

Lake Asher



Carol Kremer (USF)

The following narrative is based on an interview with Carol and Jim Kremer at their home on Lake Asher on February 1, 2002. The couple moved to the lake in 1968 and have been involved in maintaining its health ever since. The stories the Kremers told, a number of which are related in this narrative, reflect the joys and frustrations they have experienced while living on Lake Asher.

Personal History

The Kremer family moved to Apopka, Florida from Ohio in 1968, when Jim transferred for his job. Carol remembers that it was Jim's idea to buy a house on a lake:

"Well we moved here in '68 from Ohio and we had six children at the time. Jim said, 'Let's get us a house on a lake.' Well, Bear Lake was too expensive so we found Lake Asher. It's [Bear Lake] across the road from Lake Asher."

The lake proved to be a wonderful place for the Kremers to raise their children, and they soon had a seventh child. The Kremer children enjoyed swimming, boating, fishing and interacting with the lake's wildlife. The children would often take a johnboat out to a floating dock in the lake to swim. Additionally, all of the Kremer children loved to fish. Jim recalls that their sons Joe and John often spent their mornings fishing and afternoons cooking the fish they caught. In addition to fishing in Lake Asher, the children fished in nearby lakes as well. Carol mentioned that her grandchildren now love coming to the lake with cane poles to catch brim. She related that their son Joe especially enjoyed the area's wildlife:

"Our son...loved going out and catching snakes. ...If I found a shoebox under his bed with holes in it, I wouldn't even look in it. I'd just pick it up and throw it out the door. And he walked in one day and he had a snake wrapped around each arm. I mean he'd go out and catch them. And when he was just about four years old, he'd catch lizards too. He'd come up to me...I think he was more like five. And he said, 'Mom, do you like my earrings?' He had a live lizard on each ear."

Although Jim and Carol spend very little time actually on the water anymore, they continue to appreciate their beautiful surroundings, often from a picnic table in their backyard with an excellent view of the lake. Carol recently completed her two years of service as Lake Asher's LAKEWATCH volunteer.



Lake Asher in February 2002 (USF)

History/Information



Lake Asher in February 2002 (USF)



Mound where the Kremers put unwanted lake vegetation (USF)

Lake Asher is a five-acre lake located in the Little Wekiva Watershed. According to Jim and Carol, the lake has been experiencing an overgrowth of water vegetation for a number of years.

The Kremers have a keen appreciation for the abundance of wildlife that inhabits their property. The entire family has enjoyed fishing for bass, speckled perch, bluegill, catfish, gar, and brim. According to Jim, almost every child in their neighborhood has mounted a bass from Lake Asher, and many of them are good sized. Two of the Kremers' sons caught bass that weighed over eight pounds. Jim and Carol also mentioned seeing eels, turtles, otters, and the occasional six-or-seven-foot-long alligator in the lake. In terms of birds, there are cranes, ring-necked doves, turtledoves, wood ducks, and hawks. Overall, the wildlife population has remained fairly consistent.

Jim remembers that when his family first moved to the lake, the water was very clear. After a few years of living on the lake, the Kremers began to see unwanted vegetation, especially naid and hydrilla, slowly covering the lake: "It kept growing and we were almost blocked in where we couldn't get out [in the lake]." Jim also perceives that the water has grown darker over the years and is perhaps no longer safe for swimming.

In 1989, the Kremers began cleaning out the lake. Jim remembers that his family spent every weekend that year clearing the lake of vegetation:

"I had a boat winch I tied to a tree and winched them up over the plywood, then let them drain. They get lighter. And we spent every week, about every weekend for a whole year cleaning our area out."

They managed to pull a number of stumps out of the lake, in addition to lake vegetation. Lake Asher has an "island" covered with grass that is actually a large stump that the Kremers were unable to pull out of the lake.

Seminole County owns land on Lake Asher, and this lake area has been consistently overgrown with vegetation. As the Kremers see it, because the area has remained overgrown, the vegetation cleared out by the Kremers began growing back almost immediately and completely covered the lake ten years later. Carol spearheaded an effort to get the county to clean out their lakefront on Lake Asher by emailing and calling a number of public officials about the issue. In 1999, the county paid for much of the lake vegetation to be cleared out with a machine, but according to the Kremers, a great deal of lake vegetation near the county property has remained. They see this uncleared area as being a major reason that the vegetation keeps growing back.

In addition to hiring a service to clean up Lake Asher, the county put white amur in the lake two years ago to eat the vegetation, and Jim believes that they have improved the lake considerably: "Well the lake was completely covered [by vegetation] two years ago, so I think the white amur has done a great job so far." In order to get the county to put the fish in the lake, every homeowner on the lake had to sign a petition. Carol contributed much to this process, helping track down the signatures of even absentee landlords. She emailed, called, and even drove an hour to get one homeowner's signature.



View of Lake Asher in 2002 (USF)



Some of the houses along the shore of Lake Asher (USF)

Last year, the Kremers and their immediate neighbors hired a service to clean up a portion of the lake near their homes. Although the residents had to pay for the cleanup themselves, both Carol and Jim complemented the county on paying for the vegetation to be hauled away once the machine had cleared it out of the lake, saving them quite a bit of money.

Carol and Jim hope that one day the lake will be cleaned out entirely. Jim suggested that he could then maintain the lake by attaching a blade to his boat and regularly pulling out vegetation this way.

Development

According to the Kremers, there are currently 36 lots on Lake Asher. When they moved to the lake, houses were already built on most of these lots, including their own. Most of the Kremers' neighbors have lived in the area for 20 to 30 years, and their children and grandchildren have grown up together. However, the surrounding area has undergone tremendous growth over the Kremers' 34-year residence.

As soon as nearby Disney World opened in 1971, residential and commercial development in the area increased dramatically and has since continued at a steady rate. The opening of the Winter Park Mall in 1974 was another significant marker of the boom in commercial development in the area (See Shofner below). As Jim remembers it, State Road 436 and Bear Lake Road were orange groves when the Kremers first moved to Seminole County. Jim recalls that Bear Lake Road "was just a two-laned road through orange groves."

The Future

Lake residents hope to finally get Lake Asher's vegetation under control so that they can enjoy their lake once again. However, removing vegetation from the lake is a very expensive and time-consuming process, and it is unlikely that lake residents will be able to afford many more clean-ups. Hopefully concerned residents like Carol and Jim Kremer will continue to fight for the health of the lake as their efforts have certainly made a significant difference so far.

1. Jerrell H. Shofner. 1995. City of Altamonte Springs. Altamonte Springs, FL: City of Altamonte Springs.

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