

TO: ChaQuias M. Thornton  
City Manager

FROM: Bernard Kendrick  
Special Projects Manager

DATE: October 7, 2024

SUBJECT: Wetlands Management Strategy

This memorandum is focused on the City of Pine Lake's strategy for the successful management of Pine Lake Wetlands area.

I had the opportunity to walk the Eastern Wetlands with Councilmembers Ramsey and Torrent to address their concerns.

I believe the concerns centered mainly around providing the necessary flow of water to maintain the lake at an acceptable level for recreational activities and the general health of the wetland system.

To this end, we discussed the current state of the wetlands, the current level of service for maintenance, and possible improvements for the wetlands area.

I explained that we had previously removed sediment from the upstream sediment basin and was allowing gravity to remove the built-up sediment in the inflow pipe from Snapfinger Creek. This was a logical approach to sediment removal since the condition of the inflow pipe is an unknown. After excavation of the sediment basin flow from Snapfinger Creek was introduced to the flume and into the lake impoundment area. The flow was not constant due to the ebb and flow of Snapfinger Creek. Water levels in the inflow system fluctuated based on rainfall in the upper watershed.

We discussed the possible repair of the dam, ownership of the dam, and future maintenance responsibilities of ownership.

It was also noted that earlier this year a vegetation management contractor was engaged to provide services that were beyond the capabilities of Pine Lake staff and equipment.

We also engaged in what are some steps that can be immediately taken to improve the conditions of the wetlands and long-term projects that required outside funding. Those suggestions include the following:

- **Dredging of the inflow channel**
- **Additional sediment removal from the inflow pipe**
- **Upgrading the inflow system from Snapfinger Creek**
- **Repair of the "run of the river" dam inside Snapfinger Creek**
- **Upgrading the diversion box**
- **Additional vegetation management**

These are all plausible considerations that have merit and I believe would add value to the system. The additional vegetation management and sediment removal from the inflow pipe can be immediately addressed. Quotes for these services have been received and can be accomplished quickly.

The other issues would require permitting by the Army Corp of Engineers.

The project contains waters of the United States that are considered under the jurisdiction of Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 (33 U.S.C. 403) and/or Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (33 U.S.C 1344). The placement of dredged or fill material into any waterways and/or their adjacent wetlands including material re-deposited during mechanized land clearing or excavation if those wetlands would require prior Department of the Army authorization.

We have contacted the Savannah District of the Army Corp of Engineers and are awaiting additional information.

We've also investigated the possibility of a funding source for these improvements. We have identified the following funding opportunities related wetlands restoration:

- 319h grant program
- 5 Star Wetland and Urban Waters Restoration Grants
- Wetland Program Development Grants
- DeKalb County additional funds

Lastly, outside of the more immediate less intrusive projects, I recommend that the City fold the permissible projects into the existing dam design project.

The receipt of the additional funding from DeKalb County would allow for the existing design project to be amended for the evaluation of the current state of the system, coordination of the maintenance and design elements for the system, and the necessary permit considerations for improvements. This would be a more cohesive way to address this issue.

Please let me know if anything additional is required