

Proposed Minimum and Guidance Levels for **Lake Mabel** in Polk County, Florida



Draft – August 2007

Ecologic Evaluation Section

Resource Conservation and Development Department

Southwest Florida
Water Management District

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Proposed Minimum and Guidance Levels for Lake Mabel

State law (Section 373.042, Florida Statutes; hereafter F.S.) directs the Department of Environmental Protection or the water management districts to establish minimum flows and levels (MFLs) for lakes, wetlands, rivers and aquifers. As currently defined by statute, the minimum level of an aquifer or surface water body is "the level of groundwater in the aquifer and the level of surface water at which further withdrawals would be significantly harmful to the water resources of the area". Minimum flows and levels are established and used by the Southwest Florida Water Management District for water resource planning, as one of the criteria used for evaluating water use permit applications, and for the design, construction and use of surface water management systems.

Development of a minimum flow or level does not in itself protect a water body from significant harm; however, resource protection, recovery and regulatory compliance can be supported once the flow or level standards are established. State law governing implementation of minimum flows and levels (Chapter 373.0421, F.S.) requires development of a recovery or prevention strategy for water bodies if the "existing flow or level in a water body is below, or is projected to fall within 20 years below, the applicable minimum flow or level". Recovery or prevention strategies are developed to: "(a) achieve recovery to the established minimum flow or level as soon as practicable; or (b) prevent the existing flow or level from falling below the established minimum flow or level." Periodic re-evaluation and as necessary, revision of established minimum flows and levels are also required by state law.

Minimum flows and levels are to be established based upon the best available information with consideration given to "...changes and structural alterations to watersheds, surface waters and aquifers, and the effects such changes or alterations have had, and the constraints such changes or alterations have placed on the hydrology of the affected watershed, surface water, or aquifer...", with the caveat that these considerations shall not allow significant harm caused by withdrawals (Section 373.0421, F.S.). The Florida Water Resources Implementation Rule (Chapter 62-40.473, Florida Administrative Code; hereafter F.A.C.) provides additional guidance for the establishment of minimum flows and levels, requiring that "consideration shall be given to the protection of water resources, natural seasonal fluctuations in water flows, and environmental values associated with coastal, estuarine, aquatic and wetland ecology, including: a) recreation in and on the water; b) fish and wildlife habitats and the passage of fish; c) estuarine resources; d) transfer of detrital material; e) maintenance of freshwater storage and supply; f) aesthetic and scenic attributes; g) filtration and absorption of nutrients and other pollutants; h) sediment loads; i) water quality; and j) navigation." The Water Resource Implementation Rule also indicates that "minimum flows and levels should be expressed as multiple flows or levels defining a minimum hydrologic regime, to the extent practical and necessary to establish the limit beyond

which further withdrawals would be significantly harmful to the water resources or the ecology of the area".

To address this legislative mandate within its jurisdictional boundaries, the Southwest Florida Water Management District (District or SWFWMD) has developed specific methodologies for establishing minimum flows or levels for lakes, wetlands, rivers and aquifers, and adopted them into the Water Levels and Rates of Flow Rule (Chapter 40D-8, F.A.C.). For lakes, methodologies have been developed for establishing Minimum Levels for systems with fringing cypress wetlands 0.5 acres or greater in size and for those without fringing cypress wetlands 0.5 acres or greater in size. Lakes with fringing cypress wetlands where water levels currently rise to an elevation expected to fully maintain the integrity of the wetlands are classified as Category 1 Lakes. Lakes with fringing cypress wetlands that have been structurally altered such that lake water levels do not rise to former levels are classified as Category 2 Lakes. Lakes without fringing cypress wetlands are classified as Category 3 Lakes. Chapter 40D-8, F.A.C. also provides for the establishment of Guidance Levels, which serve as advisory information for the District, lake shore residents and local governments, or to aid in the management or control of adjustable water level structures. Two Minimum Levels and two Guidance Levels are established for lakes, and upon adoption by the District Governing Board, are incorporated into Chapter 40D-8, F.A.C. The levels are described below.

The **High Guidance Level** is provided as an advisory guideline for construction of lake shore development, water dependent structures, and operation of water management structures. The High Guidance Level is the elevation that a lake's water levels are expected to equal or exceed ten percent of the time (P10) on a long-term basis.

The **High Minimum Lake Level** is the elevation that a lake's water levels are required to equal or exceed ten percent of the time (P10) on a long-term basis.

The **Minimum Lake Level** is the elevation that a lake's water levels are required to equal or exceed fifty percent of the time (P50) on a long-term basis.

The **Low Guidance Level** is provided as an advisory guideline for water dependent structures, information for lake shore residents and operation of water management structures. The Low Guidance Level is the elevation that a lake's water levels are expected to equal or exceed ninety percent of the time (P90) on a long-term basis.

In accordance with Chapter 40D-8, F.A.C., proposed Minimum and Guidance Levels were developed for Lake Mabel (Table 1), a Category 3 Lake located in Polk County, Florida. The levels were established using best available information, including field data that were obtained specifically for the purpose of Minimum Levels development. Because the District is currently involved in a multi-year process of migrating all vertical elevation data from the National Geodetic Vertical Datum of 1929 (NGVD 29) to the North American Vertical Datum of 1988 (NAVD 88), tables in this report include

elevation data values in both NGVD 29 and NAVD 88. **Please note the NAVD 88 elevation values do not represent actual field measurements and are provided for informational purposes only.** The NAVD 88 elevations were derived using Corpscon 6.0, a computer software program that performs vertical conversions to and from NGVD 29 and NAVD 88. Elevation data values shown on graphs and the bathymetric map are presented in NGVD 29.

Table 1. Proposed Minimum and Guidance Levels for Lake Mabel.

Minimum and Guidance Levels	Elevation in Feet	
	NGVD 29	NAVD 88
High Guidance Level	107.5	106.6
High Minimum Lake Level	106.7	105.8
Minimum Lake Level	103.9	103.0
Low Guidance Level	102.5	101.6

Data and Analyses Supporting Proposed Minimum and Guidance Levels for Lake Mabel

Lake Setting and Description

Lake Mabel is located in Polk County, Florida (Sections 11 and 14, Township 29 South, Range 27 East), in the Peace River Basin of the Southwest Florida Water Management District (Figure 1). White (1970) classified the area of west-central Florida containing Lake Mabel as the Lake Wales Ridge physiographic region. Brooks (1981) characterized the area surrounding the lake as the Iron Mountains unit of the Lake Wales Ridge subdivision of the Central Lake District physiographic district and described the subdivision as residual sand hills similar to the Sugar Loaf Mountains, but the maximum elevation is 15 feet lower. As part of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Lake Bioassessment/Regionalization Initiative, the area has been identified as the Northern Lake Wales Ridge lake region, and described as a narrow ridge of well-drained, sandy soils, 100-300 feet in elevation, that forms the topographic crest of central Florida. The lakes are mostly alkaline, low to moderate nutrient, clearwater lakes (Griffith *et al.* 1997).

The lake is located in the Lake Mabel drainage basin within the Peace River watershed. Surface water inflow to Lake Mabel occurs from agricultural areas (citrus) surrounding the lake. Because Lake Mabel does not have an outlet conveyance system that is the principal control of surface water elevations, it is considered a closed basin lake (Figure 2). There are permitted ground water withdrawals within the surrounding lake area, but there are no surface water withdrawals from the lake currently permitted by the District. There is no public access to Lake Mabel.

The 1952 United States Geological Survey 1:24,000 Lake Wales quadrangle map indicates an elevation of 108 feet above NGVD 29 (107.1 feet above NAVD 88) for Lake Mabel. The "Gazetteer of Florida Lakes" (Florida Board of Conservation 1969) lists the area of Lake Mabel as 117 acres at this elevation. A topographic map of the lake basin generated in support of Minimum Levels development (Figure 3) indicates that the lake extends over 118 acres at an elevation of 108 feet above NGVD 29 (107.1 feet above NAVD 88).

Citrus dominates the landscape within the surrounding lake region and near shore environment. Dominant plant species observed along the shoreline include, torpedo grass (*Panicum repens*), and cattail (*Typha sp.*), along with primrose willow (*Ludwigia sp.*), maidencane (*Panicum hemitomon*), pickerelweed (*Pontederia cordata*), arrowhead (*Sagittaria lancifolia*), fragrant water lily (*Nymphaea odorata*), flat sedge (*Cyperus oederatus*), water pennywort (*Hydrocotyle umbellata*), and hydrilla (*Hydrilla verticillata*).

Figure 1. Location of Lake Mabel in Polk County, Florida.

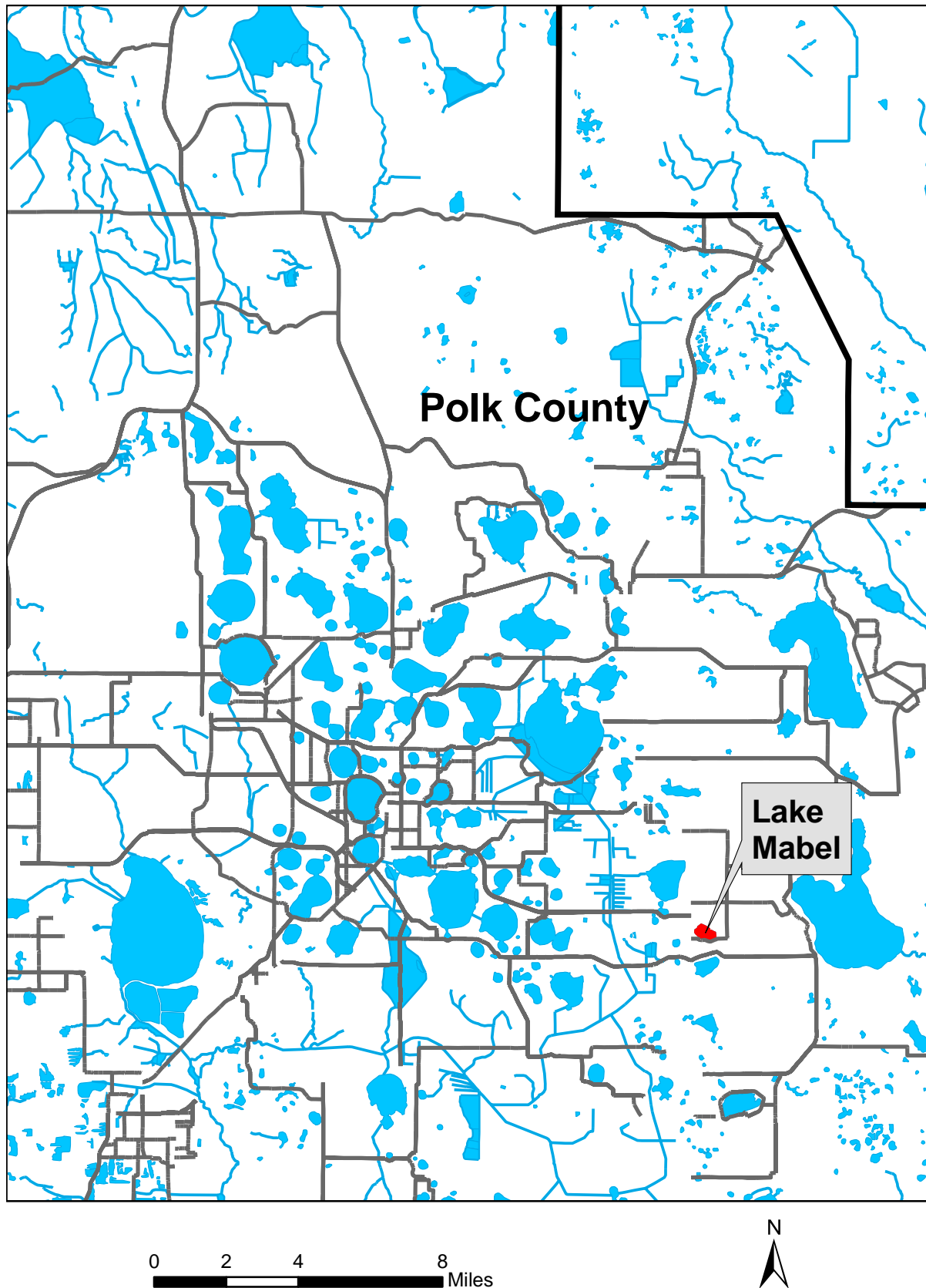




Figure 2. Location of the lake water level gage and historic high water indicator for Lake Mabel.



Legend

-  Water Level Gage
-  Historic High Water Indicator

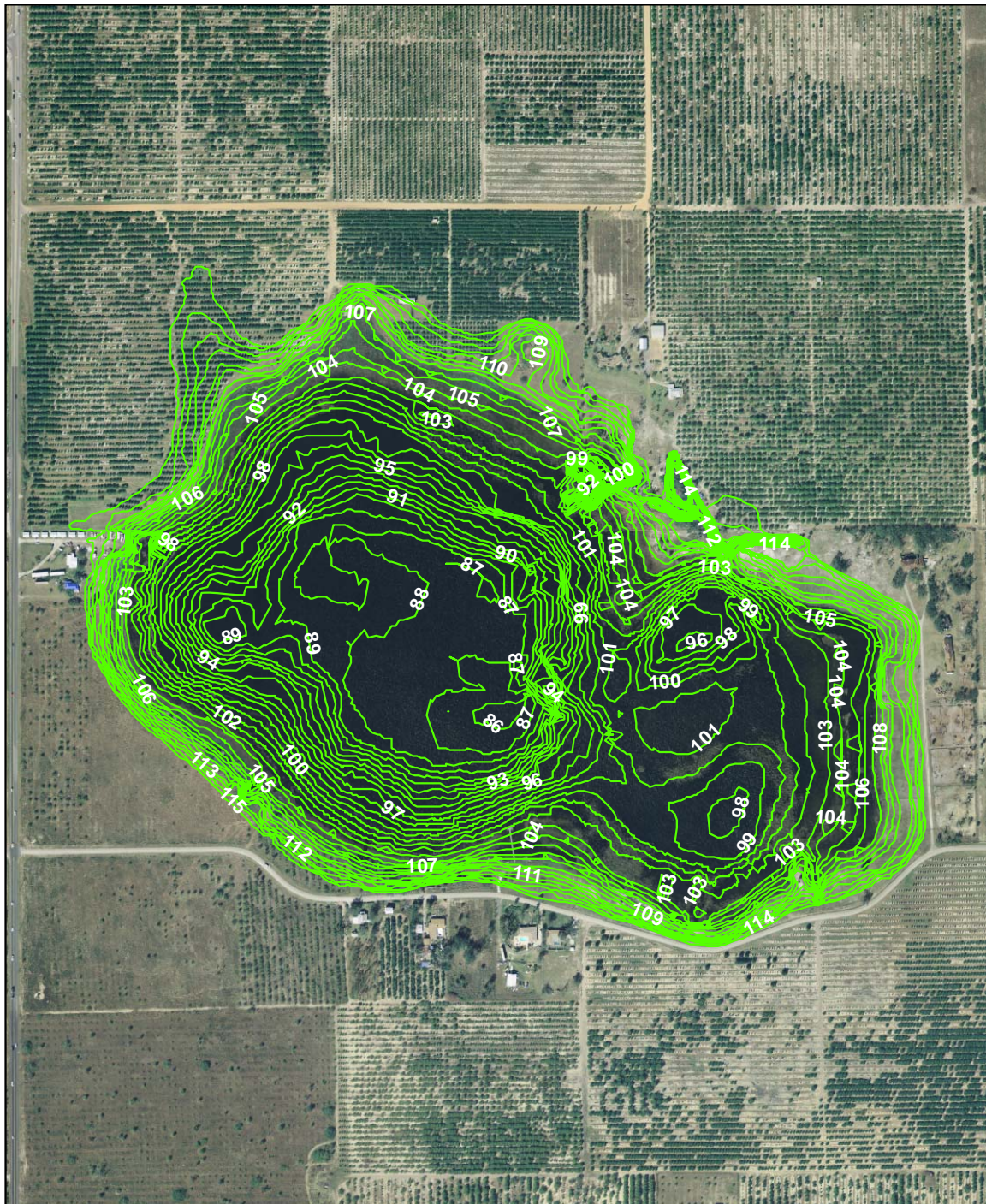


0 250 500 1,000 Feet



Map prepared using 2005 true color digital ortho photography.

Figure 3. One-foot contours within the Lake Mabel basin. Values shown are elevations in feet above NGVD 29.



Map prepared using 2005 true color digital ortho photography, elevation data from 1987 SWFWMD aerial photography with contours maps (Secs. 11 and 14, Twp. 29 S, Rge. 27 E), and elevation data collected by D. C. Johnson and Associates, Inc.



0 250 500 1,000 Feet

Currently Adopted Guidance Levels

The Southwest Florida Water Management District has a long history of water resource protection through the establishment of lake management levels. With the development of the Lake Levels Program in the mid-1970s, the District began an initiative for establishing lake management levels based on hydrologic, biological, physical and cultural aspects of lake ecosystems. By 1996, management levels for nearly 400 lakes had been established.

Based on work conducted in the 1970s (see SWFWMD 1996), the District Governing Board adopted management levels (currently referred to as Guidance Levels) for Lake Mabel in January 1989. These levels have been incorporated into Chapter 40D-8, F.A.C. (Table 2). A Maximum Desirable Level of 110.00 feet above NGVD 29 (109.10 feet above NAVD 88) was also developed, but was not adopted. The adopted Guidance Levels and Maximum Desirable Level were developed using a methodology that differs from the current District approach for establishing Minimum and Guidance Levels. The levels do not, therefore, necessarily correspond with levels developed using current methods. Minimum and Guidance Levels developed using current methods will replace existing Guidance Levels upon adoption by the District Governing Board into Chapter 40D-8, F.A.C.

Annually since 1991, a list of stressed lakes has been developed to support the District's consumptive water use permitting program. As described in the District's Consumptive Use of Water Rule (Chapter 40D-2, F.A.C.), "a stressed condition for a lake is defined to be chronic fluctuation below the normal range of lake level fluctuations". For lakes with adopted Guidance Levels, chronic fluctuation below the Low Level is considered a stressed condition. For lakes without adopted levels, evaluation of stressed condition is conducted on a case-by-case basis. Lake Mabel is included on the 2006 Stressed Lakes List and, except for a one-year period (1999), has been classified as a stressed lake since 1991 (Gant *et al.* 1999, 2006).

Table 2. Adopted Guidance Levels for Lake Mabel.

Guidance Levels	Elevation in Feet	
	NGVD 29	NAVD 88
Ten Year Flood Guidance Level	114.50	113.60
High Level	110.75	109.85
Low Level	107.00	106.10
Extreme Low Level	105.00	104.10

Summary Data Used for Development of Proposed Minimum and Guidance Levels

Proposed Minimum and Guidance Levels for Lake Mabel were developed using the methodology for Category 3 Lakes described in Chapter 40D-8, F.A.C. The levels and additional information are listed in Table 3, along with lake surface areas for elevations in NGVD 29. Detailed descriptions of the development and use of these data are provided in the remainder of this report.

Table 3. Proposed Minimum and Guidance Levels, Historic P50, lake stage percentiles, normal pool and control point elevations, and significant change standards for Lake Mabel.

Levels	Elevation in Feet		Lake Area (acres)
	NGVD 29	NAVD 88	
Lake Stage Percentiles			
Historic P10*	107.5	106.6	116
Historic P50*	104.7	103.8	102
Historic P90*	102.5	101.6	86
Current P10	108.0	107.1	118
Current P50	104.0	103.1	97
Current P90	100.2	99.3	66
Normal Pool and Control Point			
Normal Pool	NA	NA	NA
Control Point	NA	NA	NA
Significant Change Standards			
Basin Connectivity Standard	105.0	104.1	104
Wetland Offset Elevation	103.9	103.0	96
Species Richness Standard	102.7	101.8	87
Aesthetics Standard	102.5	101.6	86
Recreation/Ski Standard	97.2	96.3	45
Lake Mixing Standard	88.8	87.9	19
Dock-Use Standard	NA	NA	NA
Proposed Minimum and Guidance Levels			
High Guidance Level	107.5	106.6	116
High Minimum Lake Level	106.7	105.8	112
Minimum Lake Level	103.9	103.0	96
Low Guidance Level	102.5	101.6	86

NA = not available/not appropriate

* = based on modeled surface water elevations

Lake Stage Data and Exceedance Percentiles

Lake stage data, *i.e.*, surface water elevations for Lake Mabel (District Universal Identification Number STA 28 28) were obtained from the District's Water Management Data Base (WMDB). Lake stage data in the WMDB for Lake Mabel are recorded in feet above NGVD 29. The period of record for the data extends from December 1987 through the present date (Figure 4, see Figure 2 for current location of the SWFWMD lake water level gauge). The highest surface water elevation for Lake Mabel recorded in the WMDB, 110.90 feet above NGVD 29 (110.00 feet above NAVD 88), occurred on November 9, 2005. The low of record, 98.75 feet above NGVD 29 (97.85 feet above NAVD 88), occurred on June 25, 2001. The data record for Lake Mabel is not continuous, *i.e.*, there are some months during the period of record when lake surface elevations were not recorded.

For the purpose of Minimum Levels determination, lake stage data are classified as "Historic" for periods when there were no measurable impacts due to water withdrawals, and impacts due to structural alterations were similar to existing conditions. In the context of Minimum Levels development, "structural alterations" means man's physical alteration of the control point, or highest stable point along the outlet conveyance system of a lake, to the degree that water level fluctuations are affected. Lake stage data are classified as "Current" for periods when there were measurable, stable impacts due to water withdrawals, and impacts due to structural alterations were stable.

Based on water-use estimates and analysis of lake water levels and regional ground water fluctuations, available lake stage data for Lake Mabel from December 1987 through December 2006 were classified as Current data (see Table 3 for lake stage percentile elevations). Because Historic lake stage data are not available, a Historic composite data set of monthly mean lake surface elevations for Lake Mabel was developed using a sixty-year record of modeled lake surface elevations for the period January 1946 through December 2005. The composite sixty-year record is based on lake stage data for Lake Mabel, Historic lake stage data for Lake Clinch (District Universal Identification Number STA 479 481), and rainfall data measured at the Mountain Lake rain gage site (District Universal Identification Number STA 280 280) in Polk County (SWFWMD, draft report, 2007) (Figure 5). The sixty-year period was considered sufficient for incorporating the range of lake stage fluctuations that would be expected based on long-term climatic cycles that have been shown to be associated with changes in regional hydrology.

The Historic composite data set of modeled lake surface elevations was used to calculate the **Historic P10, P50, and P90** lake stage percentile elevations. The Historic P10 elevation, the elevation the lake water surface equaled or exceeded ten percent of the time during the historic period, was **107.5 feet above NGVD 29** (106.6 feet above NAVD 88). The Historic P50 elevation, the elevation the lake water surface equaled or exceeded fifty percent of the time during the historic period, was **104.7 feet above NGVD 29** (103.8 feet above NAVD 88). If Historic data were not available, the Historic

Figure 4. Measured surface water elevations in feet above NGVD 29 through December 2006 for Lake Mabel.

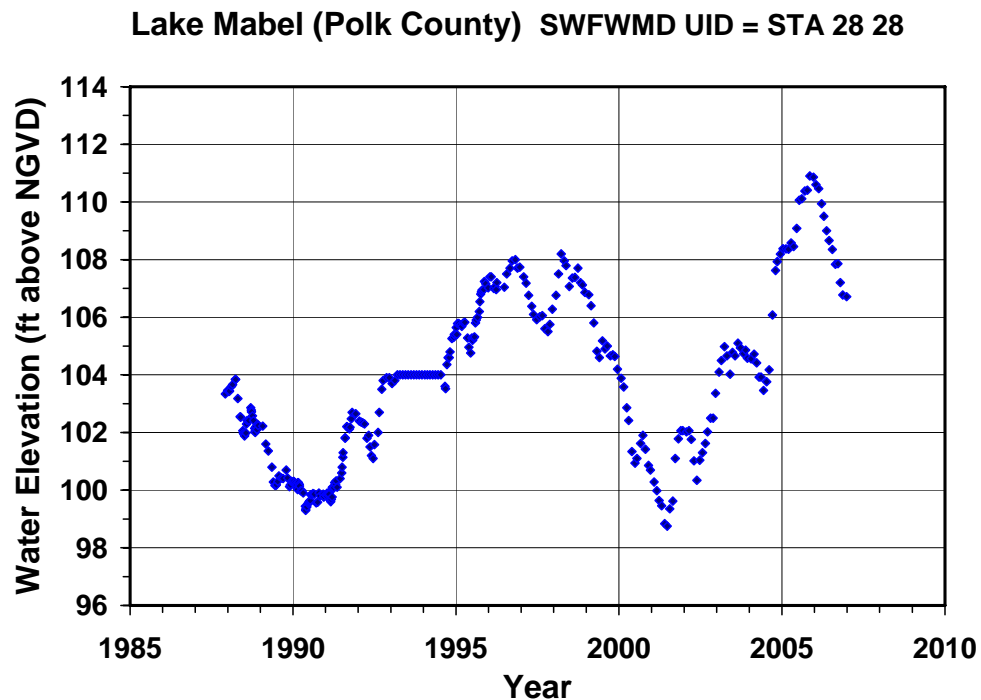
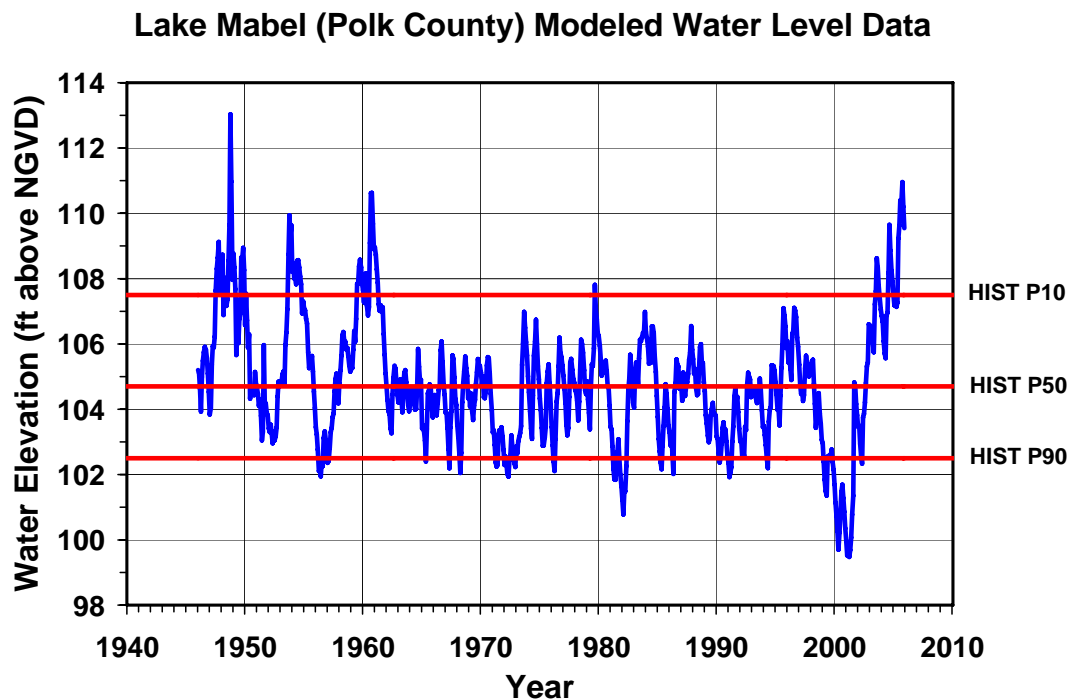


Figure 5. Modeled monthly-means surface water elevations in feet above NGVD 29 for the composite data set from January 1946 through December 2005 for Lake Mabel, and the Historic P10, P50, and P90 lake stage percentile elevations.



P50 would be estimated using Current data, reference lake water regime (RLWR) statistics, and the High Guidance Level. The Historic P90 elevation, the elevation the lake water surface equaled or exceeded 90 percent of the time during the historic period, was **102.5 feet above NGVD 29** (101.6 feet above NAVD 88).

Normal Pool Elevation, Control Point Elevation and Structural Alteration Status

The **Normal Pool** elevation, a reference elevation used for development of minimum lake and wetland levels, is established based on the elevation of Hydrologic Indicators of sustained inundation. Because Hydrologic Indicators of Normal Pool do not exist on Lake Mabel, **establishment of the Normal Pool elevation is not possible**. Based on the elevation of one large live oak tree located along the south shore of Lake Mabel, a historic seasonal high water elevation was estimated at 117.2 feet above NGVD 29 (116.3 feet above NAVD 88) (Figure 2).

The **Control Point** elevation is the elevation of the highest stable point along the outlet profile of a surface water conveyance system (e.g., structure, ditch, culvert, or pipe) that is the principal control of water level fluctuation in the lake. Based on review of one-foot contour interval maps and field survey data, it was determined that Lake Mabel does not have an outlet that is the principal control of surface water elevations within the lake. Because the lake is considered a closed-basin system, **there is no Control Point elevation** (Figure 2).

Structural Alteration Status is determined to support development of Minimum and Guidance Levels. Because there is no outlet or Control Point elevation controlling surface water elevations, **Lake Mabel is not considered to be Structurally Altered**.

Proposed Guidance Levels

The **High Guidance Level** is provided as an advisory guideline for construction of lake-shore development, water dependent structures, and operation of water management structures. The High Guidance Level is the expected Historic P10 of the lake. Because Historic data are available, the High Guidance Level was established at **107.5 feet above NGVD 29** (106.6 feet above NAVD 88), the Historic P10 elevation.

The **Low Guidance Level** is provided as an advisory guideline for water dependent structures, information for lake shore residents, and operation of water management structures. The Low Guidance Level is the elevation that a lake's water levels are expected to equal or exceed ninety percent of the time (P90) on a long-term basis. The level is established using Historic or Current data, and in some cases, RLWR statistics. Because Historic data are available, the Low Guidance Level was established at **102.5 feet above NGVD 29** (101.6 feet above NAVD 88), the Historic P90 elevation.

Lake Classification

Lakes are classified as Category 1, 2, or 3 for the purpose of Minimum Levels development. Those with fringing cypress wetlands greater than 0.5 acres in size where water levels currently rise to an elevation expected to fully maintain the integrity of the wetlands (*i.e.*, the Historic P50 is equal to or higher than an elevation 1.8 feet below the Normal Pool elevation) are classified as Category 1 Lakes. Lakes with fringing cypress wetlands greater than 0.5 acres in size that have been structurally altered such that the Historic P50 elevation is more than 1.8 feet below the Normal Pool elevation are classified as Category 2 Lakes. Lakes without fringing cypress wetlands or with cypress wetlands less than 0.5 acres in size are classified as Category 3 Lakes. Because Lake Mabel does not have fringing cypress wetlands, it is classified as a **Category 3 Lake**.

Category 3 Lake Significant Change Standards and Information for Consideration

Lake-specific significant change standards and other available information are developed for establishing Minimum Levels for Category 3 Lakes. The standards are used to identify thresholds for preventing significant harm to cultural and natural system values associated with lakes in accordance with guidance provided in the Florida Water Resources Implementation Rule (Chapter 62-40.473, F.A.C.). Other information taken into consideration includes potential changes in the coverage of herbaceous wetland vegetation and aquatic plants.

Six significant change standards are developed, including a Species Richness Standard, an Aesthetics Standard, a Lake Mixing Standard, a Recreation/Ski Standard, a Dock-Use Standard, and a Basin Connectivity Standard. Although potential changes in the coverage of herbaceous wetland vegetation and aquatic plants associated with use of the standards is taken into consideration in the development of Minimum Levels, there is no significant change standard to determine a threshold for preventing significant harm to fringing non-cypress wetlands. Based on the Cypress Wetland Standard for Category 1 Lakes, however, a Wetland Offset Elevation was developed for Category 3 Lakes to provide protection for non-cypress fringing wetlands. Since Lake Mabel is a Category 3 Lake system, the applicable significant change standards and the Wetland Offset Elevation were developed (Table 3).

The **Basin Connectivity Standard** is developed to protect surface water connections between lake basins or among sub-basins within lake basins to allow for movement of aquatic biota, such as fish, and support recreational uses. The standard is based on the elevation of lake sediments at a critical high spot between lake basins or lake sub-basins, a water depth requirement for movement of aquatic biota or powerboats and other watercraft, and use of Historic lake stage data or region-specific reference lake water regime statistics. Because Historic data are available, the Basin Connectivity Standard was established at **105.0 feet above NGVD 29** (104.1 feet above NAVD 88), based on the sum of the critical high spot elevation (100.8 feet above NGVD 29, 99.9

feet above NAVD 88), the clearance value for power boats and movement of biota (2 feet), and the difference between the Historic P50 and the Historic P90 (2.2 feet).

The **Wetland Offset Elevation** is developed to protect lake fringing non-cypress wetlands. Based on the rationale used to develop the Cypress Wetland Standard for Category 1 Lakes (1.8 feet below the Normal Pool elevation), a Wetland Offset Elevation for Category 3 Lakes was developed. Because Hydrologic Indicators of sustained inundation used to determine the Normal Pool elevation usually do not exist on Category 3 Lakes, another datum, in this case the Historic P50 elevation, was used in the development of the Wetland Offset Elevation. Based on an evaluation of the relationship of the Cypress Wetland Standard with the Historic P50 for hydrologically unimpacted cypress wetlands, the Wetland Offset Elevation for Category 3 Lakes was established at an elevation 0.8 feet below the Historic P50 elevation (Hancock, draft report, 2007). For Lake Mabel, the Wetland Offset Elevation was established at **103.9 feet above NGVD 29** (103.0 feet above NAVD 88).

The **Species Richness Standard** is developed to prevent a decline in the number of bird species that may be expected to occur at or utilize a lake. Based on an empirical relationship between lake surface area and the number of birds expected to occur at Florida lakes, the standard is established at the lowest elevation associated with less than a 15 percent reduction in lake surface area relative to the lake area at the Historic P50 elevation. For Lake Mabel, the Species Richness Standard was established at **102.7 feet above NGVD 29** (101.8 feet above NAVD 88).

The **Aesthetics Standard** is developed to protect aesthetic values associated with the inundation of lake basins. The standard is intended to protect aesthetic values associated with the median lake stage from becoming degraded below the values associated with the lake when it is staged at the Low Guidance Level. The Aesthetic Standard was established at the Low Guidance Level, which is **102.5 feet above NGVD 29** (101.6 feet above NAVD 88).

The **Recreation/Ski Standard** is developed to identify the lowest elevation within the lake basin that will contain an area suitable for safe water skiing. The standard is based on the lowest elevation (the Ski elevation) within the basin that can contain a five-foot deep ski corridor delineated as a circular area with a radius of 418 feet, or a rectangular area 200 feet in width and 2,000 feet in length, and use of Historic lake stage data or region-specific reference lake water regime statistics. Because Historic data are available, the Recreation-Ski Standard was established at **97.2 feet above NGVD 29** (96.3 feet above NAVD 88) based on the sum of the ski elevation (95.0 feet above NGVD 29, 94.1 feet above NAVD 88) and the difference between the Historic P50 and the Historic P90 (2.2 feet).

The **Lake Mixing Standard** is developed to prevent significant changes in patterns of wind-driven mixing of the lake water column and sediment resuspension. The standard is established at the highest elevation at or below the Historic P50 elevation where the dynamic ratio (see Bachmann *et al.* 2000) shifts from a value of <0.8 to a value >0.8, or

from a value >0.8 to a value <0.8 . The Lake Mixing Standard was established at **88.8 feet above NGVD 29** (87.9 feet above NAVD 88), the elevation at which the dynamic ratio shifts across the 0.8 threshold (Figure 6).

The **Dock-Use Standard** is developed to provide for sufficient water depth at the end of existing docks to permit mooring of boats and prevent adverse impacts to bottom-dwelling plants and animals caused by boat operation. The standard is based on the elevation of lake sediments at the end of existing docks, a two-foot water depth requirement for boat mooring, and use of Historic lake stage data or region-specific reference lake water regime statistics. Because only two dock platforms are located on Lake Mabel, **there is not enough information to develop the Dock-Use Standard.**

Proposed Minimum Levels

The method used for establishing Minimum Levels for a lake is dependent on its lake category. For Category 1 Lakes, the High Minimum Lake Level and Minimum Lake Level are established 0.4 feet and 1.8 feet below the Normal Pool elevation, respectively. For Category 2 Lakes, the High Minimum Lake Level is established at the High Guidance Level, and the Minimum Lake Level at the Historic P50 elevation. For Category 3 Lakes, the High Minimum Lake Level is established using Historic data or region-specific reference lake water regime statistics, and the Minimum Lake Level using lake-specific significant change standards or the Historic P50 elevation. Other available information taken into consideration in the establishment of Minimum Levels for all three lake categories includes: substantial changes in the coverage of herbaceous wetland vegetation and aquatic macrophytes; elevations associated with residential dwellings, roads or other structures; frequent submergence of dock platforms; faunal surveys; aerial photographs; typical uses of lakes (e.g., recreation, aesthetics, navigation, and irrigation); surrounding land-uses; socio-economic effects; and public health, safety and welfare matters.

The **Minimum Lake Level** is the elevation that a lake's water levels are required to equal or exceed fifty percent of the time on a long-term basis. The Minimum Lake Level for Category 3 Lakes is established at the elevation corresponding to the most conservative significant change standard, *i.e.*, the standard with the highest elevation, except where that elevation is above the Historic P50 elevation, in which case, the Minimum Lake Level is established at the Historic P50 elevation. For Lake Mabel, the Basin Connectivity Standard is higher than the Historic P50 elevation, therefore, using current rule criteria, the Minimum Lake Level could be established at the Historic P50 (104.7 feet above NGVD 29, 103.8 feet above NAVD 88). However, because establishing the Minimum Lake Level at the Historic P50 does not allow any change to lake stage elevations, the Wetland Offset Elevation, which is lower than the Historic P50, but higher than the significant change standards below the Historic P50, was used to establish the Minimum Lake Level at **103.9 feet above NGVD 29** (103.0 feet above NAVD 88) (Figures 7 and 8). Review of changes in potential wetland area in relation to change in lake stage indicated there would not be a substantial increase or decrease in

Figure 6. Surface area, maximum depth, mean depth, volume, dynamic ratio (basin slope), and potential herbaceous wetland area versus lake stage in feet above NGVD 29 for Lake Mabel.

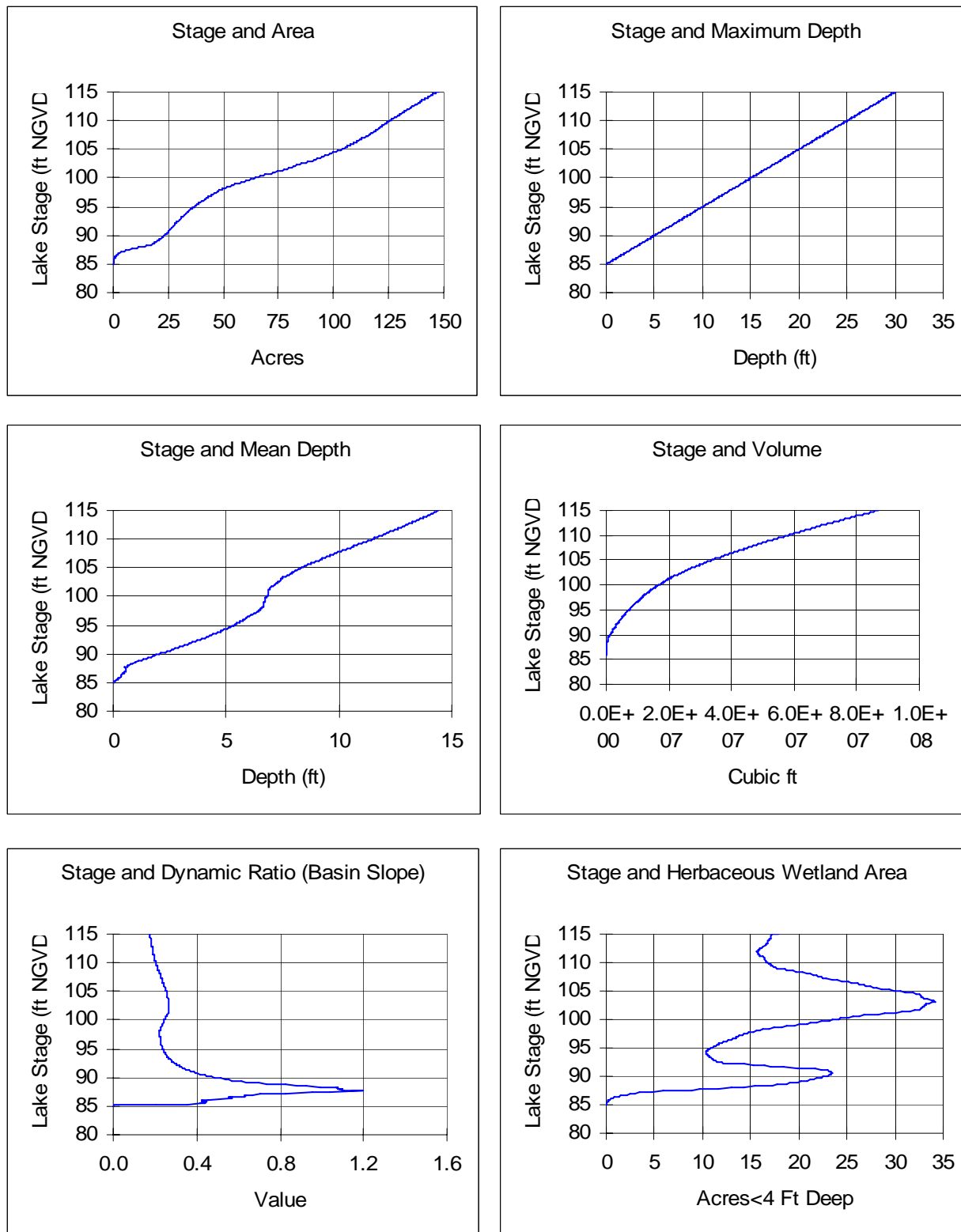


Figure 7. Mean monthly surface water elevations in feet above NGVD 29 through December 2006 based on measured lake stage records, and proposed Minimum and Guidance Levels for Lake Mabel. Proposed levels include the High Guidance Level (HGL), Low Guidance Level (LGL), High Minimum Lake Level (HMLL), and Minimum Lake Level (MLL).

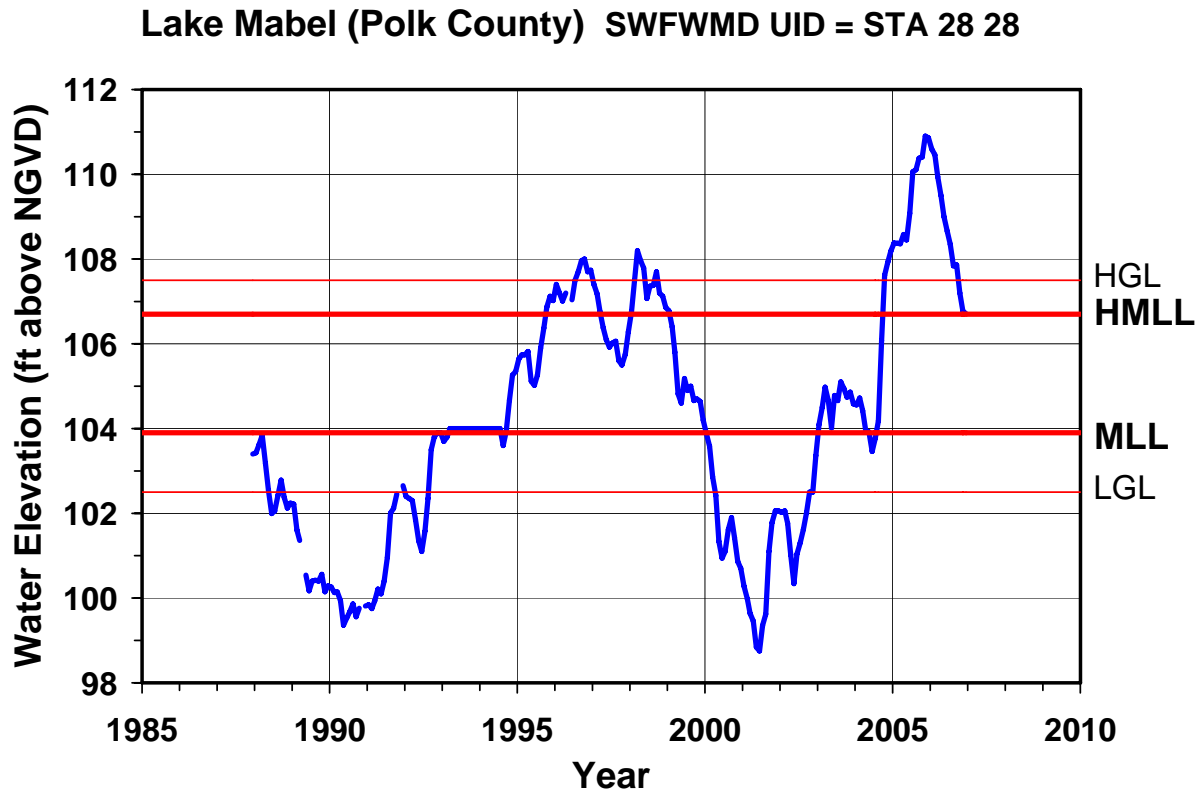
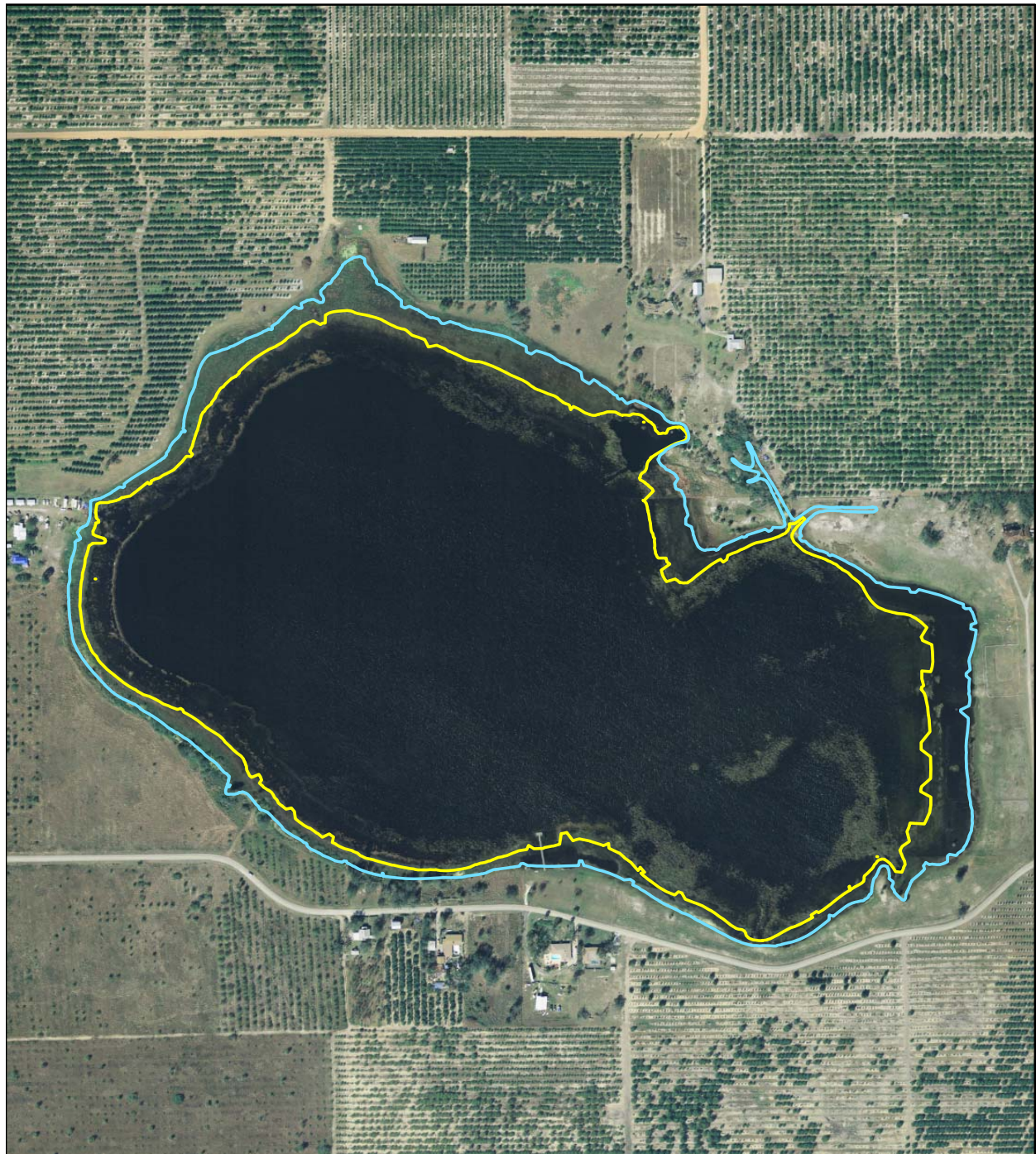


Figure 8. Approximate location of the proposed Minimum Lake Level (MLL) and High Minimum Lake Level (HMLL) for Lake Mabel.



Legend

Mabel Minimum Levels

- 103.9 feet above NGVD = MLL
- 106.7 feet above NGVD = HMLL



0 250 500 1,000 Feet

Map prepared using 2005 true color digital ortho photography, elevation data from 1987 SWFWMD aerial photography with contours maps (Secs. 11 and 14, Twp. 29 S, Rge. 27 E), and elevation data collected by D. C. Johnson and Associates, Inc.

potential wetland area within the lake basin at the Minimum Lake Level (34.0% of the lake basin) relative to the potential wetland area at the Historic P50 elevation (31.0% of the lake basin) (Figure 6).

The **High Minimum Lake Level** is the elevation that a lake's water levels are required to equal or exceed ten percent of the time on a long-term basis. Because Lake Mabel is a Category 3 lake and historic data are available, the High Minimum Lake Level was established at **106.7 feet above NGVD 29** (105.8 feet above NAVD 88), an elevation corresponding to the Minimum Lake Level elevation plus the difference between the Historic P10 and the Historic P50 (2.8 feet) (Figures 7 and 8).

The elevations of various man-made features within the immediate Lake Mabel basin were determined to evaluate the potential for flooding when the lake surface is at the proposed High Minimum Lake Level. Based on field survey data (Ardaman & Associates, Inc. 2007), the proposed High Minimum Lake Level is 6.9 feet below the finished floor of the lowest residential home, and 6.5 feet below the lowest road (Table 4).

Table 4. Elevations of selected features in the Lake Mabel basin.

Lake Basin Features	Elevation in Feet	
	NGVD 29	NAVD 88
Low house finished floor – west lake shore	113.6	112.7
Low road (private road) – west lake shore	113.2	112.3

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