

# Rock Lake



Marchetta, Amy, two of Amy's sons (USF)

*The following narrative was derived from an interview with Marchetta Heckenbach and Amy Coyle, mother and daughter respectively. The family interview took place on the evening of August 24, 2001 in their home on Rock Lake. The home is owned by Marchetta, but is now occupied by Amy and her family of seven. This narrative tells the story of living on Rock Lake over a two-generation span with plans for continuation of the tradition.*

## Personal History

Marchetta Heckenbach moved to Rock Lake with her family in 1973 and raised two children in a house that she and her husband had built. Marchetta's daughter, Amy, was six when she moved to Rock Lake and now lives with her family in the home in which she grew up. Marchetta now lives in a house not far from Rock Lake with her mother. Marchetta reflects on those early days, why the family bought the house, and how things have changed over the years:

*"Yeah, we watched it [the house] being built. They were building it when we were in the process of looking for a home to buy. And we saw the kitchen window, which was overlooking the lake, and that's when we decided to buy it. The view used to be a lot better than it is now."*

Marchetta expressed emotional ties to their house on Rock Lake. She says,

*"It's been my home. We used to go out fishing a lot when my husband was well. We used to go out and take the boat or the canoe. We've always enjoyed it. That was the first thing my husband saw when we walked through the house. He said that's the house I want...that's it."*

Now that Marchetta's daughter Amy lives there with her five children, the family tradition continues. The third generation that occupies the house, Marchetta's grandchildren, are also avid fans of the lake. The boys fish and boat in the lake and like to catch frogs.



Amy Coyle and her brother when they first moved to Rock Lake (Heckenbach)



Marchetta's husband and his grandson (Heckenbach)

## History/Information

---



*View of Rock Lake from house (USF)*



*Marchetta's grandson with catch from lake (Heckenbach)*

Rock Lake is a 19-acre lake located in the Soldiers Creek Watershed in Seminole County. According to Marchetta and Amy, wildlife supported by the lake has decreased over the years. Marchetta's grandchildren have reported sightings of turtles, alligator gars, and water moccasins still, but otherwise the animals have disappeared. Marchetta and Amy say that in the past there have been gators, at one point edible fish, and also soft-shelled turtles. There were also cranes and ducks that no longer visit. About the turtles, Amy says:

*"Turtles used to pop their heads up all the time. You used to be able to look out the window and count 20 turtleheads...you can't do that anymore. They're probably still there, but I don't think there is as many."*

About the ducks, Amy shares:

*"We used to have a lot of ducks. You could hardly go out there because of the ducks and they would just aggravate the dogs to death. Blackie would catch them...he's a little Labrador - Beagle mix...he'd go out there and catch one. Whitie, the German Shepard, would corner them and then Blackie would go in and get them."*

The lake has changed during the years that the Heckenbach's have occupied its shores. Marchetta says both the quality and quantity of the water in Rock Lake have decreased, which is most likely why the wildlife has diminished. The level of the lake has gone up and down over the years, but Marchetta says it is currently the lowest she has ever seen it. Both mother and daughter attribute the recent low levels to a combination of events that include road run off and water drainage from Rock Lake into another nearby lake.

## Development

---



*Marchetta's house in early construction  
(Heckenbach)*

Traditional land use around Rock Lake is primarily agricultural, mostly orange groves. Marchetta reported that years before she moved to Rock Lake, there was a small airstrip. Both mother and daughter attribute the deterioration of the orange groves to residential development. Amy reports:

*"The ones [orange groves] over here were torn down for the middle school and the ones on this side were tore up to put the development in...this mini-development inside of Devonshire. That's only been there about ten years and that used to be orange groves all over there."*

According to Marchetta and Amy, the number of houses on and around Lake Rock has increased drastically over the years. Both next door to and across the street from the Heckenbach's home there were woods. On Lake Rock itself, there were only a few houses. Now, Marchetta says, all land bordering the lake is full of homes. She says, "everyone has lakefront property now," but is unsure how many houses there currently are. There was also a middle school built on the lake's shore called Rock Lake Middle School after the body of water it borders.

Along with the middle school, housing developments were built, of which the largest is Devonshire. At first, there were only 20-30 homes in Devonshire. Now, Amy says there are many more. What was once a country road that leads to Marchetta's house with hardly any homes at all; Rangeline Road is now lined with housing developments that continue to grow. According to Marchetta and Amy, the massive amount of development is partly responsible for the decrease in the quality of the lake's water. Amy reports:

*"The build up around hasn't helped because if you figure people are fertilizing those yards and that's all running in there. Before there were so few of us around the lake, it really didn't make a difference because it would all be absorbed back into the environment and it wasn't enough to overwhelm the environment."*

## The Future

---



*Two of Marchetta's grandsons on dock after fishing with Rock Lake in the background. (Heckenbach)*

The future of Rock Lake is uncertain. There is a Homeowner's Association on Lake Rock, but it is not very active in maintaining the lake according to Marchetta. It concerns Marchetta that nothing is being done to preserve the future of the lake she loves. She fears that without concerted action, Rock Lake's well being is in jeopardy. She says:

*"If something is not done, it's going to be very polluted. Even more so than it is now if something is not done."*

When asked if she could change one thing about Rock Lake, Marchetta replies, "clean it up, so the kids [her grandchildren] could enjoy it." What is needed is a lake doctor that would come in and prescribe actions that can be taken to bring the lake to a sustainable state. However, lake doctors are expensive and, according to Marchetta and Amy, coordinating collaboration of the lake's residents has been difficult. Fellow Rock Lake inhabitants have made such efforts, but thus far no action has been taken. Whether concerted action is made to preserve the future of Rock Lake is unknown. As a result, the continued tradition of living on Rock Lake for the Heckenbach's is equally uncertain. However, the family is hopeful.

**Written By: Deanna Barcelona, M.A.**