

LAKES & STORMWATER TEAM ACHIEVES EXPERT STATUS FOR 2012:

The Lakes & Stormwater Division is thrilled to announce that three staff members have successfully passed the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) Lake Vegetation Index (LVI) proficiency testing on their first attempt. The team of Sarah Malone, Andrea Grainger and Sandra George completed in-depth LVI training and assessment this spring for the 2012 sampling season. The LVI is a team-based rapid assessment of lake health using aquatic plant community structure and relative species abundance. The training included classroom and field exercises on the LVI methodology, including techniques to identify over **650** aquatic plant species. The City of Lakeland is one of only three cities and five counties in Florida to have a registered Expert LVI Assessment Team.

Technically, the LVI is a multi-metric index that evaluates how closely a lake plant community resembles one which would be expected in an area of minimal disturbance. The index is based on a rapid field assessment of aquatic and wetland plants as symptoms of various effects of disturbance over time. Plants respond to physical disturbances such as erosion and sedimentation and lakeshore alterations; chemical disturbances such as those used for fertilizers, pesticides, household and industrial applications; and biological disturbances such as introduction of exotic species. A plant community will have a particular combination of dominant and number of species depending on the severity and nature of the disturbance.

The City benefits from these employees' effort as the LVI methodology improves abilities of the Lakes & Stormwater staff to monitor the health of our lakes and the expertise proves legitimacy in the assessments. Water quality monitoring, in addition to LVI measures and other bioassessment practices, are used together to determine not only the impairment status of a water body, but proper strategies for restoration. The more we know; the better our position is when dealing with restoration, protection and compliance issues that arise. This team of employees showed their dedication to professional development by taking advantage of a program that will enhance their job knowledge and equip them with a skill set they can apply immediately. During the next year, half of the City's 17 monitored lakes will be getting a LVI assessment.

Each team member has achieved a level of personal professional development that will yield benefits in all of their pursuits. Such initiative is celebrated within the Lakes & Stormwater Division as it is the individual push for excellence combined with the team spirit that will allow the Department of Public Works, Lakes & Stormwater Division to meet future challenges as a "leader in the field."

Congratulations and job well done!!!!

For further glowing information, please contact Doug Gleckler, Lakes & Stormwater Manger, at 863-834-8439, or doug.gleckler@lakelandgov.net.



City of Lakeland Lakes Vegetation Index Experts: (From Left) Sandra George, Andrea Grainger, Sarah Malone (Team Captain)