

By Senator Constantine

22-1802-07

1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to the restoration of Lake
3 Jesup; requiring the Department of
4 Environmental Protection, the St. Johns River
5 Water Management District, the Fish and
6 Wildlife Conservation Commission, and the City
7 of Sanford to develop a plan concerning the
8 progress of the commission's project to restore
9 aquatic habitats in Lake Jesup; requiring the
10 commission to report to the Legislature
11 concerning the development of the plan;
12 providing that the acquisition of a site to
13 dispose of muck from the project is a
14 conservation and restoration acquisition under
15 the Florida Forever program; encouraging state
16 agencies to help fund the removal of muck from
17 Lake Jesup; providing an effective date.

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19 WHEREAS, the Legislature recognizes the importance of
20 improving water quality in surface waters having regional or
21 statewide significance, and

22 WHEREAS, Lake Jesup, a lake that fluctuates with the
23 St. Johns River system and encompasses between 9,150 acres at
24 low water and 13,034 acres at high water, is an important
25 natural resource of regional and statewide significance, an
26 important economic resource, and a habitat for resident and
27 migratory fish and waterfowl, and

28 WHEREAS, historically, Lake Jesup has been a primary
29 destination of sport fishers, a navigable waterway, and a
30 waterway capable of supporting commerce, travel, and
31 recreation, and

1 WHEREAS, endangered species, such as the manatee and
2 bald eagle, and species of special concern, such as the ibis,
3 wood stork, and sandhill crane, use this lake and basin as
4 habitat, and

5 WHEREAS, hundreds of thousands of visitors are drawn to
6 the area around Lake Jesup each year, and

7 WHEREAS, the water quality, fisheries, and other
8 biological communities of Lake Jesup have deteriorated, and

9 WHEREAS, various state, federal, and local governmental
10 agencies have been engaged in a coordinated, scientifically
11 developed, approach to the restoration of Lake Jesup for some
12 years, and

13 WHEREAS, governmental agencies have purchased over
14 8,500 acres around the lake for purposes that include
15 conservation and recreation as well as restoration of Lake
16 Jesup, and

17 WHEREAS, a mitigation project of the Department of
18 Transportation removed a 2-mile berm from Lake Jesup which
19 returned a substantial amount of navigability to the lake and
20 allowed an additional 300 acres of the lake's floodplain to
21 again help filter particulates from the lake and absorb the
22 lake's nutrient pollution while increasing the lake's ability
23 to store floodwater and provide valuable habitat for plants
24 and animals, and

25 WHEREAS, the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
26 has embarked on a plan to restore aquatic habitat in the lake
27 in order to rehabilitate the lake's fishery resources, and a
28 significant component of that plan requires removal of the
29 large amount of muck that is now lying on the bottom of the
30 lake and that is more than 9 1/2 feet thick in some areas, and
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1 WHEREAS, while significant progress has been made
2 toward restoring Lake Jesup by the government agencies
3 involved in this restoration project, the progress of the
4 project is stymied by challenges associated with obtaining
5 necessary permits for the muck-removal phase of the
6 restoration, and

7 WHEREAS, a parcel of land that the City of Sanford has
8 used as a sprayfield for effluent from its wastewater
9 treatment plant may be highly suitable as a muck-disposal
10 site, NOW, THEREFORE,

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

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14 Section 1. The Department of Environmental Protection,
15 the St. Johns River Water Management District, the Fish and
16 Wildlife Conservation Commission, and the City of Sanford
17 shall work with diligence to develop a plan that will allow
18 the muck removal that is contemplated by the commission's
19 project to restore the aquatic habitat in Lake Jesup to
20 proceed. The commission shall report to the Legislature
21 concerning the group's progress toward this goal on October 1,
22 2007, and on the first day of each 3rd month thereafter until
23 any site needed to dispose of muck has received all necessary
24 state permits or it is determined that muck removal can
25 proceed without a site at which to dispose of the muck. The
26 acquisition of a muck-disposal site is a conservation and
27 restoration acquisition under the Florida Forever program
28 created in s. 259.105, Florida Statutes, the goal of which is
29 to improve and sustain the ecological integrity of Lake Jesup.
30 Each state agency is encouraged to expend funds to assist in
31 the removal of muck from the bottom of Lake Jesup in Seminole

1 County, and to employ such funds as are at its disposal for
2 such purpose.

3 Section 2. This act shall take effect July 1, 2007.

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6 SENATE SUMMARY

7 Requires the Department of Environmental Protection, the
8 St. Johns River Water Management District, the Fish and
9 Wildlife Conservation Commission, and the City of Sanford
10 to develop a plan concerning the progress of the
11 commission's project to restore aquatic habitats of Lake
12 Jesup in Seminole County. Requires the commission to
13 report to the Legislature about the development of the
14 plan. Provides that the acquisition of a site to dispose
15 of muck from the project is a conservation and
16 restoration acquisition under the Florida Forever
17 program. Encourages state agencies to help fund the
18 removal of muck from Lake Jesup.
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