

The Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, an official agency of the State of Florida, has reported that fresh water bass and other species of fresh water game fish grow and reproduce at accelerated rates in the water areas resulting from mining.

Fish and wildlife management under the direction of that commission is an important part of the cooperative program now underway between the phosphate industry and the public. Fish management programs have been instituted in 25 different pools and some 20 additional pools are scheduled for stocking.

Golf course development on reclaimed phosphate land has proven successful in several instances. Three courses in the area have utilized reclaimed land almost totally for 18-hole layouts and a fourth has expanded due to the availability of reclaimed land.

Projects involving commercial, industrial, and residential development have and will continue to be one of the highest and best uses of reclaimed land, but this, of course, depends largely on the location of the land and its proximity to urban areas. Nonetheless, a number of residential developments have taken place on reclaimed land throughout the phosphate mining areas. Some have resulted from reclamation efforts by the companies involved and others through private development after purchase of the mined-over lands.

A major example of reclamation for residential purposes is a 3,000-acre tract near Lakeland in Polk County, Fla., which was formerly a marshy, swampy, unusable area and has now been mined and completely reclaimed. City planners have predicted that the highly desirable tract will provide homesites for an estimated 15,000 residents in the future.

I could cite numerous other examples of low-lying, swampy areas that provided little benefit to anyone prior to mining that have been reclaimed to a useful condition following phosphate mining. However, I will not take your time to elaborate on these.

In light of the progress and accomplishments which have resulted under the present voluntary system of reclamation, members of the Florida Phosphate Council can see no need for Federal land reclamation regulations. To enact legislation that would place the phosphate industry under such controls would be an unnecessary and wasteful expansion of Government control in the phosphate mining industry.

Through this voluntary action, the phosphate industry has acknowledged the importance of reclaiming mined-over lands and restoring them to beneficial use. Our reclamation efforts are continuing and research is being done on more effective techniques.

Through this point, I have described the tremendous progress which our industry has made in the field of reclamation. In so doing, I do not intend to imply that we have no problems, for that is not the case.

We have one major operational problem, and a report covering reclamation in the Florida phosphate industry would be incomplete without describing it to you.

It is a unique problem inherent in the phosphate recovery process. When the phosphate ore-bearing matrix is sent to the beneficiation plant, it consists basically of one-third sand or tailings, one-third colloidal clay particles, and one-third phosphate ore.