

INTRODUCTION

Lake Hamilton, Middle Lake Hamilton, and Little Lake Hamilton are near the headwaters of the eastern arm of the Peace River system (Fig. 1). The lakes, which are used primarily for boating and fishing, are connected by a series of channels. The lakes are important to the local economy because the lakes are used for citrus groves, homesites, recreation, and businesses. Some groves adjacent to the lakes have been irrigated with lake water.

Water quality in the Hamilton lakes began a study of the hydrologic conditions of the Hamilton lakes. The study was part of a series of lakes selected for study as part of a continuing cooperative program with the Southwest Florida Water Management District. The objective of the project was to determine the hydrologic conditions of the lakes. The data atlas was prepared by the U.S. Geological Survey to help fulfill that objective.

Data collected during the investigation from October 1979 through September 1980 included (1) the elevation of the lakes; (2) depth of the lakes; (3) physical and chemical characteristics of the water; (4) the amount of water in the lakes and lakeshells; and (5) water levels in Floridan aquifer wells and in surficial aquifer wells in the vicinity of the lakes. Station names, site descriptions, and maps of the study area are given in Table 1, and the site locations are shown in Figure 2.

THE LAKES AND THEIR SETTING

Origin and Physical Dimensions

The Hamilton lakes probably occupy constricted sinkhole depressions which formed when dissolution of subsurface limestone permitted the land surface to subside to below the local water table. Figure 3 is an aerial photograph of the lakes and the surrounding areas taken November 26, 1977, when the altitude of the lakes was 118.8 feet. The depth contours shown in figure 3, which are based on fathometer traverses of the lakes in late February 1980, are applicable when the altitude of the lakes is 120 feet. The probable sinkhole origin of the Hamilton lakes is corroborated by figure 4, which is a trace of part of a fathometer traverse of Little Lake Hamilton at the location shown in figure 3. This traverse suggests the presence of a partially filled sinkhole. The trend of the fathometer trace is extended to show two possible configurations of the suggested sinkhole.

Below are the approximate surface areas, volumes, and average depths of the lakes when their altitude is 120 feet.

| Lake name | Surface area (acres) | Volume (millions of gallons) | Average depth (feet) |
|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|
| Lake Hamilton | 2,160 | 5,300 | 7.5 |
| Middle Lake Hamilton | 106 | 225 | 6.5 |
| Little Lake Hamilton | 367 | 1,180 | 9.8 |

Drainage Basin Characteristics and Water-Control Structures

The size of the area that can contribute surface inflow to the Hamilton lakes can range from about 22 to about 71 mi² and depends on the settings of several water-control structures in the upper Peace River basin (Fig. 1). When the P-7 structure is closed, the P-6 structure is open, and the Fannie and Lake Hamilton is closed, and the drop culvert structure in Lake Fannie at the head of Peace Creek drainage canal is used to bypass Lake Fannie, the altitude of the chain of lakes behind the Lake Lulu control structure is less than the altitude of the Peace River. When Lake Fannie is blocked, and the P-7 structure is open, the area contributing to Lake Hamilton is about 48 mi². If the Lake Lulu control structures were set to pass water at or below the altitude of the Peace River, the P-6 structure were closed, and the P-6 (Smart-Fannie canal) and P-7 structures were open, Lake Hamilton could receive surface drainages from about 71 mi². The settings of the water-control structures in Lake Hamilton receiving only part of the surface drainage are shown in Fig. 2. The following is a quantitative analysis of the sources of surface inflow to the Hamilton lakes.

RELATION OF LAKE LEVELS TO GROUND-WATER LEVELS

The potentiometric contours in figure 3 show the altitude of the water level in tightly cased wells in the artesian (Floridan) aquifer in the Hamilton lakes vicinity. The surface defined by these contours is called the potentiometric surface of the Floridan aquifer.

Figure 3 shows the potentiometric surface for September 9, 1980, when the altitude of the lakes was 120 feet. The altitude of the lakes was from 0.5 to 10 feet higher than the altitude of the potentiometric surface at the lakes and, therefore, a potential for seepage from the lakes to the Floridan aquifer existed at all points in the lakes. Logs of wells adjacent to the lakes show 80 to 100 feet of unconsolidated sand and clay materials between the lakes and the Floridan aquifer at the lake shores. Leakage from the lakes to the Floridan aquifer probably is restricted by these materials.

Except for a few isolated hills on the west and north sides, and a sandy ridge on the east side of the lakes, the land adjacent to the Hamilton lakes is very flat, and thus does not afford sufficient gradient in the surrounding area to permit the water to drain off the lakes. The water level in the shallow waters at sites 10 and 17 (Figs. 2 and 3) indicate there was very little mounding of the water table under the isolated hills and west of Lake Hamilton. However, very heavy rainfall may sometimes cause the water to rise enough under the hills to cause significant lateral seepage of water from the lakes. Figure 4 shows the relation between hydrologic sections A-A' and A-B in Figure 5 to show the relation between water levels in the lakes, shallow wells, and Floridan aquifer wells in profile. The gradient of the water table (section A-A') is shown to be steeper east of the A-A' section than west of the section. The water level at the east end of the section indicates the altitude of the water table probably is less than 115 feet at the east end of the section.

RELATION OF STAGE CHARACTERISTICS TO RAINFALL

The altitude of Lake Hamilton was recorded either weekly or monthly from June 1945 to mid-February 1963, except in nine periods of 1 to 5 months duration when no observations were made. Daily water levels in Lake Hamilton outlet near structure P-8, which became operative in July 1962, have been made since mid-February 1963. The annual extremes in altitude are shown in figure 6. The range in altitude for the years prior to 1964 was probably more than is shown in figure 6, because the record is incomplete. However, figure 6 probably shows the pattern of year-to-year variation in altitude fairly well.

Figure 6 shows that from 1945 through 1961, the average altitude of

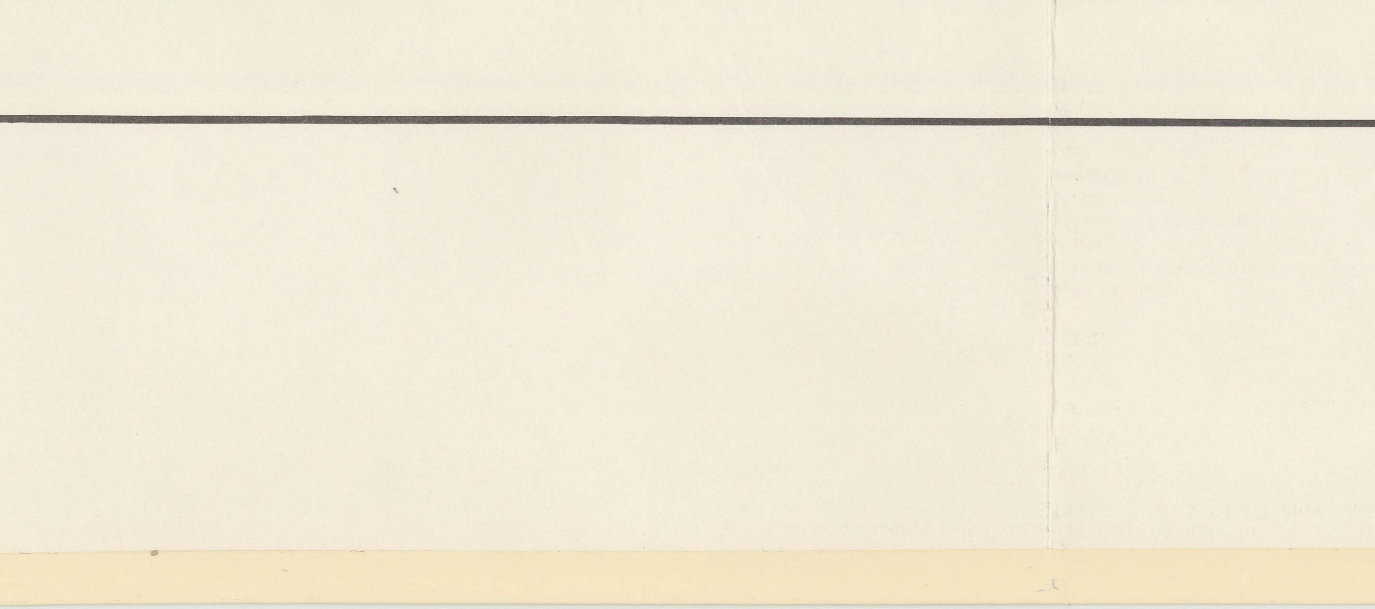
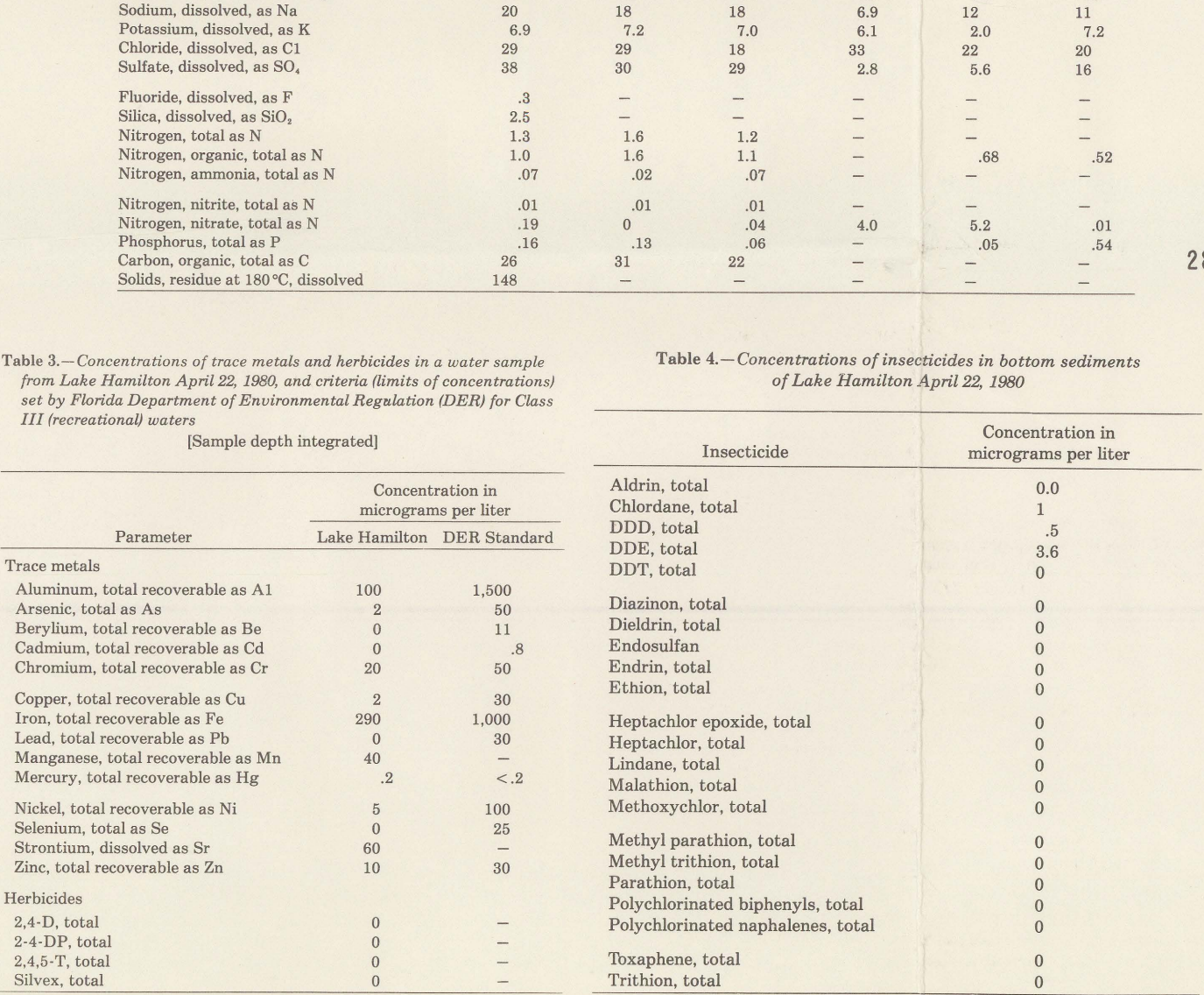
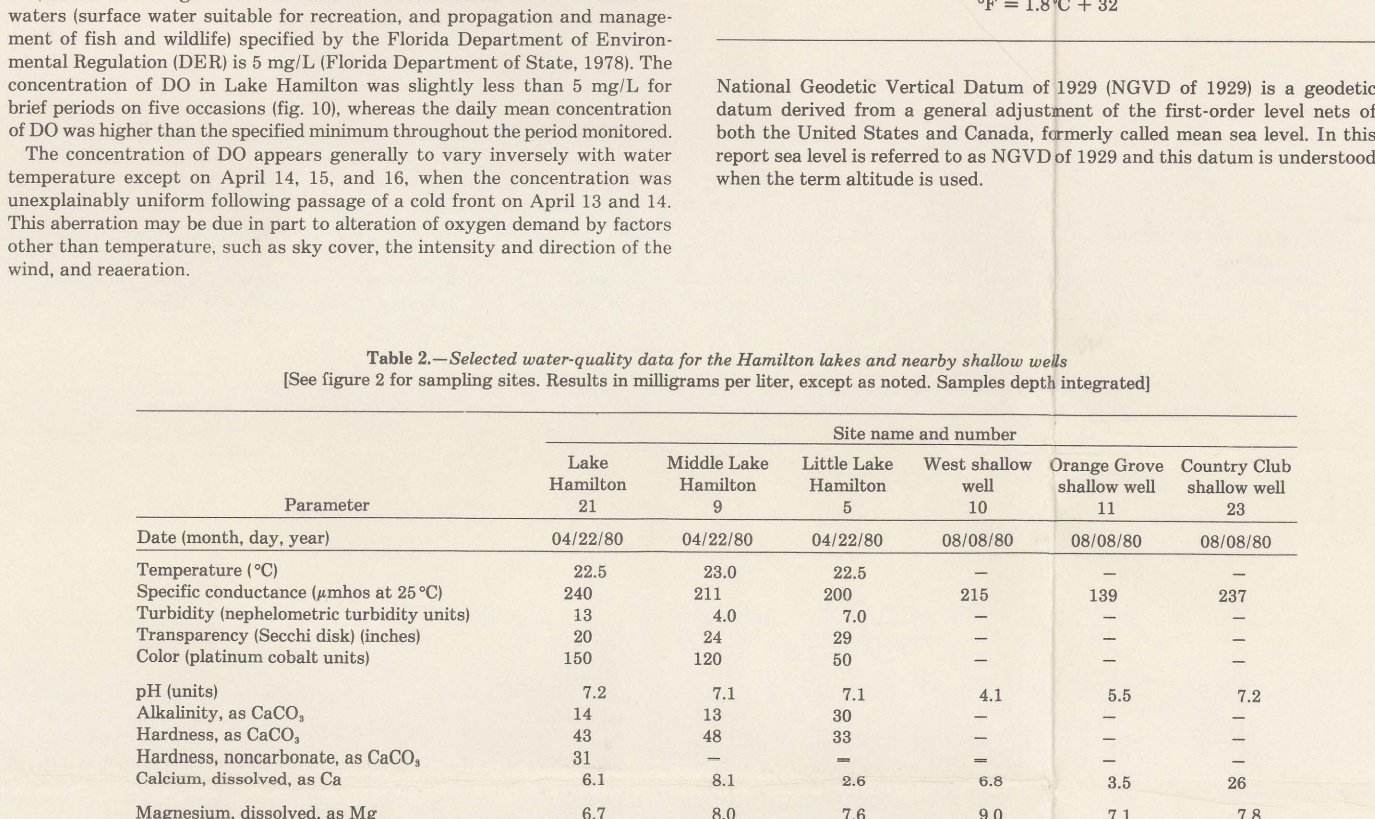
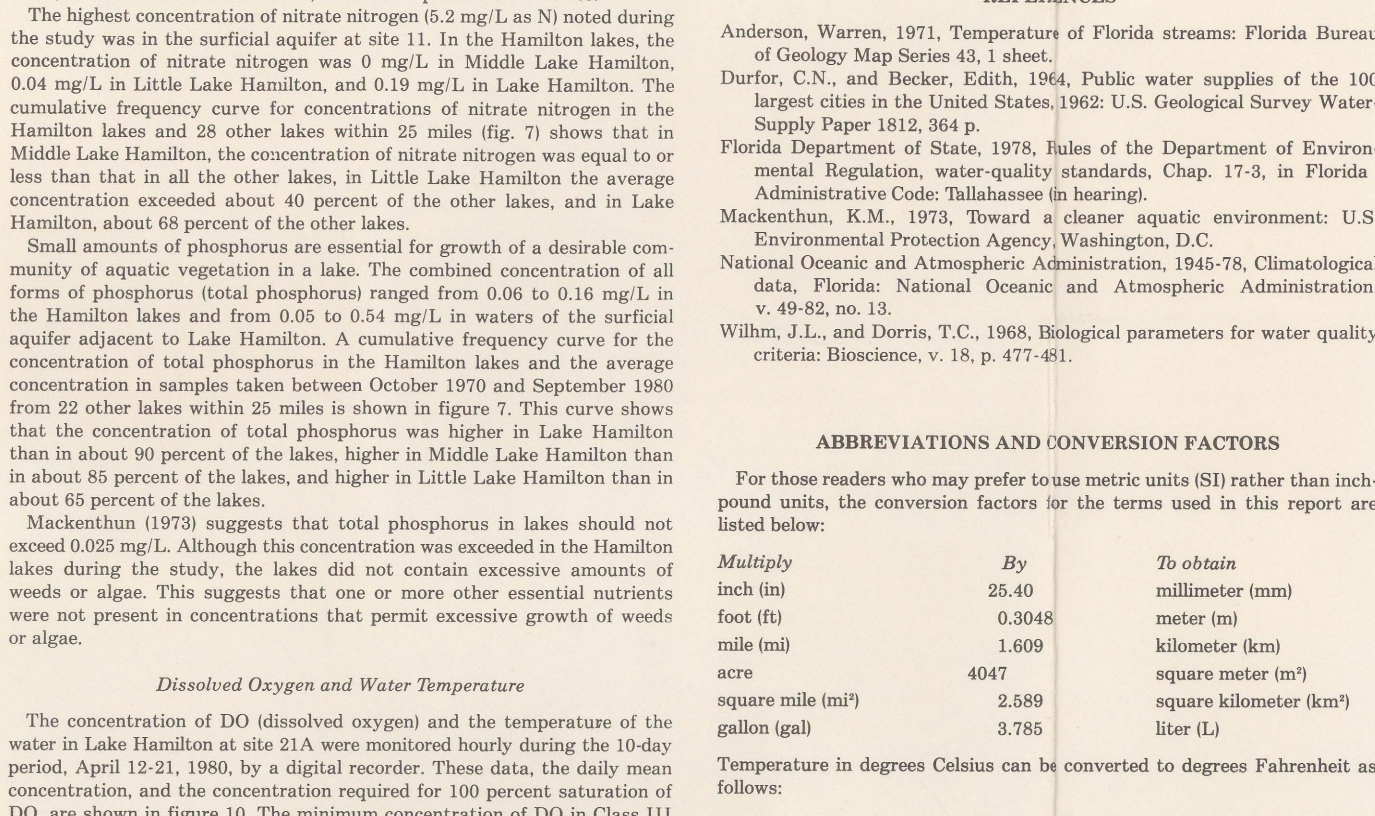
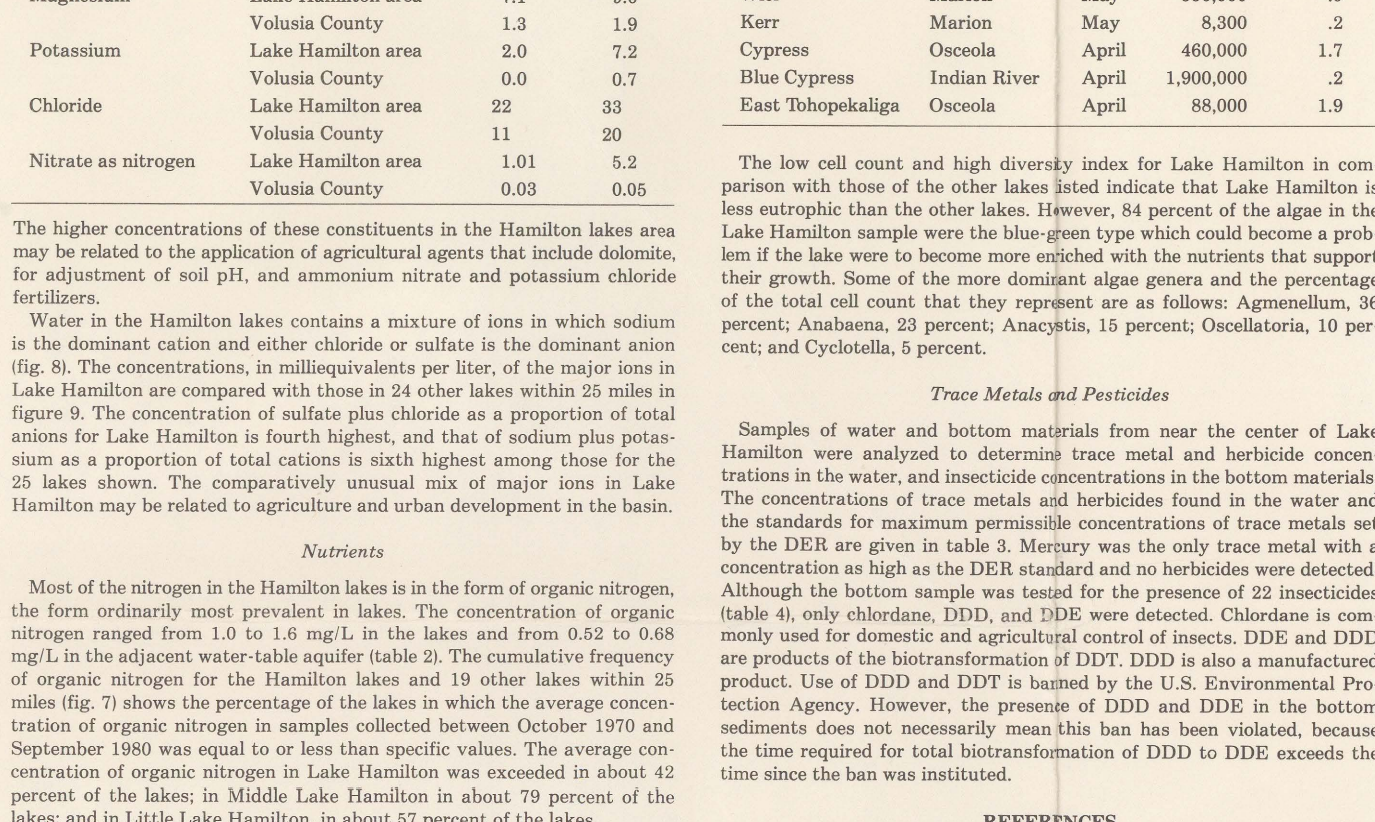
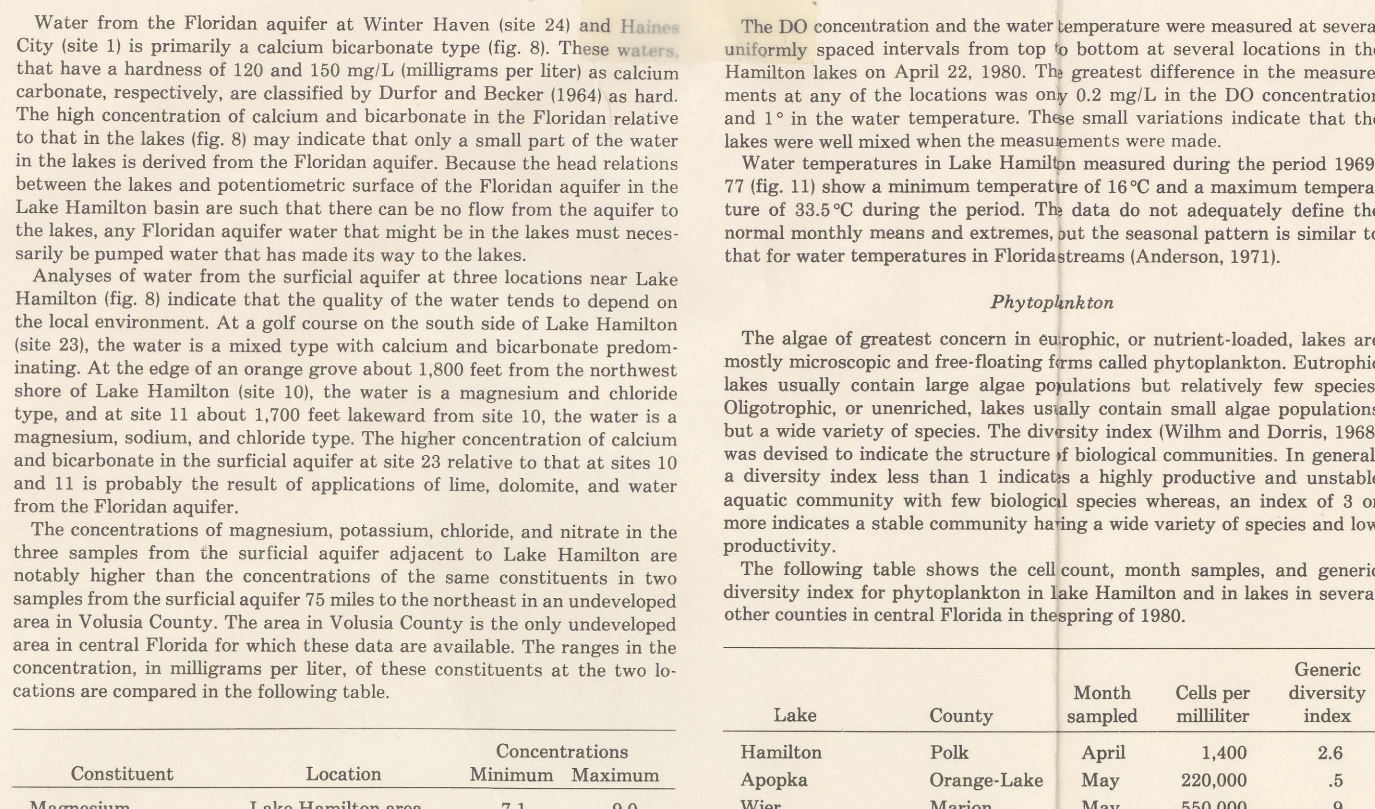
Hamilton was about 2 feet higher than the average altitude from 1962 through 1978. Figure 6 also shows that the average annual rainfall from 1945 through 1961 was about 7 inches more than the average annual rainfall from 1962 through 1978. Thus, the lower average altitude of the lake during the latter period was caused, at least in part, by lower rainfall, and perhaps in part, by operation of structure P-8.

QUALITY OF THE LAKES AND A

The physical and chemical character of the water in the Hamilton lakes, in the bottom sediments of Lake Hamilton, and in the surficial and Pleistocene glacial till deposits of the Hamilton area were determined by analyses at the U.S. Geological Survey Water-Quality Service, U.S. Geological Survey, Office of Water, U.S. Geological Survey National Water-Quality Laboratory—Atlanta, Georgia. The water samples were collected from the near-shore zone of the phytoplankton community in Lake Hamilton was determined by microscopic inspection of a sample at the U.S. Geological Survey National Water-Quality Laboratory, U.S. Geological Survey, Office of Water, U.S. Geological Survey, Office of Water, U.S. Geological Survey National Water-Quality Laboratory—Atlanta, Georgia. The concentration of dissolved oxygen were monitored for Lake Hamilton for 10 consecutive days.

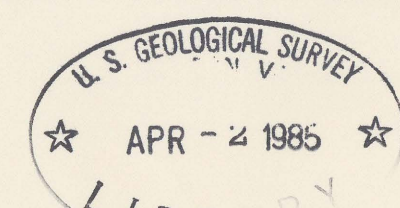
The chemical types of water in the Hamilton lakes, the adjacent surficial aquifer, and the Floridan aquifer at Winter Haven and Haines City are shown in figure 8. The aquifers were sampled even though there was no direct inflow from the Floridan and probably very little from the surficial aquifer to the lakes during the study because the aquifers are sources, either directly or indirectly, along with rainfall and surface inflow, of the water and chemicals in the Hamilton lakes.

| Station name | Site number | USGS file number |
|------------------------------------|-------------|------------------|
| Haines City water supply | 6 | 280687031374200 |
| Smiths irrigation well | 2 | 280640803137400 |
| Robertson's well | 2 | 280640803137400 |
| American Trucking well | 4 | 280640803137210 |
| Midway Lake sampling site | 4 | 280640803137210 |
| McKnight's well | 6 | 280411983139040 |
| Zimmerly well | 6 | 280411983139040 |
| Robertson's well | 8 | 280411983137300 |
| Midway Lake Hamilton sampling site | 8 | 280411983137300 |
| West Dallas well | 10 | 280687031385500 |
| Greene Grove shallow well | 11 | 280687031385500 |
| Paradise family well | 12 | 280687031385100 |
| Paradise main well | 13 | 280687031385100 |
| Paradise main well | 14 | 280687031385100 |
| Robertson's well | 15 | 280687031385100 |
| Davis Handag Tree well | 16 | 2803011983138120 |
| Robertson's well | 17 | 2803011983138120 |
| Robertson's well | 18 | 2803011983138120 |
| Cramer well | 20 | 2803011983137400 |
| Open well | 20 | 2803011983136400 |
| Robertson's well | 21 | 280687031385100 |
| Lake Hamilton sampling sites | 21,21A | 02250660 |
| Robertson's well | 22 | 280687031385100 |
| Clinton Chalk shallow well | 23 | 2803011983130200 |
| Robertson's well | 24 | 280687031385100 |
| Robertson's well | 24 | 280687031385100 |
| Roger Decell well | 25 | 280687031385100 |
| Lake Hamilton stage gaging site | 26 | 02250660 |
| Robertson's well | 27 | 2803011983137400 |
| Crumpp Road well | 28 | 2801400803137000 |



HYDROLOGY OF HAMILTON LAKES AND VICINITY, POLK COUNTY, CENTRAL FLORIDA

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