

Long Pond Narrative

The following narrative was derived from an interview with Ionie “Buck” Scogin, in his home on the shores of Long Pond (also known as Lake Hunter) on June 28, 2001. This narrative is an account of living on Long Pond according to Buck Scogin, who has lived on his 10-acre lakefront property for over 30 years. This is his story.

Personal History

Sixty-six year old Buck Scogin moved to Lake Hunter in 1970, but he has lived in Brandon since 1950 and Hillsborough County since 1946. Upon his move to the area, Buck opened a men and women’s retail apparel store called Scogin’s. The business was successful and evolved until it grew into a 15,000 square foot store. On one of the walls in his beautiful home, Buck has hung a series of photographs showing how the store developed.



In 1994, Buck retired from a life in the retail business, stopped operating Scogin’s and rented the space to the Florida Orthopedic Institute. Since retiring, Buck has been spending his time learning computer science in order to play the stock market and access the Internet.

Buck moved onto Lake Hunter in 1970 for the scenery and privacy it provided. Buck discusses his motivations for moving to the lake:

“Well, the scenery and privacy and personality that it presents is incalculable...I love the privacy and I love the expanse of the property...how majestic it is providing the space, the mirroring of the water, emitting a feeling that I could produce poetry.”

One of Buck’s long-time interests is horticulture, which is another reason he was attracted to Lake Hunter. According to Buck, he planted everything on the property except for the oak trees. Upon reflecting on the overgrown property he bought 30 years ago, Buck shares:

“There were not any cultured shrubs, no hybrid shrubs, so I cleaned that up and then commenced to plant, put irrigation in, automatic sprinklers, with a well...I have it set up to where I use a Dixie Chopper to mow with, so I don’t edge anything. The shrubbery was planned to be easy care.”

Currently, Buck’s home is on the market and soon, he hopes to sell it to a family that will care for and appreciate both the home and lake on which it is situated. Once sold, he plans to move into a condo on Bayshore in South Tampa. In this way he can travel more – another pastime and passion of Bucks.

Lake History



Lake Hunter from Buck Scogin's property
(Source: USF)

Long Pond is a 65-acre lake with a mean depth of 7 feet. Now known as Lake Hunter after a gentleman with the same name, this water body is located in northeast Brandon. Actually, Buck bought his property from Mr. Hunter himself. Buck reports:

“There was an old residence here in 1970 when I moved here owned by a man named Hunter, who the lake is now named after, which was formerly Long Pond. Now, it is called Lake Hunter.”

Like most all-freshwater lakes in the area, Lake Hunter supports a variety of wildlife. Those mentioned by Buck are alligators, bass, perch, squirrels, possums, fox, and armadillos. Buck also reports sightings of fowl. Of the birds, he has seen sandhill cranes and every once in a while, pelicans. According to Buck, the wildlife supported by the lake has been fairly unswerving, however, it has been some time since he has seen a pelican.

Development

Buck has seen very little development around the lake in the time that he has lived there. As far as Buck knows, traditional land use around the lake was groves, primarily citrus. He's noticed only one house go up in all of the 30 years he's been around. There are now about 25-30 homes on the lake and according to Buck this number has been consistent.

As Buck sees it, the opening of a drain canal connected to the lake is one of the primary issues of Lake Hunter. He describes the canal as clogged with overgrown vegetation, leading the water to back up and flood his property. A couple of years ago, Hillsborough County and the Southwest Florida Water Management District decided to open the canal on the north end of the lake.

Many Lake Hunter residents opposed the project, but Buck and a few others thought it should be opened. Those opposed wanted it to stay plugged up, but that flooded Buck's property because his house rests on a lower elevation than some of his neighbors. Those in opposition had property that was considerably higher than Buck's and their docks were set high and ready for overflow. If the officials left the vegetation, the water could not flow through, and it would back up and flood those on lower property – like Buck. Buck explains:

‘It flooded me when El Nino came and my two neighbors to the south were flooded, kept their septic tank from working and ran into their pool. They filled it in with a lot of dirt. That neighbor was the only protestor against all of these people that was for not opening the lake and she pleaded with me to come join her.’



Dock on property adjacent to Buck's home; shows low water level
(Source: USF)

Buck feels that such meddling by the county has been going on a long time. Buck reports:

“...the county toyed with the north end of the lake canal for years. Thirty years! Long, I

know because I knew a couple of residents on the lake before I moved here...I was told by the old timers that 40 years ago, the water was high enough to be all the way at the road.”

Despite the controversy, the officials wound up opening up the canal by installing an adjustable pipe that could be opened or closed depending on the water level.

Future



View of Long Pond (aka Lake Hunter) from Buck Scogin's backyard
(Source: USF)

Future issues as reported by Buck are minimal. There is the recent drought, which is affecting many lakes in Hillsborough County and Long Pond is no exception. According to Buck, Lake Hunter is down six to eight feet due to the recent drought. However, now that flooding is under control, Lake Hunter residents like Buck have no complaints. It appears that except for its name, Long Pond, now called Lake Hunter has resisted much change in the past.

Notwithstanding the drought that is affecting most all Florida water bodies, there seems to be no pressing concerns facing Lake Hunter according to Buck's point of view. As Buck sees it, Lake Hunter has resisted great change in the last thirty years. One has to wonder if this trend will continue into the future.

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