

Lake Yvonne



Eric Wright at time of interview (USF)

The following narrative was derived from an interview with previous Lake Yvonne resident Eric Wright at his parents' home on May 16, 2002. In it, he tells of growing up on the lake and what it has meant to him over the years.

Personal History

Eric Wright moved to Lake Yvonne at the age of two years when his parents bought a home on its shores in 1973. Although he no longer lives in the house on Lake Yvonne's shores, he frequently visits his parents who still live in the house. Eric explained:

"I live out just on the other side of Lake Monroe, Deltona. I work right around the corner, so I'll come by and my mom will watch my daughter every Wednesday and she'll sleep over on Friday nights. I usually come by a lot."

Eric's older brother Bob bought and lives in the house next door to his parents' home. If anyone truly knows Lake Yvonne, Eric says that it would be him and his brother. Throughout his childhood, he spent hours fishing, swimming, and camping on the lake with his three brothers and neighborhood friends. Eric says that growing up and living on Lake Yvonne gave him a greater appreciation of nature. He reflected:

"We did a lot of night time stuff down here. [It] just always seemed a lot more exciting at night. We'd have lanterns and a fire going. Lots of fishing, canoeing, swimming. We used to make rafts with Styrofoam underneath them. Float those around. We used to have a big tree here that fell down and we used to swim under that. Jump into the lake. If it wasn't for this, we'd be in jail. It was something to do. A lot of good memories down here, that's for sure."

Today, Eric is married with two young daughters. He works as at Lucent Technologies located close to Lake Yvonne. Although no longer living on the lake, he often visits and continues to care a great deal about its future and well-being.



Lake Yvonne in May 2002 (USF)

History/Information



Lake Yvonne in May 2002 (USF)

Lake Yvonne is a seven-acre lake in the Gee Creek Watershed of Seminole County in Casselberry, Florida. According to Eric, the shape of the lake has changed over the years due to water level fluctuation. Lake Yvonne is actually part of a chain of five lakes, Yvonne being on one of the ends. Eric explained, “This is the 5th lake, but we [his friends] always called it the first lake because this is where I lived.” The quintuplet lakes are Yvonne, Annette, Cecille, Emily, and Maria. As Eric explained it, Lake Yvonne is connected to at least two other water bodies – Secret Lake and Lost Lake. He is unsure where the lakes got their all-female names.

Wildlife supported by Lake Yvonne include snakes such as cottonmouths and coral snakes, as well as fish that include brim, shiners, perch, sunfish, carp, catfish, and bass. Eric also reported water moccasins, fresh water mussels, crawfish, eel, and a few alligators. More recently, Eric spotted a fresh water otter – something he had never seen before in Lake Yvonne. According to Eric, the type and number of wildlife has changed over the years. For instance, the number of brim and shiners in the lake has decreased dramatically. Eric reflected:

“Years ago, we used to have a lot of brim and shiners. We used to come down with oatmeal and throw it on top of the water and the shiners would come up. Then you would get them with a casting net and get your free shiners. Then hook them, throw them back out and catch bass with them. Now, you would be lucky if you find shiners out here.”

In terms of water quality, Eric says he remembers being able to see “at least 10-12 feet deep...now you can’t see more than two feet through the water. It just seems to have gotten dirty.” Another constant change has been water levels, which have fluctuated continuously. Eric has seen both extremes:

“The levels have definitely changed. The highest...I’ve seen it so high that it started creeping up into the center of the backyard over there. Hurricanes and heavy rains. Whereas if you look at it now, the water level is so low, that the earth is beginning to show up. Then trees start to grow and the water goes back up again and then you get this green funky stuff on top of the water that will form every now and then.”

Development



Property on which Eric grew up (USF)

For many of the years that Eric lived on Lake Yvonne, land across from his home was completely undeveloped. He said, “It was nothing, but woods...acres of woods back there.” Eric remembers the road that separated the woods from his house was not yet paved; it was still dirt. It was not until the last couple of years that homes were built where the trees and brush once dominated. Currently, Eric estimates the number of homes on the shores of Lake Yvonne at fifteen, three of which are fairly new. According to Eric, the residents of these homes have stayed relatively consistent. Eric explained:

“Not a lot of turnover, none whatsoever. My parents’ neighbors, the Bolingers have been there since before my parents got in. They’ve been there well over 30 years. Mr. Doddingure, he’s been there since before my Dad got in. It’s not really an in and an out type of thing.”



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The Future

According to Eric, the future of Lake Yvonne is uncertain. One of his biggest concerns is the extremely low water level the lake is currently experiencing, a trend seen across the state due to present drought conditions. When asked what he would change about Lake Yvonne if granted the power to make one wish, he expressed:

“Get more water back into it. I like to water ski. We used to go water skiing all the time when I was a kid. We jet skied, but it was constant circles.”

Eric is hopeful and said he has a “big emotional stake in the lake.” It is his hope that we are nearing the end of the drought and that heavy rains will help bring the lake back to normal water levels. Eric would like to one-day share the joy of Lake Yvonne with his two young daughters once they get old enough.

Written By: Deanna Barcelona, M.A.