

April Lake Conway Data Analysis

Rainfall / Lake Level

NOAA predicted average rainfall last month and we got way above average at 4.6 inches. Another significant miss considering the 1.8" long term average for the month. At the end of the month the lake level was at 85.52 or a stage of 49% (a 2% increase from last month). The lake is just below average and almost seven inches above the average for the beginning of May. NOAA is still predicting normal rainfall conditions for the next 3 months. We are starting to come out of the dry season so we should expect the lake level to start gaining toward the summer. NOAA seems to be missing on the low side so we can expect the lake to be 2 to 4 inches higher in the next month.

http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/predictions/long_range/lead01/off01_prp.gif

This year's accumulated annual rainfall is 14.02 inches which is 4.46 inches higher than we had at this time last year. Given the current NOAA average rainfall prediction and spring in the air we should expect the lake to start rising. We have a high probability of some docks being awash this summer.

El Nino / Southern Oscillation (ENSO)

According to the May 8th ENSO report NOAA is experiencing ENSO neutral conditions but the sea is heating up and they are predicting a 65% chance of El Nino this summer. This indicates increased rainfall this summer.

Lake Temperature

Break out the swim suits. Most anyone can swim comfortably in the lake now. The average water temperature is up to 79, about the same as last year at this time. It started the month at 71. We should see continually increasing water temperatures now. The Amoeba season is here so caution is due. More amoeba information may be found at: <http://www.doh.state.fl.us/chd/volusia/eh/lab/pdf/amoeba.pdf>

Hurricanes

The April 10th report, by the University of Colorado's Philip J. Klotzbach and William M. Gray, indicates this summer will be a light hurricane season. This due to the lower temperature THC (Thermo Haline Circulation - [temperature-salt circulation] That is the circulation of the salt concentration in the Atlantic ocean caused by cooling at the poles and heating near the equator.) and the anticipated el Nino condition. Strong THC tends to encourage hurricanes and el Nino tends to discourage hurricanes.

<http://tropical.atmos.colostate.edu/Forecasts/2013/dec2013/dec2013.pdf>

If you would like to see an estimate of the probability of tropical storms hitting where you live check out this site. It is also produced by William Gray of the Colorado State University.

<http://landfalldisplay.geolabvirtualmaps.com/> It is showing 0.5% chance of a named storm entering Orange County this year.

Planting and Weed Control

If you are doing aquatic planting now it should be at the shore line or slightly above. With the lake level at the 49% stage and rising we want make sure our plants will not be planted so high as to be high and dry next winter. If planted too far out in the water they will be too deep to survive next summer's high water. When planting near the shore it helps to have an offshore barrier of some sort to break up the waves to prevent them from being washed out by wave action before they root. Duck potato in less than 10" of water is easy meals for ducks. Yes, ducks do like duck potato for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

To help us all enjoy a clear lake make sure you have maximized the number of aquatic plants on your shoreline. These plants help consume nutrients which run off from your yard and they provide habitat and food for fish and fowl. A sandy beach = a cloudy lake.

You might be inspired to attack some of that torpedo grass with a weed whacker. **DON'T DO IT!** That is about the worst way to control the weeds on your beach. It does not kill them. If you are doing any lakeshore cleaning, please capture **all** of your cuttings. Sprigs of torpedo grass are very hardy and easily survive an excursion across the lake while growing a new set of roots. Once on the beach they immediately start to take over and choke out the beneficial plants. A single sprig will take root and in three months it will be a circle of healthy torpedo grass 10 feet in diameter. Considering it is likely over a hundred of these sprigs could float away from a weed whacking job, your efforts could easily seed another 1000 square feet of torpedo grass all around the lake. Respect your neighbors and capture weed bits.

[As an example on the weekend of 8/3/13 someone on the west to south west side of the middle lake wacked their torpedo grass and on 8/5 I fished out nearly a bushel of torpedo grass sprigs which had just floated in. Probably a half mile of shoreline is now planted with new torpedo grass. These get caught in our good weeds so we cannot see them then choke out the good plants in about a year. As long as people do not collect their trimmings it will be impossible to control torpedo grass.]

The best approach for controlling torpedo grass is with lake friendly herbicides. These may only be applied with the proper permit from Orange County Environmental Protection Division 407-836-1400 and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission 407-858-6170. These permits are not expensive nor difficult to obtain. The County allowed weed free area on any lot is a maximum of 30' and there is no "grandfathering" of larger cleared areas. In any event make sure you collect any and all weeds you remove from your beach.

Orange County Lakeshore Vegetation Removal Permit:

<http://www.orangecountyfl.net/PermitsLicenses/Permits/LakeshoreVegetationRemovalPermit.aspx>

County Lakefront Clearing Regulations

Orange County Code of Ordinances - Section 15-251 through Section 15-256

<http://www.orangecountyfl.net/Portals/0/Library/Permitting-Licensing/docs/ArticleVIIILakeshoreProtectionCode.pdf>

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Permit page including links to the permit and regulations:

<http://myfwc.com/license/aquatic-plants/>

NOAA current La Nina - El Nino Synopsis:

http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/analysis_monitoring/enso_advisory/ensodisc.pdf

Orlando Weather Averages by month

<http://countrystudies.us/united-states/weather/florida/orlando.htm>

Live weather data on the north shore of the middle lake, updated by the minute, can be viewed at:

http://www.wunderground.com/swf/Rapid_Fire.swf?units=english&station=KFLORLAN51

Thank you for your help maintaining our lakes.

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