

By Senators Brown-Waite and Cowin

10-501-98

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to water management; creating
3 the Lake Panasoffkee Restoration Council;
4 providing for its membership, powers, and
5 duties; requiring the Southwest Florida Water
6 Management District to provide staff for the
7 council and to award contracts subject to an
8 appropriation of funds; providing an effective
9 date.

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11 WHEREAS, Lake Panasoffkee is a waterbody of historic,
12 hydrologic, and ecological significance, and

13 WHEREAS, Lake Panasoffkee is a major tributary to the
14 Withlacoochee River, and

15 WHEREAS, Lake Panasoffkee is plagued by fluctuating
16 water levels and sedimentation and excessive growth of aquatic
17 plants, which are degrading its water quality and recreational
18 values and adversely affecting the Withlacoochee River, and

19 WHEREAS, Lake Panasoffkee continues to provide wildlife
20 habitat for fish, birds, and game, and offers recreational
21 opportunities for the residents of Sumter County and Central
22 Florida and visitors to the area, despite its current
23 problems, and

24 WHEREAS, the economic potential of Lake Panasoffkee has
25 yet to be tapped, and

26 WHEREAS, the Southwest Water Management District, in
27 cooperation with several state, regional, and local entities,
28 has developed proposals to restore Lake Panasoffkee, NOW,
29 THEREFORE,

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31 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

1 Section 1. The Southwest Florida Water Management
2 District, in conjunction with the Department of Environmental
3 Protection, the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, Sumter
4 County, and the Lake Panasoffkee Restoration Council, is
5 directed to review existing restoration proposals to determine
6 which are the most environmentally sound and economically
7 feasible methods of improving the water quality of Lake
8 Panasoffkee.

9 Section 2. (1) There is created within the Southwest
10 Florida Water Management District the Lake Panasoffkee
11 Restoration Council. The council shall consist of nine members
12 as follows: one representative each from the Southwest
13 Florida Water Management District, the Department of
14 Environmental Protection, the Game and Fresh Water Fish
15 Commission, and Sumter County, all of whom must have training
16 in biology or another scientific discipline and who are
17 appointed by the head of their respective agencies, as well as
18 two representatives of lakefront property owners, an
19 environmental engineer, one representative of a local
20 municipality in the vicinity of the lake, and a representative
21 of the sportfishing industry, each to be appointed by the
22 Governor. The council shall serve as advisors to the Southwest
23 Florida Water Management District Governing Board.

24 (2) Immediately after their appointment, the council
25 members shall meet and organize by electing a chairperson, a
26 vice chairperson, and a secretary, whose terms shall be for 2
27 years each. Council officers may not serve consecutive terms.
28 Council members representing state agencies shall be nonvoting
29 members; however, at the discretion of the council, they may
30 serve in the capacity of chairperson.

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1 (3) The council shall meet at the call of its
2 chairperson, at the request of four of its members, or at the
3 request of the Southwest Florida Water Management District
4 Governing Board chairperson.

5 Section 3. The Lake Panasoffkee Restoration Council
6 has the powers and duties to:

7 (1) Review audits and all data specifically related to
8 lake restoration techniques, particularly as they apply to
9 Lake Panasoffkee;

10 (2) Advise the Southwest Florida Water Management
11 District Governing Board on the best approach to restoring
12 Lake Panasoffkee and make a recommendation on which techniques
13 should be part of the restoration program;

14 (3) Report to the Legislature before November 25 of
15 each year on the progress of the Lake Panasoffkee restoration
16 plan and any recommendations for the next fiscal year.

17 Section 4. Members of the Lake Panasoffkee Restoration
18 Council are not entitled to receive compensation for their
19 services, but are entitled to be reimbursed for per diem and
20 travel expenses incurred during their official duties, as
21 provided in section 112.061, Florida Statutes.

22 Section 5. The Southwest Florida Water Management
23 District Governing Board shall specify tasks that are to be
24 undertaken by the district, the Department of Environmental
25 Protection, the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, and
26 pertinent local governments in order to initiate the Lake
27 Panasoffkee restoration program. These tasks include, but are
28 not limited to:

29 (1) Conducting extensive water sampling of the lake
30 and associated tributaries to determine water quality;

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