still very visible for boaters who travel Arbuckle Creek.

The original Superintendent of Development for the construction of Spring Lake was Mr. Roger Dyess. Another article in this anniversary edition is titled, "Historical Item Donated to the District." Mr. Dyess is the person who made the donation, and his story is there.



- Village I officially began October 15, 1970 but was not included in the SLID boundary
- Village II began on February 3, 1971, and Village III on April 7, 1971
- Village IV began January 2, 1972, and Villages V and VI on October 12, 1972

## Villages II & V

Historical records show that from December 29, 1973 to January 5, 1974 an Open House was held in Village II to view a model home built as a development of Coral Ridge Properties, as a subsidiary of Westinghouse Electric Corporation. By January of 1975 eight new homes were advertised with prices ranging from \$30,000 to \$42,900.

In April of 1975 Coral Ridge held a Gala Preview for homes being built in Village V and, according to a Sebring News article, a very large turnout previewed the homes and the new sales information center recently constructed.



This attractive seven home model row in Village V represents the creative efforts of five local builders. (Greenbriar Models 1980)

A June 1975 Tampa Tribune article titled *Value of Spring Lake Soars* read, "The Spring Lake Community, a modern housing development, has increased in value 434% during its five years of existence, records in the Highlands County Tax Assessor's office state. It now has an assessed value of \$7.6 million, compared to \$175,000 just five years ago. There are now 96 homes in Villages I, II, and V, along with numerous lots ready for homes to be built.



The Pine Breeze Villa project is underway in Village II with 16 villas planned on Honeysuckle Drive. (1980)

In early 1977, there were 230 homes in Spring Lake with a population of 512. In 2021, 3,825 residents and landowners

### THE TAMPA TRIBUNE Monday, June 16, 1975

## Spring Lake Increases Value

SEBRING: The Spring Lake Community, a modern housing development, has increased in value 434% during its five years of existence, records in the Highlands county tax assessor's office state.

The 3,500-acre development, about eight miles south of Sebring on U.S. 98 toward

Okeechobee, has an assessed value of \$7.6 million compared to \$175,000 five years ago. Tax Assessor Billy Martin said 96 homes are contained in the acreage. Don Stanick, Spring Lake Controller, said the most recent evaluation includes 86 homes assessed at \$2,137,000 in Village I, while 10 homes in Village

II are assessed at \$279,000. Next year's evaluation will include a total of 157 homes as construction continues in both Villages. Coral Ridge Properties, builders of Spring Lake, has announced that two additional Villages will begin construction with models available later in the next year.

### THE TAMPA TRIBUNE Saturday, January 15, 1977

## Spring Lake Construction Doubles

SEBRING: New home construction is expected to be almost doubled during 1977 at Spring Lake, a community being developed by Coral Ridge Properties, Inc. about eight miles southeast of Sebring.

J.H. Ryan, general manager of Spring Lake and assistant vice-president of Coral Ridge Properties,

said Thursday that 200 homes would be built during the year, compared to 112 in 1976. Mr. Ryan spoke to a group of 30 banking representatives, builders, and the news media at a preview gathering. He said the community has 230 homes and a population of 500, with an annual disposable income of \$1.5 million.

He said the disposable income would reach \$8 million when the projected 200 homes for 1977 are completed and occupied.

Spring Lake is the fastest growing subdivision in Highlands County, doubling the construction activity of its nearest competitor. The total investment at Spring Lake to date is listed at \$19.5 million.



There are 226 fire hydrants throughout Spring Lake.



## Spring Lake Churches

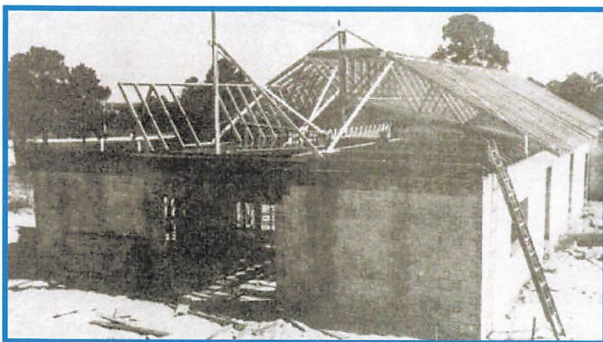
### Spring Lake Presbyterian Church

On October 3, 1976 about 150 people gathered at the Spring Lake Shopping Center to formally organize the Spring Lake Presbyterian Church. For Mary Yontek, whose husband had recently died, it was an anticipated moment. She needed a project to fill her mind and heart and the new community needed a church. The Rev. Barbara Yontek, Mary's daughter, had contacted St. John's Presbytery and Jack Ryan, sales manager of Coral Ridge Properties, developers of Spring Lake, to suggest the community's need for a church.

Teenager Donna Greenhalgh was first in line to put her name to the document that petitioned the Presbytery to form the congregation as a church of the United Presbyterian Church, USA. Forty-nine other people followed, putting their names to the list of charter members. Before this evening there had been fifteen months of investigating, searching, and meetings led by representatives of the Presbytery. Their mission was to determine if there was sufficient interest in the community to form a church. Dr. Harry Bryan was the first of these emissaries from Orlando.

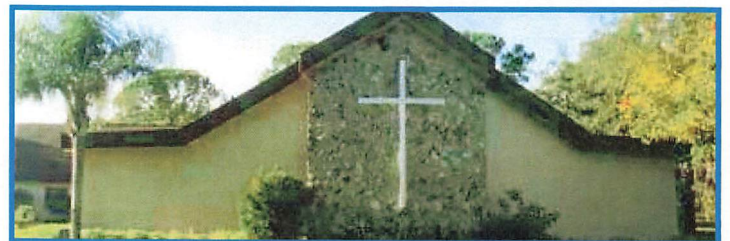


*The congregation of the Spring Lake Presbyterian Church enjoyed fellowship in the courtyard of the shopping plaza before worship service each Sunday. Shown here (l-r) Donna Greenhaigh, Joyce Shanklin, Ruth Storath, Mary Yonteck, Helen & Bob Hart and Ann Hargett. Jan, 1977*



*Easter, March, 1978*

Realizing the zeal among residents, Bryan began worship services in rented quarters at the shopping center. The first was held on December 7, 1975. Neighboring congregations in Sebring, and as far away as Alabama, supplied resources for worship. The search for a permanent pastor ended when the Rev. Paul Stauning, a pastor in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania accepted the call. He was installed as pastor on October 2, 1977. With funds given by the Presbytery and raised by the congregation, the present buildings were dedicated on November 26, 1978.





## Spring Lake United Methodist Church



On October 12, 1981, the groundbreaking for the Spring Lake United Methodist Church was announced. The story describes how Lillian Palmer told people at the ground consecration how she and her late husband, Duane Palmer, came to Spring Lake in 1941 from New York. They farmed over 1,000 acres, which eventually became our Spring Lake community. The Rev. Perry James held the official groundbreaking ceremonies and Lakeland District Superintendent Dr. Jimmy Jones led a host of dignitaries from the area. Jones officially constituted the church on Easter Sunday of 1981 after

it was organized by a Planning Committee, which, the article stated, included Mr. and Mrs. Reed McLean Jr., Dr. Odell Miley, Freda Hawkins, among others.

Foster Alter was the administrative Board chairman, Jim Zimmerman headed the building committee, and Clayton Hall served as finance chairman. The congregation raised the money to construct a chapel with a multipurpose room on acres bought in 1979.



*Rev. Perry James with Mrs. Lillian Palmer at the site of the new Methodist church*



*The new Spring Lake Methodist Church*

In another article dated February 10, 1982, the newspaper noted the church had experienced a steady growth in interest and cooperation of members and friends. A Bible study group was meeting with Clayton Hall as one of the teachers. Mrs. John Gill as president was leading an active Women's group. Howard Pike was president of the men's organization.

## Spring Lake Baptist Church

Located at the intersection of Rt. 98 and Spring Lake Blvd., the Spring Lake Baptist Church has a unique origin. In November of 1978 Pastor Arthur P. Mann and his wife arrived at Spring Lake after leaving an established church in Stevens Point, Michigan. Their objective, as directed by the Hiawatha Baptist Mission in Grand Rapids, was to establish a fundamental Baptist church in the Spring Lake area.



*December, 1978*

Upon arriving to Spring Lake Pastor Mann and his wife began holding services in their living room and soon had assembled a small but dedicated congregation. Soon the house was remodeled to accommodate a larger congregation, and as they grew a church building was inevitable.

Within two years of his arrival Pastor Mann and his group, now grown to 30, managed to purchase the land the church currently stands on. The land and building required no outside financial help and was fully supported by the congregation.

Groundbreaking began November 2, 1980 and interim services were held at the Community Club at Spring Lake while the new building was erected. The 3,000 square foot sanctuary, which has seating for 160, was constructed in less than 90 days by a team of five construction missionaries, their wives, and volunteer helpers from Michigan, Iowa, and Spring Lake. Services were held in the new church for the first time on March 8, 1981.



*November, 1981*

## Shopping Plaza

Groundbreaking for the original plaza took place in July of 1973 and the dedication ceremonies were attended by County Commissioners, County Engineer, and other officials and dignitaries. The plaza was built by Coral Ridge Properties and was designed to have two phases. The first building was constructed at a cost of \$134,000 and the second building for slightly more. The grand opening for the first building was held on May 2, 1974. By 1977 the second building was completed and had 10 stores

### The First Stores:

- Spring Lake Development Administrative Offices
- Annabelle's Boutique
- Kelevon Appliance Center
- Hair Gallery
- Sebrino's Italian Restaurant
- Hughes Spring Lake Market
- Smiley's Ceramics
- C&B Hardware
- Spring Lake Draperies

Original rent at the Shopping Plaza was \$127 per month for an average size space.



Coral Ridge-Westinghouse presents  
Spring Lake Shopping Plaza

6101-03 US Hwy. 98, Spring Lake, Sebring, Florida

Come and join Hughes Spring Lake Market, Kelevon Appliances, and Sebrino's Spring Lake Restaurant in the new and beautiful community of SPRING LAKE.

Space available for as little as \$127 PER MONTH

TERMS ARRANGED TO MEET YOUR NEEDS

SPACE SUITABLE FOR

BEAUTY SHOP	BICYCLE REPAIR SHOP
BARBER SHOP	DRUG STORE
HARDWARE STORE	GIFT SHOP
GARDEN SHOP	CRAFTS SHOP

Realty Management Corp. R. L. Hofmann, Broker  
For further information call (813) 385-2538

March 6, 1975

## Spring Lake Shopping Plaza

Look what we have in store for you!

Benjamin Moore paints	HELENE CURTIS UNI-PERM
C&B HARDWARE 385-8403	Hair Gallery, Inc. 385-3520
Fine Italian & American Cuisine	CERAMIC INSTRUCTION
Sebrino's 385-2182	SMILEY'S CERAMICS.. 385-2971
Westinghouse Appliances	Hughes' Spring Lake Market
KeLeVon APPLIANCE CENTER & BUILDERS SUPPLY 385-1744	385-2637

Spring Lake  
on U.S. 98 • Seven miles south of SEBRING.

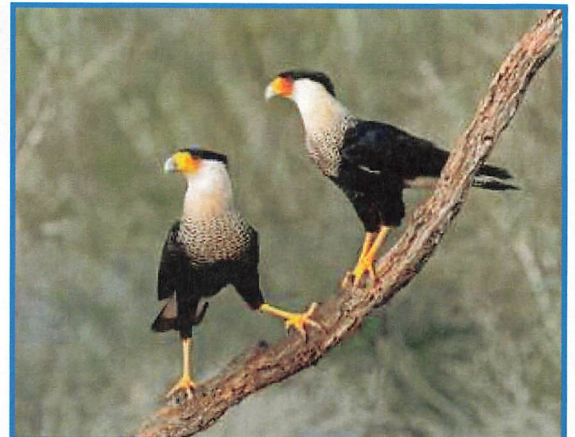
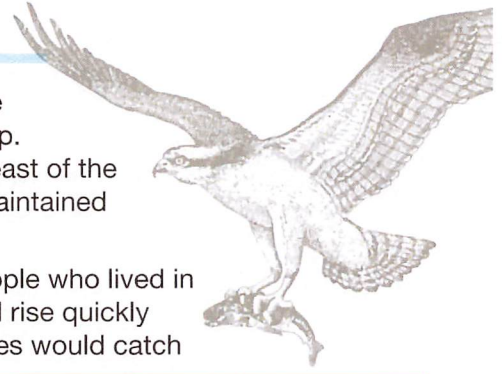
October 16, 1975

## Lake Istokpoga

Florida's fifth largest lake forms the southern boundary of Spring Lake. The lake is approximately 27,000 acres, 40 square miles, and averages about 4-feet deep. Istokpoga Park is easily available to all Spring Lake residents and located just east of the Gator Shack Restaurant. There is no charge to take advantage of the county maintained boat ramp, boardwalk, nature trails, dock fishing, restrooms, and picnic area.

As legend has it, Lake Istokpoga means "men have died here". Early native people who lived in the area in the 1900s gave it that name because two-to-three-foot swells would rise quickly without warning due to the shallowness of the lake's depth. These sudden waves would catch the Indians off guard and many drowned.

Lake Istokpoga is one of the best fishing lakes in the state. Istokpoga is home to the largest recorded resident population of Osprey of any lake in the world; they are there for the fishing too. The lake is also home to several federally-protected species, including the Everglades Snail Kite, American Bald Eagle, and the Crested Caracara as well as numerous species of reptiles, wading birds and waterfowl. The sunsets on the lake are unsurpassed.



© 1997  
University of Florida

## Spring Lake Golf Course

In January 1977, Coral Ridge Properties Vice-President and General Manager of Spring Lake announced plans for the construction of an 18-hole golf course complex. The budget was estimated at \$1.5 million with a targeted completion date of late 1978. Well known golf course builder R.E. (Bob) Werk, President of American Golf Course Company, was contracted to construct and operate the facility.

After negotiations with Werk failed in 1978, David Garard was hired by Coral Ridge Properties to supervise construction of the golf course. Old newspaper articles point out, "The land was a swamp!" As a result of the amount of muck, fill from 35 acres of canals were used to bring the land up above the water level. Despite the unique headaches involved, the construction steadily progressed to its completion, and on July 28,

1980, the 18-hole championship layout was opened for play. David and his wife, Inez, managed the golf course for several years. He also constructed what was known as the 9 hole Bobcat Run course.



First foursome to play the course

On that first day of play Spring Lake property owner Douglas Kennedy and his son teed off to become the first paying golfers to play the course. Next up was a foursome consisting of Spring Lake residents Charlie Grindle and Ken Harris with their guest George McMillan, and Spring Lake golf pro Doug Key.

*GOLF, Con't. on page 13*

December 30, 1981

ATTENTION GOLFERS!

# SpringLake

Golf and Country Club, Inc.

**Seasonal Rates**  
Prices good thru December!

**\$14.00** plus tax

Public Invited 18 holes

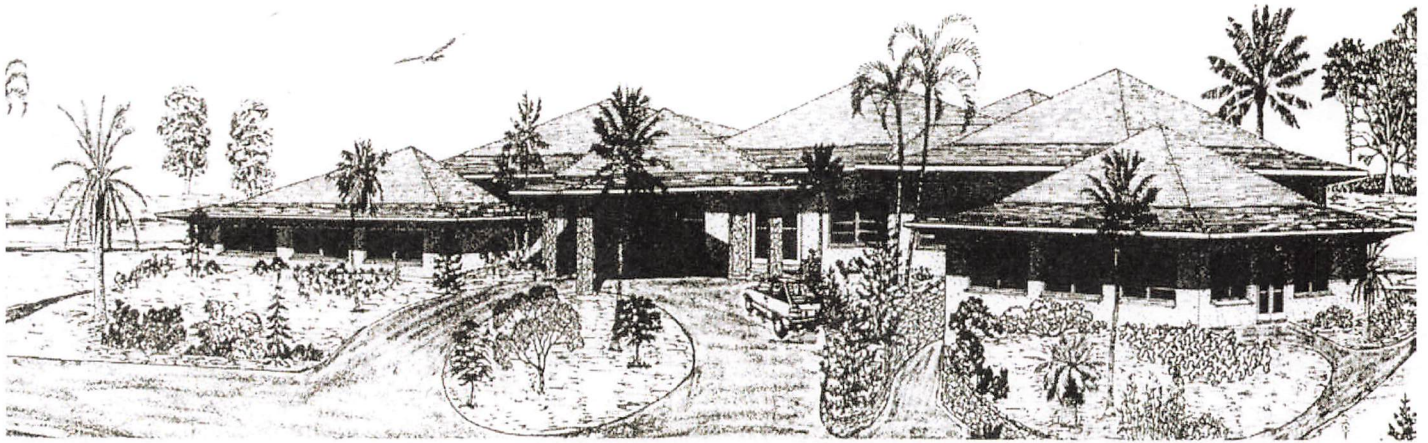
INCLUDES: GOLF CAR GREEN FEES

SpringLake Golf and Country Club, Inc. Special Rates available for groups! Call for info: (813)655-1276

### February weather

	1977	1976
Average high temperature	72 d. F.	79 d.
Highest temperature	87 d. F.	86 d. F.
Average low temperature	47 d. F.	52 d. F.
Lowest temperature	30 d. F.	33 d. F.
Amount of rainfall	.76"	1.21"
Days it rained	6	4



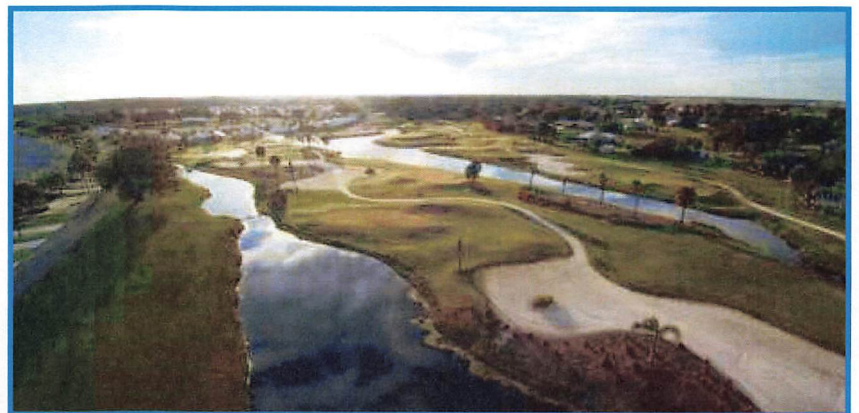


*This artist's conceptual drawing was presented in early 1987. Construction plans later changed to the current design.*

**GOLF, Con't. from page 12**

After many years of success, the golf course was eventually sold at auction in 1985 to Mike Tellschow, a businessman from West Palm Beach. The addition of a clubhouse, golf villas, and 18 additional holes of golf over the years turned the property into a popular Golf Resort, attracting golfers and buyers from around the United States and Europe.

In 2016 local business owners Edd and Rita Vowels purchased the golf course and operated it until November of 2019 when they sold it to The Signature Group. The name was changed to The Sebring International Golf Resort and is currently in a building and expansion mode. The resort is operated by Helmut Wyzisk II and Helmut Wyzisk III, known by H2 and H3.



*Tons of earth were moved to create a waterway between what became the 10th and 18th fairways at the course.*



FORT LAUDERDALE NEWS  
 SATURDAY, JUNE 9, 1979  
**Real Estate**



## Infrastructure

- Pump station has four 65,000 gallons per minute pumps (2 electric: 2 diesel)
- 2,305 acres served by the pump station in discharging storm water.
- 1,380 acres of off-site land served by the pump station.

A Water Control Plan was engineered in 2010, leading to millions of dollars in projects.

*The \$3.2 million wastewater treatment plant had a ribbon cutting on July 8, 2020*



In 1973, residents received a letter stating the water bill would be \$6.00 for 5000 gallons



## Storm Treatment Area

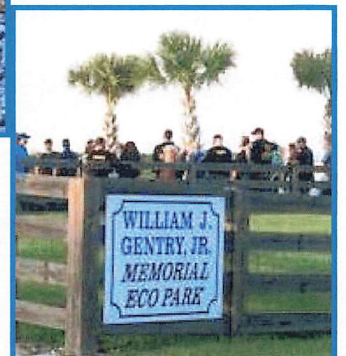
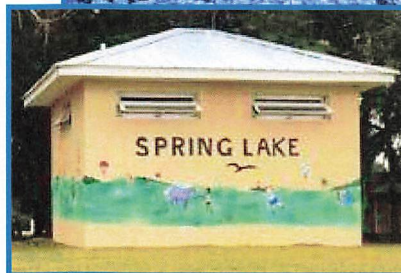
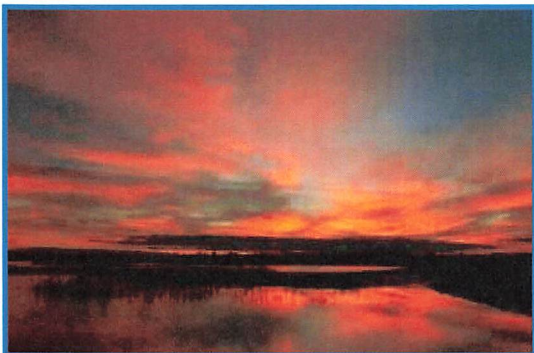
### FACTS AND FIGURES

105 Acres of Land Purchased	\$750,000
Sink Hole and Sea Wall Repair at Pump Station	\$450,000
Grants, Appropriations, and State Revolving Funds for STA	\$3,600,000
District Operating Funds and Reserves for all STA projects	\$1,250,000
Legislative Appropriation for Pump Station	\$500,000
District Operating Funds and Reserves for all Pump Station projects	\$250,000
<b>Total Costs</b>	<b>\$6,800,000</b>

- Construction began March 2015 and concluded October 2016
- 750,000 cubic yards of fill removed from 70-acre Storm Water Treatment Area - 25,000 dump truck loads
- 1.47-mile perimeter of STA has been paved for walking and biking
- Receives storm water from just under 4,000 acres
- Retains 9.5 million cubic feet of storm water prior to discharge
- Initial monitoring began August 2017
- 10,781 lbs. of total suspended solids identified
- 18.3 lbs. of Phosphorus removed
- 589 lbs. of Nitrogen removed
- 1500 lbs. of Biological Oxygen demand removed which allows oxygen levels to remain high
- Eco Park installed with shelters, picnic tables, grilles, benches, and restroom with County Grant of \$75,000



The Storm Water Treatment Project (ECO Park) broke ground October 31, 2014



## Board History

When the District was formed in 1971, the Charter required three landowner positions as the make-up of the Board of Supervisors. It was not until 1998 when the District exceeded 25% density, that two positions were added to the Board as popularly elected Board positions.

Three Supervisors are currently elected on a one acre/one vote system. If you own 4 properties, you have four votes; 1 house is one vote; etc. Elections are always held at the Annual Landowners Meeting, the second Wednesday of November, and are three-year terms.

Two Supervisors are currently elected by popular vote and have four-year terms. The County Supervisor of Elections coordinates the election of these two Board members. Here are the 31 residents who have given their time and talents to the District:

Grady, Kenneth 1971-1976	Birney, Joseph 1977-1988	Tellschow, Mike 1993-1998	Calabrese, Kent 1998-2005
Van, Leon 2001-2012; 2015-2019	Benson, Marsi 2005-2010	Danko, Theresa 2010-2011	Klingbiel, Arlene 2012-2016
O'Neal, Julian 1971-1976	Sterling, William 1978-1984	DeCerbo, Joseph 1996-2006	Rentel, Bill 1998-2007
Childers, Dan 2003 (9 months)	Acker, Brian 2006-present	Foote, Jim 2010-2011	Gorham, Kay 2019-present
Watson, Charles 1971-1979	Ankrom, Russell 1984-1996	Boone, Monte 1998-2001	Wolfe, Walter 2001-2003
Steinlage, Ann 2004-2007	Poe, Ken 2007-2010	McKenna, Tim 2011-present	Melony Culpepper 2019-2020
Pollard, Eldridge 1976-1997	Geiger, Walter 1988-1992	Emerson, Robert 1998-2004	Sue Dean 2020-present
Smith, Joe 2005-2006	Bill Lawens 2007-present	Behrendt, Gary 2011- 2019	

The first race at the track was held on New Year's Eve, 1950, and lasted six hours. This 1950 Crosley was the winner!



November 21, 1984

**THE GOOD LIFE IS STILL AFFORDABLE IN SPRING LAKE**

Compare our price and exceptional value. Live where the air is clean and the land is uncrowded.

**HOUSE and LOT PACKAGE FOR ONLY \$44,900\***

The FINECHEST has proven to be our most popular design and floorplan. It is truly the home of the 80's - well designed, attractive and energy efficient. Split bedroom plan with large Master bedroom and walk-in closet.

SPRING LAKE is an established community in central Florida that offers a beautiful 18-hole championship golf course, racquet club, shopping and medical facilities and is located on Lake Itzokpa, 30 square miles of bass fishing and recreation.

Sales Manager, Spring Lake  
8127 U. S. Highway 95  
Spring Lake, Sebring, FL 33870  
TEL: (813)653-1213

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_  
State \_\_\_\_\_  
Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**SpringLake**

Florida... the way it should be.



# A Tribute

50th Anniversary of Spring Lake Improvement District

WHEREAS, the Spring Lake Improvement District, an independent special district and a political subdivision of the state, was created by a special act of the Legislature in 1971 and is located in Highlands County, and

WHEREAS, Spring Lake Improvement District held its first official landowners' meeting on November 10, 1971, and

WHEREAS, throughout the 1970s and 1980s, the Westinghouse Corporation built a community through its subsidiaries of Florida National Properties and Coral Ridge Properties, and

WHEREAS, with a population density of 30 percent, the Spring Lake Improvement District now contains 1,700 homes and businesses, and

WHEREAS, the Spring Lake Improvement District recognized the need to make improvements to ensure that the residents would have access to adequate, high-quality water, and

WHEREAS, over the years, the Spring Lake Improvement District developed a working relationship and partnership with the Legislature and the Department of Environmental Protection and has received grants and low cost loans to improve its infrastructure, and

WHEREAS, the Spring Lake Improvement District has completed many infrastructure improvements, including building a storm water treatment project, a new sewer plant, and a second water plant, and has upgraded its pump station, NOW,

WHEREFORE,

BE IT RESPECTFULLY PROCLAIMED that the Spring Lake Improvement District is congratulated upon its 50th anniversary and an extended best wishes for its future.

*Kaylee Tuck*  
Kaylee Tuck  
Representative, District 55

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-0107

February 26, 2021

Joe DeCervo, District Manager  
Spring Lake Improvement District  
115 Spring Lake Blvd.  
Sebring, FL 33876

Dear Joe:

Congratulations on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the creation of Spring Lake by the Florida Legislature on November 10, 1971. This is a true testament to the leadership, hard work and dedication to the residents and landowners of your community. Thank you for all you have done through Spring Lake.

Once again, please accept my most sincere congratulations on the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Spring Lake Improvement District. If I may be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact my Congressional office at (981) 496-1214. I'd like to meet.

In Your Service,  
*W. Scott*  
W. Scott  
Member of Congress

## Congratulations & Proclamations

United States Senate

May 7, 2021


Dear Friends:

Congratulations to the Spring Lake Improvement District on your 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Thank you for helping to create opportunities for Spring Lake's families.

As a husband, father and grandfather, I understand the importance of family and community. I grew up in a family that didn't have a lot of money, and I watched my parents struggle to keep a job and just how important it is to invest in what matters to families. That is why, during my eight years as Governor, I fought every single day to make Florida the best state in the nation to find a great job, build a business and live in safe neighborhoods. My goal in the United States Senate is to continue building on Florida's tremendous success so every family has the opportunity to live their American dream.

Thank you for helping to create opportunities for Spring Lake's families and to see work to make Florida the best place to find a job and raise a family. Congratulations again, you have my best wishes for many more years of continued success.

Sincerely,  
*Rick Scott*  
Rick Scott  
United States Senator

 **HIGHLANDS COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
ADMINISTRATION**  
600 S. Commerce Ave., Sebring, Florida 33870  
Office (888) 622-6833 Fax (888) 402-6836 www.Highlandsfla.gov

February 15, 2021

Mr. Joe DeCervo  
District Manager  
115 Spring Lake Boulevard  
Sebring, FL 33876

Dear Mr. DeCervo,

It is amazing to think of how far Spring Lake has come over the last 50 years. In the early 1970's, mostly wet pasture land to the now thriving community with a model water management system.

It has taken both visionaries and those willing to invest their time, talents and sweat equity to make the vision of what is now Spring Lake a reality. The leadership and staff have had to make the tough financial decisions to ensure the District is fiscally sound, while at the same time having a heart for service. It has taken a close-knit community continually working together to make Spring Lake a better place to live despite the challenges presented by cycles in the economy and housing market, natural disasters, and of late, a pandemic. Despite all that, fifty years later, the Spring Lake Improvement District continues to thrive and grow.

Congratulations on Spring Lake Improvement District's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, and to Joe DeCervo and his board for the role they played in its continuing growth and success.

Sincerely,  
*Randy Vosburg*  
Randy Vosburg, MPA, AICP, CFM  
County Administrator

 **Highlands County Sheriff's Office**  
Sheriff Paul Bluckman  
115 Spring Lake Blvd  
Sebring, Florida 33876  
888-622-6833  
www.HighlandsCountyFL.gov

January 19, 2021

Board of Supervisors  
Spring Lake Improvement District  
115 Spring Lake Blvd  
Sebring, Florida 33876-0107

Members of the Board:

Congratulations to the Spring Lake Improvement District on their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We are with celebrating 50 years this year, and 2021 is going to be a big year for both Spring Lake and the Highlands County Sheriff's Office.


Much has changed in our county since 1971, and Spring Lake is no exception. The District has grown and improved and, as a result, has become a vital part of the Highlands County community.

I would like to take this time to give again thank the District for housing one of our fallen members, Deputy William Gentry, who lived in Spring Lake. It was a privilege to have him at the entrance of the 500 Park with a monument to his service to citizens of Highlands County. Deputy Gentry's family also lives in Spring Lake, and I think it means the world to them to have a monument to him so close to home.

I wish Spring Lake all the best as it celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year and look forward to what the future brings for the District.

Sincerely,  
*Paul Bluckman*  
Paul Bluckman, Highlands County Sheriff



 **THE FLORIDA SENATE**  
Tallahassee, Florida 32310-1100

February 2, 2021

SENATOR BEN ALBERTSON  
106 Capitol  
Tallahassee, Florida 32310-1100

Dear Joe:

I am honored and proud to congratulate you Spring Lake Improvement District for 50 years of accomplishments, quality service to our communities in Highlands County. That is an incredible feat. For those 50 years, the District has brought out and accomplished creative ways to provide for a better public service to whom. There is no higher calling and over the years many have taken on the challenge. Thank you for pursuing your motto and passion for the high place, directed at your neighbors for their benefit.

The district has invested in and created opportunities for our citizens, parks and recreational areas, and general upkeep of its natural areas with diligence and great care.

As your State Senator, I say, THANK YOU, and God Bless the Spring Lake Improvement District. Their 50th anniversary 50 years of quality, innovation, and action service for a better future in this special part of Highlands County.

I'm proud of what you have accomplished and can't wait to see what the future holds. It will be fantastic that in the Spring Lake will always be a special place filled with special people working for a special purpose. This is an important part as Florida's Rural Heartland.

Sincerely,  
*Ben Albertson*  
Ben Albertson  
Florida State Senator  
District 26

## Major Awards, Loans, and Grants

### 2007

- \$14,000 FEMA grant to repair tropical storm damage to pump station; first reimbursement since District was established

### 2010

- \$465,000 debt to Florida National Properties removed from our books
- Water Quality testing on Arbuckle Creek eliminated at savings of \$30K year
- Medium Public Water System of the Year Award from Florida Rural Water Association

### 2012

- FEMA certifies levee and saves homeowners millions in flood insurance
- District Manager of the Year Award (Joe DeCerbo) from Florida Association of Special Districts

### 2014

- \$624,000 grant from Florida Department of Environmental Protection for Storm Water Treatment Area project
- \$416,000 legislative appropriation for the Storm Water Treatment Area
- District of the Year Award from Florida Association of Special Districts

### 2015

- \$624,000 grant from Spring Lake receives additional \$624K grant from Florida Department of Environmental Protection for Storm Water Treatment Area project
- \$500,000 legislative appropriation for pump station
- \$2,800,000 state loan (0% interest - 30 years) secured for Storm Water Treatment Area project Florida Department of Environmental Protection Excellence Award for water plant operations

### 2016

- \$194,000 secured to repair storm damage pump equipment - Preferred Government Insurance Trust
- \$3,200,000 state loan (0% interest - 30 years) secured for construction of a new sewer plant.

### 2017

- \$75,000 County Recreation Committee award for ECO Park.
- Florida Rural Water Association Administrator of the Year Awards (Clay Shrum)

### 2018

- \$40,000 County Recreation Committee award for Pine Breeze Park
- Close to \$125,000 FEMA reimbursements pending from Hurricane Irma.
- \$5,000 Safety Award from Preferred Government Insurance Trust
- District Manager of the Year Award (Joe DeCerbo) from Florida Association of Special Districts

### 2019

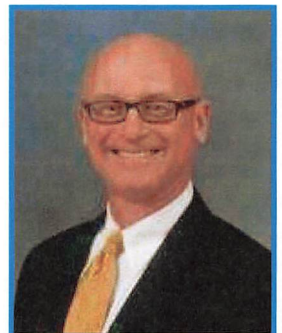
- \$42,000 County Recreation Committee award for Bark Park.
- \$450,000 for water projects engineering from Florida Department of Environmental Protection
- \$5,000 Safety Award from Preferred Government Insurance Trust
- Most Valuable Member of the Year (Joe DeCerbo) from Florida Association of Special Districts

### 2020

- \$5,900,000 for water utility projects from Florida State Department of Environmental Protection



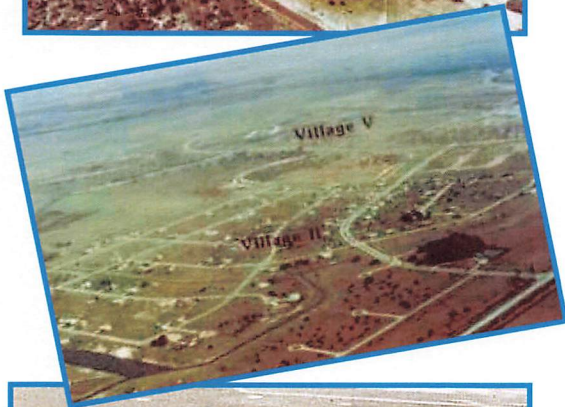
Former State Senator Denise Grimsley and former State Representative Cary Pigman helped Spring Lake secure over \$2 million in Legislative Appropriations and supported \$10 million of no interest loans from the State.



The first issue of the Breeze newsletter was written by Brad Sterling in March 1975



# BREEZE



- The District interacts with over 50 local, state, and federal agencies.
- 3,825 residents and landowners
- 3,333 acres; 2,493 north of Rt. 98 and 840 south of Rt. 98
- District mowing program serves 1,320 lots and 133 acres.
- 36 miles of roadway, 16 miles of canals, 3 miles of levees
- 5 miles in length, east to west
- Land elevations vary from 65' on the west to 38' mean sea level to the east
- 10,000 + autos and trucks travel Rt. 98 through Spring Lake daily
- 5 public parks, community center, tennis courts, 5 pavilions, boat ramp/dock
- Golf Resort, restaurant, pub, villa rentals (18 holes built in 1978)
- District web site averages 400 sessions per month
- Over 1 billion gallons of storm water was discharged during hurricane Irma (9/17)
- Average rainfall over the past 45 years, 50" per year (60% occurs from June – Sept.)
- Close to 1,700 water meters and 320 sewer connections
- 400K gallon water storage tank, 250K gallon tank, 3 wells
- The Florida Aquifer underlies the entire District.

## Spring Lake Underwater!

In September of 2006 Tropical Storm Ernesto made a direct hit on Spring Lake and brought into focus the need for increased flood control. As a result of litigation against the District and the use of our pump station, it was clear that without a working pump station and more retention and storage, the future of Spring Lake was bleak. These pictures show the extent of the damage inflicted on our community, and why we had to focus our attention on developing a new and improved storm water management program.

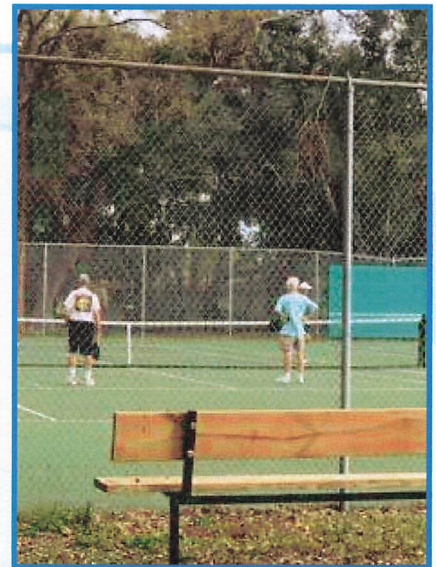
Starting in 2007 the District worked closely with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the Florida Legislature to secure grants, appropriations, and no-interest loans. While this was a time-consuming process, the fruits of our labor came to fruition beginning in 2014 and the development of our Storm Water Treatment Area, known today as the ECO Park. This was followed by additional funding for the pump station, a new sewer plant, the purchase of a second water plant, sewer lines along Rt. 98, and a focus on creating as much retention and storage as possible. Today, Spring Lake is the premier community for flood control and storm water management.



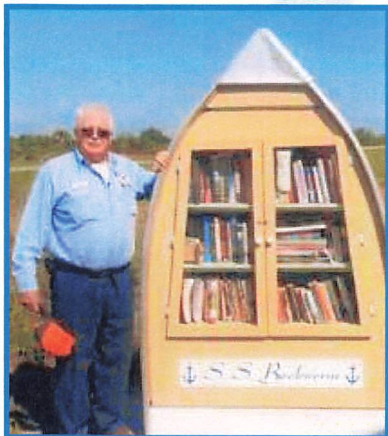
# A Look Around Spring Lake



Pine Breeze Playground



Pickleball



Little Free Library at Storm Water Treatment Area



Butterfly habitat at ECO Park

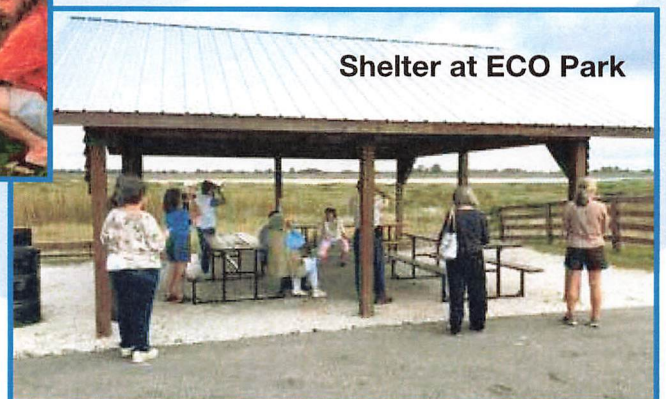


Popular picnic and gathering spot at Pine Breeze Park



Sunset at Storm Water Treatment Area

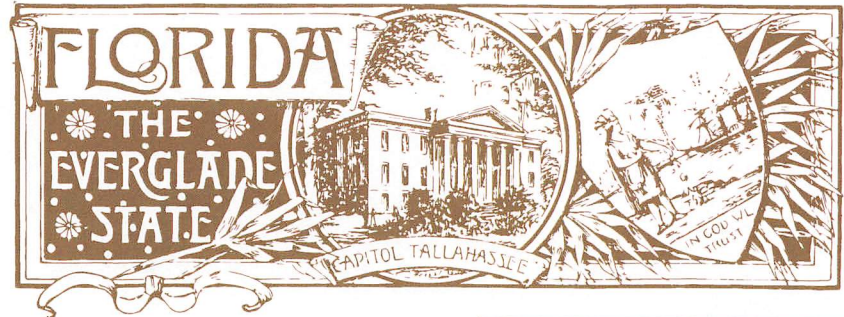
Fun at Bark Park



Shelter at ECO Park



When Florida became a state in 1845, the Seminole Indians had already been here for many thousands of years. Most accounts agree they didn't begin to coexist very peacefully with white settlers until long after the last Seminole War ended in 1858. In 1909, Congress opened these lands for homesteading as most of the Indians had fled southward into the swamps.



## History Uncovered

We know that there is a lot of history throughout Florida and we often read about people finding old Indian canoes, arrowheads, and other artifacts. The Paul-Hus family owns land off of Rt. 98, directly across the street from Thunder Road and extending east to the levee. While walking their land they discovered a piece of pipe sticking out of the ground. It was a survey pipe from 1928 that was put there during the general survey being conducted in the whole state.

It is illegal to remove a stake and, as the picture shows, the fine back then was \$250, which equals \$3,650 today!

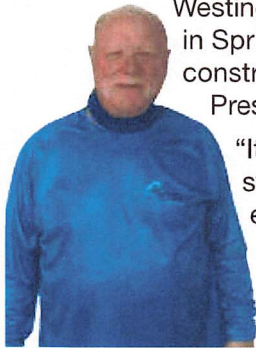


*Osceola, one of the leaders of the Seminole Indians during the Second Seminole War with the United States in the 1830s.*



## Historical Item Donated To District

This item was donated to the District by David Roger Dyess, who worked for Coral Ridge Properties and Westinghouse Communities from 1970 – 1995. He writes, "I was the first representative on site in Spring Lake for Coral Ridge from 1971 – 1978 and was the supervisor of all infrastructure construction during that time. I was presented with a token of appreciation by J.H. Ryan, Vice President of Operations for Spring Lake in 1978.



"It is a small gift but packed with history of the land that is now Spring Lake. The types of stones that each object is made from, and its origin, tell a story of a trading network that existed long before the white man inhabited the area. The group of collected treasures are arrowheads and what is believed to be a very large spear head or small blunt striking head.

"These objects were found throughout the site, and the blunt force object was found during construction of the Spring Lake Pump Station

during phase one construction of Duane Palmer Boulevard, under a lone pine tree. I am sure arrowheads can still be found in that area.

"It would be a privilege for me and my coworkers to pass this on to the Spring Lake Improvement District to display for safe keeping as a small example of the history of the land."

This historical gift, along with other pieces of memorabilia and photos, are on display in the District Office for all to visit and enjoy.

