



# NEWSLETTER

## CALENDAR

### April 23

Krazy Kids Inflatible Fun Run at Northwest Recreation Complex.

### April 23-24

Apopka Art and Foliage Festival at Kit Land Nelson Park.

### April 30

Apopka Public Safety Day at Northwest Rec. Complex

### May 4

City Council meeting at 1:30 p.m. at City Hall

### May 5

Apopka Food Truck Roundup at Kit Land Nelson Park

### May 10

Planning Commission meeting at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall

## Spring Makes Alligators Active

Alligators are more active this time of the year, when the weather becomes warmer and mating season approaches.

Florida's toothy neighbors are among the state's largest predators measuring up to 13 feet long and more than 1,000 pounds. They account for more than 350 attacks on people since 1948 although they mostly prefer to stay away from humans.

The state receives an average of almost 16,000 alligator-related complaints each year. Most of these complaints deal with alligators in places such as backyard ponds, canals, ditches and streams. Other conflicts occur when alligators wander into garages, swimming pools and golf course ponds.



Sometimes, alligators come out of the water to bask in the sun or move between wetlands. In many cases, if left alone, these alligators will eventually move on to areas away from people.

The safest rule is to keep plenty of distance from gators no matter where they show up. Here are some other safety guidelines from state wildlife officials:

- If you encounter any alligator that you believe to be a serious threat to people, pets or property, call the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's nuisance gator hotline at 866-FWCGATOR (866-392-4286).

Nuisance alligators must be killed— not relocated.

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## Apopka Wins Big Game



Apopka police officers and firefighters recently topped several other teams including a heavily favored four-time champion to win the 2016 Orlando Magic Guns & Hoses basketball tournament at the Amway Center. Apopka defeated the Brevard County Sheriff's Office in the final game.

Apopka scored trophies for their big win. The Harris Foundation also awarded Apopka with \$5,000 to be donated to a local charity. Other teams in the basketball tournament included the Orange County Fire Department, Coleman Federal Correctional Center, St. Lucie County Sheriff's Office, Orange County Corrections and the Kissimmee Police Department.



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- Generally, alligators less than four feet in length are not large enough to be dangerous unless handled. The state will not intervene in these cases.
- Be aware of the possibility of alligators when you are in or near fresh or brackish water. Bites may occur when people do not pay close enough attention to their surroundings when working or recreating near water.
- Do not swim outside of posted swimming areas or in waters that might be inhabited by large alligators.
- Alligators are most active between dusk and dawn. Therefore, avoid swimming at night.
- Dogs and cats are similar in size to the natural prey of alligators. Don't allow pets to swim, exercise or drink in or near waters that may contain alligators. Dogs often attract an alligator's interest, so do not swim with your dog.
- Never feed alligators – it's dangerous and illegal. When fed, alligators can overcome their natural wariness and learn to associate people with food. When this happens, some of these alligators have to be removed and killed.
- Dispose of fish scraps in garbage cans at boat ramps and fish camps. Do not throw them into the water. Although you are not intentionally feeding alligators when you do this, the result can be the same.
- Seek immediate medical attention if you are bitten by an alligator. Alligator bites can result in serious infections.

The state has an estimated 1.3 million alligators with a human population around 19 million. That's nearly one alligator for every 15 residents—a vivid statistic that explains why we should better understand and respect them. Gators also are protected under state and federal laws. They can be hunted or obtained only by license or permit.

## **Apopka Puts Reclaimed Water to Good Use**

Construction is complete on a new, \$12 million North Shore Reclaimed Water Treatment Facility off of Lust Road that will help to protect precious water resources while meeting increased demands from one of Central Florida's fastest growing areas.

The large project – funded with support from the St. Johns River Water Management District and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection – will utilize excess water from the Lake Apopka North Shore Restoration Area to serve Apopka's utility customers to irrigate lawns, golf courses and other areas. The project will add up to five million gallons each day to the city's reclaimed water distribution system. Vogel Bros. Building Co. started construction in October 2014.

The facility includes a pipeline to take excess water from north shore of Lake Apopka – a 20,000-acre wetland restoration area connected to the lake. The water is pumped underneath Lust Road into two, three-acre basins to filter out sediments. Water will undergo additional treatment before it is pumped to a three-million-gallon storage tank for distribution.

The facility is the latest improvement to Apopka's innovative approach to use alternative water for irrigation and to lessen impacts on Florida's fresh drinking water supply. Construction continues for the second of two new retention ponds that will store reclaimed water at Apopka's Northwest Recreation Complex, 3710 Jason Dwelley Parkway.

The next step is to create another large retention pond on 102 acres of land contributed by the St. Johns River Water Management District off of Golden Gem Road north of Ponkan Road. All this stored water is vital for irrigation of grass and landscaping for 6,500 existing customers as well as future development.

Reclaimed water is collected from storm drains and Apopka's wastewater treatment plant. Apopka also receives reclaimed water from the Sanlando area and Altamonte Springs.