

AN INTERVIEW WITH LAKE JESUP

INTERVIEWER: Lake Jesup, thank you for taking the time to tell us a little about yourself.

LAKE JESUP: No problem. I wish more people cared enough to find out about me. I haven't been feeling so good lately, a little ignored to tell the truth.

INTERVIEWER: Well, tell us a little about yourself. How big are you?

LAKE JESUP: 8,120 acres. That's about twelve and half square miles. Not bad, eh?

INTERVIEWER: Nice, and how many alligators do you support?

LAKE JESUP: Well, they're a little hard to count. Don't hold still long, you know? But Larry Scherer, who owns a home on my shores, says biologists estimate there are between 13,000 and 15,000 gators.

INTERVIEWER: No way!

LAKE JESUP: Sure. And in my middle, there's Bird Island, with egrets, and herons, and even bald eagles. Another of my neighbors, Vaughn Medcalf, says he's even seen barn owls.

INTERVIEWER: It sounds like you've got great neighbors and lots of wildlife. So why aren't you feeling well these days?

LAKE JESUP: Well, for one thing, I'm feeling a little stagnant. The last time I really felt good was, say, 1950.

INTERVIEWER: That's a long time to feel bad. What happened?

LAKE JESUP: Well, I think it started when people built the State Road 46 bridge, but I can't be sure. Things were changing so quickly with all of the people and businesses moving in. See, on my north end, I have a small connection to the St. John River. Before the bridge was built, fresh water from the river flowed into me pretty easily. My neighbor Larry said, "Originally, the St. Johns River flowed into the lake and it was like a big washing machine. It just came in and swept everything out and back up the river." The natural flow of water used to keep me clean as a whistle. But when they built that bridge, it prevented some of the river water from flowing in and out. My natural water circulation was interrupted, and I got left with the extra pollution.

INTERVIEWER: Was it just the new bridge that caused you to feel bad?

LAKE JESUP: Oh, no. It usually takes more than one thing to cause a problem. Wastewater from Winter Springs was flowing into me from the southwest. This wastewater added more nutrients than I could handle. It caused a drop in my dissolved oxygen levels.

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INTERVIEWER: Why do you need dissolved oxygen? Lakes don't breathe, do they?

LAKE JESUP: Fish breathe. So do baby frogs. Since my dissolved oxygen levels started dropping, I've had fewer and fewer fish and frogs. I've heard people say that fishing isn't much fun here anymore. My neighbor Larry said, "I remember in '72-'73, the fishing out there was so good!" Hardly anyone likes to fish in me anymore; that's really depressing.

INTERVIEWER: Come on, Lake Jesup. It's not so bad. You're still a beautiful lake! Didn't the state stop the flow of that damaging wastewater back in the 1980s? And don't you have a group of friends helping to clean you up?

LAKE JESUP: You're right. I don't mean to complain. The "Friends of Lake Jesup" do great cleanups and plan for ways to improve my water quality. I just worry. Pieces of land that sold for \$1,000 long ago are worth \$40,000 today. Now that my property is so valuable, more and more people will come. Having neighbors is great, but I'm concerned about the deer and turkey that roam my shores. Where will they go when all the land is built up?

INTERVIEWER: I've got some good news for you, Lake Jesup. Have you noticed that most of the construction is going on a short distance away from your shoreline? The state and county have purchased a lot of the land close to your shores to keep it natural. That should give the animals some space.

LAKE JESUP: You're right; most of the buildings are some distance away. But I thought they'd start building on the lakefront lots too. Thanks for the info; I feel a lot better knowing the animals will have some space. It's so exciting to see fuzzy baby deer wobbling up to my shores!

INTERVIEWER: I can just imagine. Hey, Lake Jesup, if there were two things you could share with visitors, what would they be?

LAKE JESUP: Well, first, I'd ask visitors to think carefully about what they put into the environment. Everything from pesticides to car oil to pet poop ends up washing into me. If you want lakes to be clean enough to swim and fish in, you've got to keep the environment around them clean. And second, I want people to get to know their lakes by doing their own interviews. Visit a lake and talk to the people who live nearby. Look for plants and animals in ways that are safe for you and for the lake's living things. If people can't go to a lake themselves, they can visit the Seminole Water Atlas website. By typing in a lake name, they can find out almost anything about that lake, from what it looks like, to the amount of rain the lake got that day, to the kinds of plants and animals that live there. Remember, lakes need friends, too!

RESOURCES:

This interview was created using data and information from the Seminole County Water Atlas website, including the Lake Jesup General Info page and the History and Recreation Page. You can interview a lake in the Seminole County area by visiting this website and typing in the name of your lake! Go to www.Seminole.WaterAtlas.org.

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Water Atlas Curriculum Lesson 19

READING PRACTICE:

1. This article is written as though the author were actually interviewing Lake Jesup. Based on your reading of the article, describe the reasons you think the author expressed this information in a fictional format instead of using the more standard paragraph form.

2. Which of the following statements from the article is an opinion?

- a) "I don't mean to complain."
- b) "A lot of wastewater from nearby towns was flowing into me."
- c) "Everything from pesticides to car oil to pet poop ends up washing into me."
- d) "Remember, lakes need friends too!"

3. According to the article, which of the following animals has been decreasing in the Lake Jesup area?

- a) Bald eagles
- b) Deer
- c) Frogs
- d) Turtles

4. The following statements are included in the article titled "An Interview with Lake Jesup."

LAKE JESUP: Well, for one thing, I'm feeling a little stagnant. The last time I really felt well was, say, 1950.

INTERVIEWER: That's a long time to feel bad. What happened?

LAKE JESUP: Well, I think it started when people built the State Road 46 bridge, but I can't be sure. Things were changing so quickly with all of the people and businesses moving in. See, on my north end, I have a small connection to the St. John River. Before the bridge was built, fresh water from the river flowed into me pretty easily. My neighbor Larry said 'originally, the St. Johns River flowed into the lake and it was like a big washing machine. It just came in and swept everything out and back up the river.' The natural flow of water used to keep me clean as a whistle. But when they built that bridge, it prevented some of the river water from flowing in and out. My natural water circulation stopped, and I got left with the extra pollution."

Based on context clues in these statements, what is the meaning of the word "stagnant"?

- a) Flowing and circulating easily
- b) Connected with a larger water body
- c) Sluggish and still
- e) Polluted



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WRITING PRACTICE:

1. Our world is filled with many amazing natural areas. Imagine that you can visit one natural area anywhere in the world. Write a story about the day of your visit.
2. Our world is filled with many amazing people. Imagine that you can interview anyone you choose. Write a story about this interview, including the questions you would ask and the answers you might get.
3. People often have differing opinions about the best use of natural resources. Imagine that you have received two offers to buy your undeveloped lakefront property: one from a buyer who will preserve the natural shoreline, and the other from a developer who will build a playground along the shore. Write to explain which person you would sell your property to and your reasons for making this choice.
4. People have differing opinions about the benefits of wildlife near their homes. Imagine that your family owns property in an area where the number of ducks is increasing rapidly. Write to explain to your neighborhood group why you think the increasing number of ducks is good OR bad for the community.

Name:

Date:

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