

Viewsheds

Long term care and preservation of a natural resource depends largely upon people having an interest in it. The more that people can connect with a resource and begin to feel a sense of ownership, the greater the likelihood they will take responsibility for its conservation and protection. Viewsheds - vantage points from which people can visually interact with a resource - are an effective way to give people this sense of ownership. Developing viewsheds for public use can add substantially to the number of people able to experience a resource, which would otherwise be restricted to a relatively small number of people who have physical access to it. Without viewsheds, interest in the future of a resource such as a lake might be limited only to those who reside along its shoreline or have use of a boat.

Viewsheds also are a positive experience for the viewer. Whether the experience is from a public roadway, trail or park, views add to the enjoyment of an area. They also increase the value of surrounding property, and enhance an area's livability by helping to protect its scenic quality and character. Viewsheds also play a significant role in establishing and promoting eco-tourism for an area.

A number of visual access points were identified as part of the research effort. These points consist of both public and private sites located throughout the basin. A few offer direct visual access from the shoreline while others offer larger vistas from sites having higher elevations than the surrounding landscape. A limited number are in public ownership, although currently most are on private land.

Needs and Opportunities relating to viewsheds center on two sites. They offer significant opportunity to accommodate large numbers of people and provide exceptional views of the lake. As they are both in private ownership and face intense development pressure, the need to secure them for public use is immediate.



Below: The Northwest shore topography map shows the areas of higher elevation that offer generous views of Lake Apopka with circles, while the red arrows represent the views to the lake.

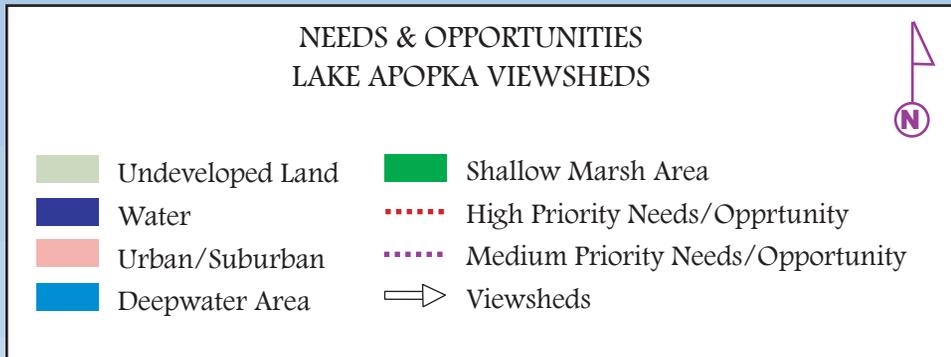
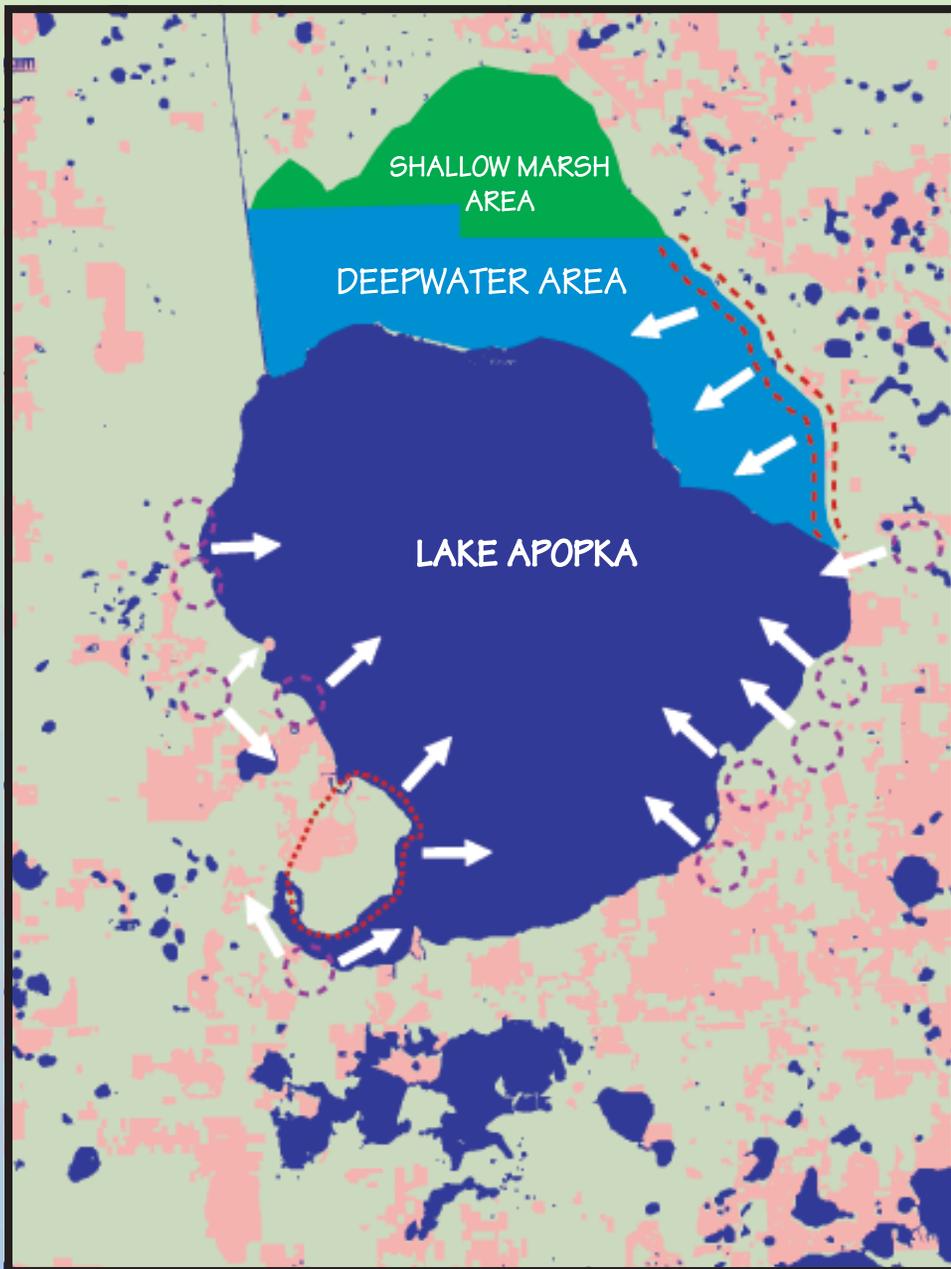


clay island

Sugarloaf Mountain

COUNTY ROAD 455

8



Pine Island

Pine Island is a 1,475-acre site located on Lake Apopka's southwestern shore. The viewshed opportunities benefit from its elevations - parts of which are 100 feet higher than the lake - its projection into the lake and its proximity to major urban transportation corridors. It has the potential to offer visual access for the greatest number of people, provided it is developed as a public amenity.

Future Shoreline of Lake Apopka adjacent to the SJRWMD's Deepwater Area.

Restoration of Lake Apopka anticipates a new shoreline along the northeast section of the lake. This shoreline will be approximately 7 miles in length and can offer substantial opportunity for viewing the lake if public access is available. As proposed, it would include part of the Loop Trail around Lake Apopka, and public access would be available through that trail. This section is the only paved part of the loop trail that would front directly on the lake and consequently would offer extended lake viewing. Such a trail also would allow connection to proposed District trails internal to the restoration area. Once the restoration effort is complete, however, and the District lands flooded, there will not be sufficient uplands under District ownership to accommodate a trail. Substantial effort on the part of the basin's communities will be required if this area is to be made available for public use.

Viewsheds

