

Senator METCALF. The articles will be printed and the photographs kept in the committee files.

(The information referred to follows:)

[From the New York Times, Mar. 5, 1967]

INDUSTRY MIRACLE IN FLORIDA

PHOSPHATE COMPANIES IN POLK COUNTY MEND THEIR WAYS, RECLAIM BLIGHTED AREAS FOR RECREATION, BEAUTIFY LAND

(By C. E. Wright)

LAKELAND, FLA.—Each year, Polk County, which lies between Orlando and Tampa in central Florida, plays host to a million tourists. The principal attractions are Cypress Gardens, near Winter Haven; the Bok Tower at Lake Wales; the county's many lakes and unexcelled fresh-water fishing; the largest citrus acreage of any county in the state, and the highest elevation in Florida—325 feet above sea level at Lake Wales and 215 feet here at Lakeland.

This is also cattle and agricultural country, but, above all, it produces more than 70 per cent of the nation's phosphate ore. Last year, this amounted to more than 20 million tons.

Sixteen companies of national renown process phosphate here, but only eight of them mine the ore. These mining operations are largely concentrated in the western part of the county and along U.S. 60, which crosses the state from Tampa to Vero Beach.

Short distances

Major north-south highways also pass through Polk County, including Interstate 4, U.S. 17-92 and U.S. 98. All points in the county are within easy driving distance of both Orlando, which is in Orange County, and Tampa, which is in Hillsborough County.

At one time, the view that motorists had in passing through the phosphate region was blighted by huge mounds of the raw product. Then, in 1961, the phosphate miners, through the Florida Phosphate Council, proclaimed this policy:

"The phosphate mining companies * * * adopt as a policy the planning of mining activities * * * so that the land involved shall help meet the esthetic and practical needs of the community."

Since that time, the phosphate-mining industry has pursued a program of land reclamation and landscape engineering that possibly has had few, if any, equals in any other mining areas of the United States.

Not only have community relations been greatly improved, but the area also has become a pleasanter and more attractive place for both residents and visitors. Meantime, another problem stemming from the processing of the ore—pollution of air and water—has been virtually overcome.

Pollution controls

The companies have spent some \$30-million on research and equipment to minimize pollution. Operation of these control systems costs about \$4-million a year.

Thousands of acres of mined-out land have been reclaimed for recreation purposes. Extensive tracts have become public parks, while golf courses have been built on other restored acreage. Additional land has been used for planting pine trees, citrus groves, and field and truck crops, and for homesites.

Reclamation has created hundreds of spring-fed lakes throughout the area, and three fish-management areas have been created by the Florida Game and Fresh-water Fish Commission. These contain 45 lakes, of which 25 have been stocked with large-mouth bass, channel bass and bream.

So important has fresh-water fishing become in these management areas that the Fish Commission keeps a resident fish biologist on the job at all times to improve the angling. Last year, Polk County led the state, as it had in previous years, in the sale of fishing licenses. The management areas are:

(1)—Saddle Creek Park (740 acres, including 500 acres of spring-fed lakes). This reclaimed area was donated to the county by the American Cyanamid Company. There is a bathing beach on a lake, picnic tables, riding trails and nature trails, and there are plans for a rifle range. Saddle Creek is situated on U.S. 92 at a point east of Lakeland.