

# Water Project Accelerating

By: Ed Robertson



*Algae blooms like this one on Butterfield Lake, summer 2014, are becoming an all too frequent occurrence on the Indian River Lakes. These blooms result from excess nutrients entering the lake water and can often contain species of algae that are toxic to humans, pets and wildlife. Photo by Elliott Hillback.*

The Indian River and Lakes Water Project has generated a lot of interest as we build a wide ranging program of activities to overcome the challenges presented by the water quality crisis that is degrading the way of life on the Indian River and Indian River Lakes we all love. As we talk with and listen to more and more of you who live in, and love, this area it has become clear that the community understands there is a water crisis. A significant number of individuals are clearly ready to begin taking action to restore clean water to our lakes and river.

IRLC is seeking cottagers and homeowners willing to be lake's Water Project representatives for your lake. As such you will help address questions from your neighbors and present the latest findings and recommendations on how to do things like switch from water based toilets, install effective nutrient capturing grey water absorption systems or create waterfront runoff buffer zones. Please volunteer to help your lake by helping spread the word.

Please consider volunteering your cottage or home as a demonstration site for an alternative toilet, grey water or buffer project. This can be an impactful way for neighbors to observe firsthand how well these systems work. Help

inspire others to take action by showing them how straight forward and cost effective they can be. So little cost for so much benefit! Take action at your cottage this spring and begin to reduce the nutrient concentrations in your lake's water. We are seeking at least two cottage or home owners from each lake as demo sites this summer.

The IRLC Water Project is also evaluating what will be required to produce a comprehensive Indian River Watershed Management Plan. This plan will help residents strengthen the quality of life in their community while restoring the sustainable ecological function of our lakes and river. We will need volunteers to conduct tests, monitor streams and lakes, evaluate data and work with scientists to increase our knowledge.

Conservation of the natural beauty and environmental integrity of our land and water will, in the long term, be mutually beneficial for all seasonal and year-around residents and for our wildlife inhabitants too. Please contact us to participate in this work. We need your help and ideas, we need involvement and input from all stakeholder groups to return the Indian River and Lakes Watershed to a healthy and sustainable condition. Thank you.