

Lakeland Ledger, Friday, October 10, 2003

## Combee Residents Rank Local Concerns

By Tom Palmer  
The Ledger

LAKELAND -- Mosquitoes, stray animals, speeding and dilapidated housing are what residents in the Combee area think are the neighborhood's worst problems, a poll of residents revealed.

The next step will be a meeting of the Combee Settlement Committee to discuss what to do to deal with those problems.

That meeting will be at 6:30 p.m. on Oct. 27 in the media center at Combee Elementary School, 2805 Morgan Combee Road. The public is welcome.

The poll, which generated responses from 103 households, is the latest effort by the committee to organize residents to improve conditions in the area between Saddle Creek Park and Lake Parker north of U.S. 92.

In addition to mailing out the surveys, the group canvassed the neighborhood, talking to residents and getting people who had not responded to the initial survey to share their views.

"It was overall very positive," said Tom Parrotte, a neighborhood activist who has been one of the group's leaders.

He said many people were pleased that there were efforts to improve the neighborhood.

Parrotte said he found that many of his neighbors were unaware of the neighborhood revitalization effort or of other efforts, such as community policing.

Gloria Graham, a Polk County Health Department staffer who is working with the committee, said the residents' comments were helpful because they point to issues that need further investigation.

"If they say there's a mosquito problem, we need to go out and find out what the county's doing about mosquitoes," she said. "We will check on these issues."

Other issues that residents considered important included community beautification, abandoned vehicles, poor drainage, lack of sidewalks, poor street lighting, child safety and crime.



**PIERRE DUCHARME/THE LEDGER**

Alejandra Silvas, with her children, walks along Combee Road in Lakeland, sharing the road with auto traffic in an area without sidewalks.