



SpringLake BREEZE

Florida... the way it should be!



TOMORROW STARTS TODAY!

Parks and Recreation Expansion Begins

For the past 18 months the District has been working with Catalyst Designs in Orlando to develop a master plan for the expansion of parks and recreation in Spring Lake. This 10 year plan impacts every park, as well as adding many new amenities for residents. All the major projects are pictured and described in this issue, and large poster sized pictures are located in the District office Board Room for public viewing.

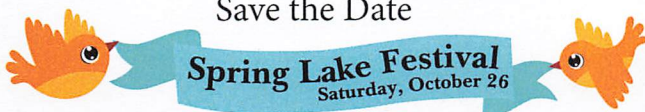
The total cost of this program is just under \$17 million if all the work were to be bid out and handled by an outside firm. The plan is for the District to manage each project itself, bypass the costly bid process, and secure a large portion of the funding from grants, State Appropriations, and in-kind work, which will lower the costs significantly. Our District staff will be able to do a number of tasks that will reduce costs as well. Funding will not rely on assessments only, and projects will only be started when funds become available.



Pictured above is a complex that will include a new community center, splash pads, athletic fields, playgrounds, picnic areas, shade structures, and walking paths. The District Office, located in the lower right, will remain in that location at this time. The Pickleball courts will remain where they are currently located.

See proposed maps and changes on the following pages.

Save the Date

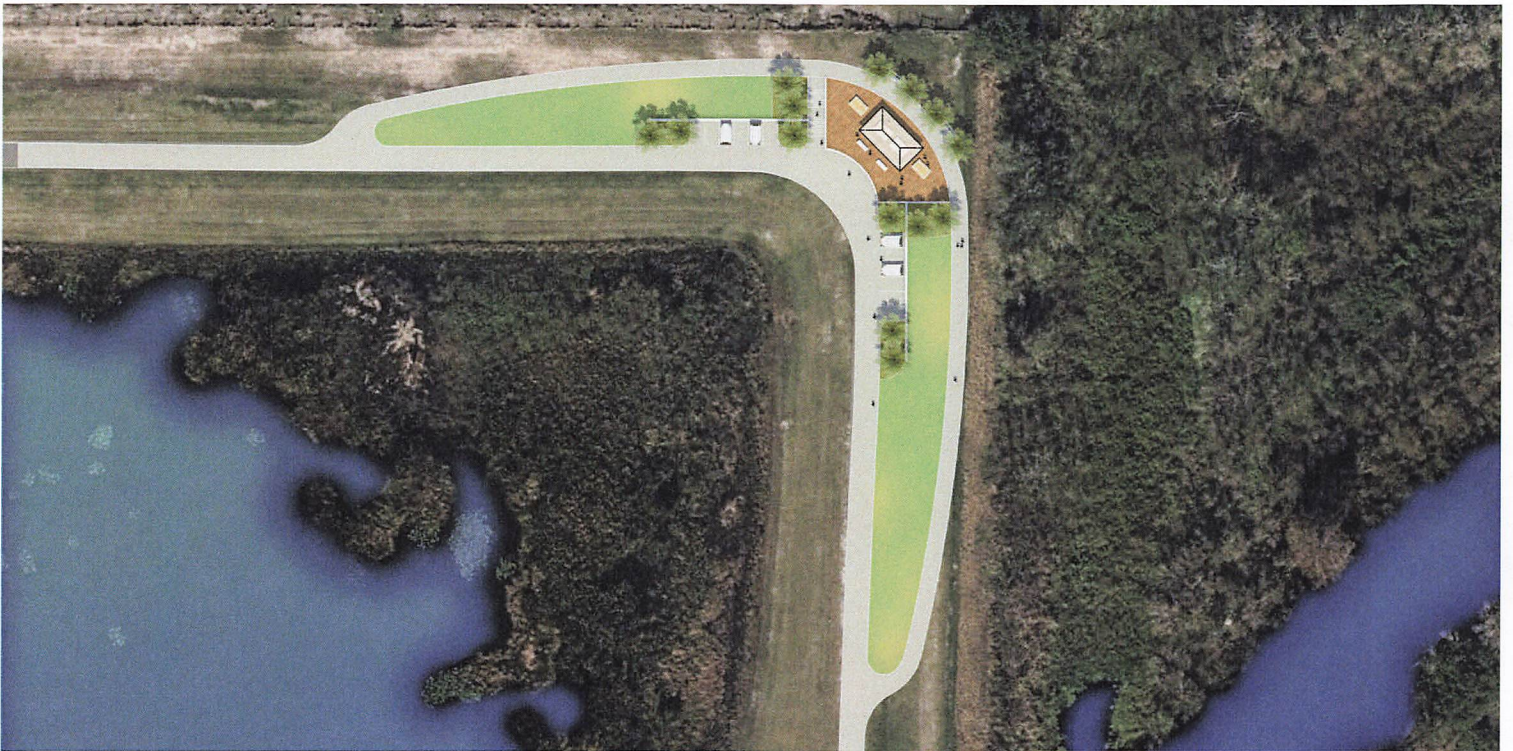


William Gentry Memorial ECO Park



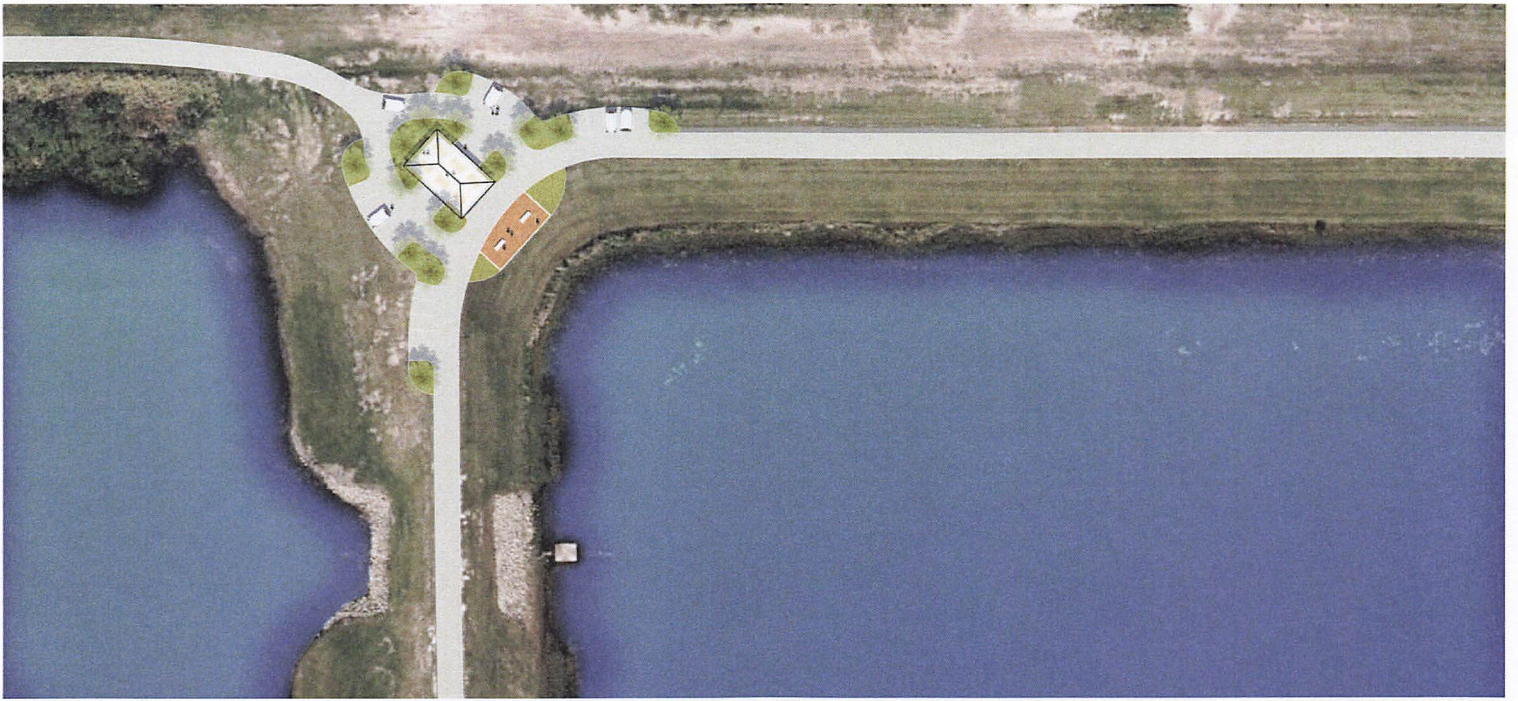
This has become one of the most popular areas in all of Spring Lake. Whether people are walking, biking, fishing, driving their golf cart, or using the shelter and picnic areas, you will always see people taking advantage of this beautiful area. Many residents will go on top of the dirt mound on the east side of the park and watch the sunset. This higher ground area will be getting a complete upgrading and renovation that will include golf cart access and parking, vehicle parking, restrooms, patio areas, nature trail, shade structures, picnic tables, grills, benches, stage, and a destination green for media events (i.e. movies).

ECO Park Overlook



This area of the park is in the northeast corner and will include: trail extension; golf cart access and parking area; shade structure; picnic tables; grills; and benches. This provides another area for park users to rest, picnic, and enjoy the wildlife in the wetlands area.

ECO Park Halfway Station



Located just north of the fishing pier, this area will include: shade structure; picnic tables; benches; grills; and a wetland deck close to the water. The continuation of the trail system will travel to the west of this station and access the 20 acres of land that was donated to the District by the County and will be part of the parks expansion. While not pictured, the area will include trails; fishing pier; pavilion; picnic tables; grills; benches; both golf cart and vehicle parking areas.

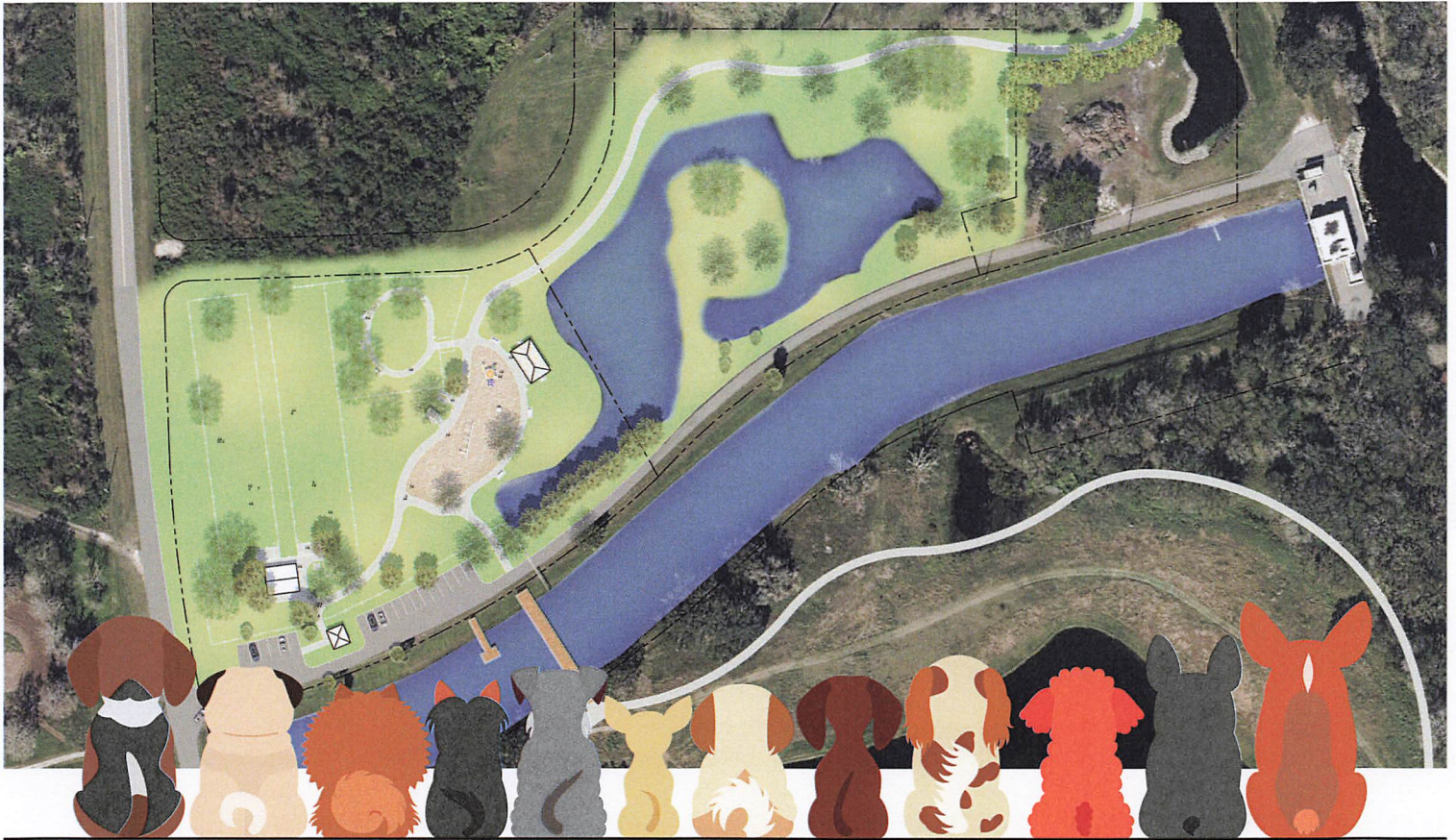
Arbuckle Creek Park



This will be one of the more extensive projects that will allow many more residents to take advantage of this beautiful site. Lack of amenities have prevented more people from using the park, but that is sure to change. Water service is being connected to allow for fountains and a restroom. Other additions include: expanded parking area; playground; shade structures; picnic tables; grills; benches; and exercise equipment. The boat ramp and fishing pier will be upgraded as well.

The project will begin this winter, and \$250,000 has already been secured in grants from the State Recreation Department and the County Recreation Committee.

Bark Park Expansion



Similar to Arbuckle Creek Park, this project has already received \$220,250 from the Florida Recreation Department and the County Recreation Committee. Work will commence in the coming months. With the amount of land that is available in that area, plans call for a playground, splash pad, another shelter with picnic tables and grills, and benches. A trailhead is planned that will extend west towards the ECO Park, on to the donated County land, back on to Duane Palmer, and east back to the Dog Park. Eventually, the trail will be expanded to other areas and will be over eight miles in length.

Russ Ankrom Park



Located just off off Lime Tree, this has been a very underused area. Plans call for a walking trail, shelter, picnic tables, grills, benches, and a water fountain. An application has been recently made to the State Recreation Department in the amount of \$145,000. The State will announce the awards in June of 2025.

Village One Park



Changes to this park will enhance an already beautiful area. The road between Thunder and Wilson Terrace will no longer be accessible to vehicles, and it will be replaced with a walking trail around the pond. A parking area will be added, additional playground equipment, shelter, picnic tables, benches, grills, and a fishing pier.

4H Coming to Spring Lake

As Spring Lake continues to grow, and more children are living here, activities for our young people will become increasingly important. Thanks to the efforts of long time resident Monica Griffith, 4H will become a reality in Spring Lake. While 4H is usually thought of as a Livestock program, it is far from that. The program offers organized activities for all interests: art; culinary; plants; bugs; dogs and cats; marine science; nutrition; public speaking; and much more.

The program will be open to school age children, and the total cost for a whole year is \$20. During summer months there will be day camps and overnight camps, as well as many other activities.

4H meetings are held at the Spring Lake Community Center Tuesdays from 6:30 – 8:00 p.m., and they began in early September. If any adults would like to help, your assistance would be welcomed and appreciated. For further information contact Monica at 863-381-8052.



Frequently Asked Questions About the Park Project

When will these projects begin?

Funding has already been received for Arbuckle Creek Park and the Bark Park Expansion, and construction will begin this winter. Another grant application was submitted for Russ Ankrom Park and, if successful, will begin next summer.

How do the projects get ranked?

Since our plan is to secure as many grants and appropriations as possible, we will stay abreast of what funding is a priority. For example, the reason Arbuckle Creek Park became number one is because of the State priority to fund boating and fishing projects. The Bark Park expansion received funding because of a priority for walking trails.

How much of an increase will we see in our assessments?

While the parks operations and maintenance costs will certainly increase, our efforts to secure outside funding will cut costs substantially. You should see only slight increases in the non ad valorem assessments, but will certainly have more than ample amenities to justify any increase.

Where can I get more information on these projects?

Large poster size pictures of each project are on the wall of the District Board Room, and staff are prepared to discuss them with you. At this year's Festival the District will have a table inside the Community Center staffed by our District Supervisors to view the projects, ask your questions, and give your opinions.

Will there be any user fees at these parks?

There are no plans to have any charges. The only cost we currently have, and will continue to have, is the rental of the community center.

How long will the parks be opened, and will they be lighted?

There are no plans for lighted parks, and the hours will continue to be dawn to dusk.

Can we bring guests to the parks?

As a result of receiving State and County funds over the years for our parks, they are open to the public. The Pickleball Courts, Bark Park, and ECO Park are the most popular parks used by the public.

Board Approves FY '25 Budget

We all pay Property Taxes, School Taxes, Waste Collection, and Fire Assessment to the County Tax Collector. These totals are based on the value of your home, referred to as an AD-VALOREM tax. On the bottom of your tax bill you will see Spring Lake listed as an assessment that is collected by the County and sent to the District. This assessment is called NON-AD-VALOREM because it does not relate to the value of your home, but how many units you have. A single home or one acre of land is a unit, 2 homes are 2 units, and 5 acres of land would be 5 units. There are currently 3,743 taxable units in Spring Lake, and 338 in Village One. The total operating budget of the district is divided by the number of taxable units, and that becomes the assessment. The Utility and lot mowing budgets are separate and distinct from the district assessment.

The assessment for FY '25, which is from October 1, 2024 thru September 30, 2025, will be \$320.48 per unit, or 88 cents per day! Lot mowing will be \$200 for a single lot, and \$230 per acre for the larger, continuous lands. Both the water and wastewater fees remained the same.

The breakdown for all district funds are as follows:

General Fund	\$1,247,135	Wastewater	477,594
Water	1,003,909	Lot Mowing	261,706
TOTAL ALL FUNDS		\$2,990,344	

Over the years the district Board and Staff have been good stewards of our funds, and that has led to all the positive development we are seeing, including the Parks initiatives. Spring Lake has one of the lowest assessments of all Improvement Districts in Florida. When you consider the monthly cost of many HOA's, the district assessment for a full year equals one month of an HOA fee. As more development occurs, both residential and commercial, the yearly assessment should continue to stay well below average and give our residents a real value of living here.



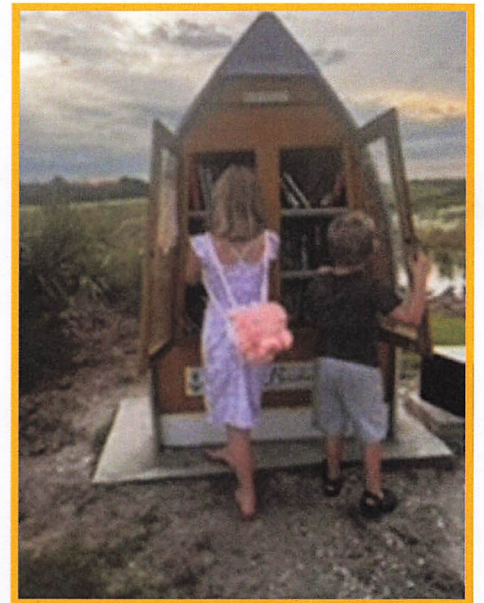
District Staff promptly respond to water leaks and breaks.



Spring Lake Pickleball Club enjoy the courts!!



Best sunrise in the County is at the ECO Park



Little Free Library at the ECO Park





IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

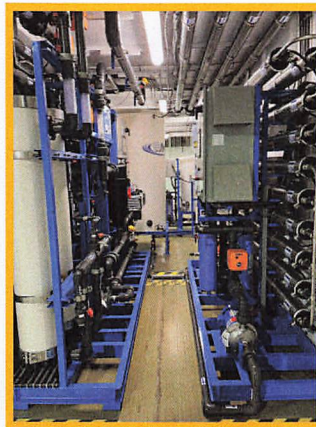
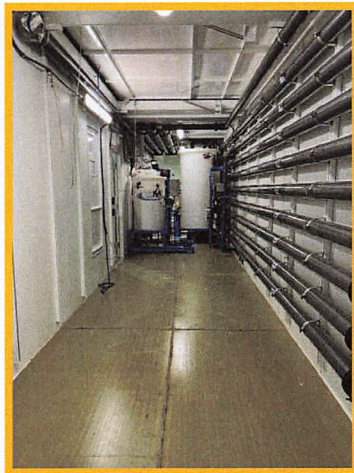
115 Spring Lake Blvd.
Sebring, FL 33876
863.655.1715 phone
863.655.4430 fax

ECO Water System Arrives

Spring Lake is about to embark on the field testing of a new and innovative process that is going to revolutionize the treatment of wastewater. We were chosen to be the only location in the country to test the system. The unit has been installed in front of our existing sewer plant and will become operational by late November. This system will not replace our current plant but will allow for the District to handle more customers as demand increases. With all the development along Rt. 98, new homes being constructed, and other residential developments planned, more capacity will be needed. The system pictured can handle 88,000 gallons per day, and our current plant can do 80,000 gallons. The difference in cost, maintenance, and operations is substantial, and will allow Spring Lake to increase capacity at a fraction of the cost of a new plant.

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection is evaluating the water quality results of this system, and it is anticipated that the water will meet standards that will allow it to be discharged into our canal and eliminate costly drain fields. It is also the next step in transitioning off of septic and on to sewer.

Residents can see this unit from Rt. 98, and if you would like to have a tour of the unit, contact the District Office at 863-655-1715



SAVE the DATE

Spring Lake Festival
Saturday
October 26

10 am - 4 pm

Pine Breeze Park

For the latest news and events... Visit SpringLakeFL.com