

# Lake Calm Narrative

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## Family History

### The Koschler's



Bob Koschler and Daughter on Lake Calm

The Koschler family moved to Lake Calm 12 years ago. Their home is a 59-year-old cottage that has been added on to over the years. The lake has provided a setting for raising his daughter

who is now 5 years old, although isolation from other children can be seen as a drawback.

Bob enjoys the peacefulness and tranquility of life on the lake. He is semi-retired and has time to swim, snorkel and canoe. He comments that, "...with a pool you need to chlorinate it and clean it, but a lake is just there."

Bob has participated in LAKEWATCH for 6 years. He recognizes the connection between water quality and LAKEWATCH efforts. "It is only with the appropriate data that you can take a problem to SWFWMD. LAKEWATCH monitors key elements in the lake in terms of what is happening over time."

## Lake Calm



Dock of the Koschler family

Lake Calm, located in the Northwest Hillsborough Basin in Odessa is a 126-acre lake, the third largest in the chain of lakes that eventually drain into Brooker Creek. Lake Calm is one of the highest lakes above sea level in Hillsborough County, explaining the high degree of fluctuation the lake experiences, as it is mostly dependent on rainfall to ensure a stable level. According to Bob, a five or six foot drop in the lake level results in an 80-foot



retreat of the water from the shoreline. Adding to the challenges the lake experiences naturally, the level has been negatively effected by the installation of the St.Petersburg well fields 30 years ago.

Bob comments, "Some people will say the fields have no effect on the lake levels, but then why does it always seem to not rain where there is a well field in the area? [sic]" When there is adequate rain to enhance the lake level, the lake drains into Lake Keystone.

The lake maintains a white and sandy bottom accompanied by a high level of clarity. This may be because of the high position the lake occupies in the land; nutrients tend to run away from the lake.

Lake Calm, like the majority of lakes in Hillsborough County is a privately owned lake, thus enhancing the property value of the land surrounding it. Owners of lakefront property have a vested interest in maintaining the quality of the lake to protect their investment, efforts such as Bob's through LAKEWATCH operate toward this end.

## The Development

Bob's background in real estate gives him a unique perspective on the development around Lake Calm and the Odessa area as a whole. Property values, which at one time experienced a rapid increase, have leveled off in the last 10 years. Approximately 20% of the land surrounding the lake remains



Undeveloped land around Lake Calm

undeveloped. The majority of houses on Lake Calm are approximately 30 years old, but a trend of razing existing houses to build a "dream-house" is becoming apparent. Lake Calm has been the site of the construction of five homes in the past few years in the million-dollar price range.

Odessa presently is zoned for one house per 5 acres, with proposals to have the norm changed to one house per one acre perpetually pending, yet failing to be adopted. This is perhaps a legacy of Odessa's wish to maintain a rural sense of community.



The existence between structured development and the retention of the past quality of life, low crime, and a preservation ethic is evident in this perpetual struggle. Bob feels it may be wiser to reduce the minimum lot size to enable paced development rather than wait twenty years for a developer to get an easement and then have to deal with the issue of multi-family complexes, strip malls and other such



Development began on Lake  
Calm in the first half of the  
1900's but many of the older  
structures are being replaced  
by newer development

development.

## The Future

For the present, rezoning and lake level are the two most prominent concerns for the residents on and around Lake Calm. One is social the other is environmental. Rezoning will be decided by factors perhaps out of the hands of Lake Calm residents; the level of the lake may be an issue they can better address. A previous resident on the lake was a judge and he was able to use his connections to access the aquifer to fill the lake. The residents are trying to pull the same coup, but lack the contacts. Hopefully the information from LAKEWATCH will enable a positive decision to be made.