

OP-ED

'Floating homes' technology has demonstrated usefulness

BY FANE LOZMAN

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It is an unfortunate reality that those who currently live on Eastern Shores in Maule Lake will have to abandon their homes in the next 30 years because of rising tides. The only residents around Maule Lake will be the Amirillah floating islands, and any new developments built after Miami 21-like building codes are enacted.

The current Eastern Shores residents should be making plans now for where they will be moving once North Miami Beach condemns their residences for sea water intrusion. Instead, their fears are focused on the floating islands and reflect a total lack of knowledge about floating technology that has been proven over the last century.

Just like floating oil rigs moored to the ocean floor survive Category 5 hurricanes without being torn off their moorings, floating islands use similar technology. The land-based houses around Maule Lake would be swept clean off their concrete pads as the eye wall of a hurricane similar to Andrew made a direct hit, while the Maule Lake floating islands wouldn't slide an inch off their permanent moorings.

Even more impressive is that these foam-cored, reinforced concrete islands are unsinkable, even after being pelted with 200-mph, windswept debris from the destroyed houses on shore.

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The west Coast of the United States has thousands of floating homes that are a welcome addition to their communities in Washington, Oregon and California. The Maule Lake floating-island residences will introduce a new generation of floating homes to the East Coast. They will be completely self-sustaining and have the “greenest” footprint of any dwelling in South Florida.

The landlubbers whose attitude is that “I got to Maule Lake first and no one else should ever join me” forget one thing. The actual lake bottom is privately owned, and the submerged lands do not belong to those who are fortunate to live on its borders. Perhaps a 50-foot-high floating privacy screen running on the east side of Maule Lake would be soothing to these residents so they would not have to be jealous of their floating neighbors?

The floating islands will also help solve a simple reality that the political leaders of North Miami Beach can no longer ignore: New sources of tax revenue will be desperately needed to supplement the hidden pension demands of civil employees (i.e. police) over the coming years.

The 29 floating islands that will be assessed at \$12.5 million each will bring in a staggering \$363 million in new property assessments. This windfall for the city will be further magnified by the increased tax assessments for the Eastern Shores residents as their droopy neighborhood wakes up to become part of South Florida’s most unique residential community.

Like any new technology, whether it was the Wright brothers’ first airplane flight, or the \$3 billion Perdido oil rig anchored in 2,438 meters of water in the Gulf of Mexico, there are “talking heads” that will refuse to accept the inevitable march of technology. It makes one wonder: How many Eastern Shores residents still have horse and buggies in their back yards?

Fane Lozman won a precedent-setting victory last year against Riviera Beach when the U.S. Supreme Court agreed with him that his floating home — which the city had seized and destroyed under laws governing ships at sea — was a house, not a vessel covered by maritime law.

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