



FLERA FOCUS!

Florida Local Environmental Resource Agencies

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2006 Annual Conference - "Local Government - Leading By Example" August 2-4, Sarasota

This year's Annual Conference will be held at the Hyatt Hotel on Sarasota Bay, beginning Wednesday, August 2nd and continuing through Friday, August 4th. The theme for this year's conference is "Local Government – Leading by Example." In addition to great workshop sessions and outstanding keynote speakers, there will be pre-conference tours of local environmental programs and projects, the Silent Auction and FLERA's Exhibits program. The famous FLERA BBQ will be held at the MOTE Marine Laboratory!

The Opening Session will include an address by Mike Sole, FDEP Deputy Secretary for Regulatory Programs. A review of the 2006 Legislative Session by a panel of experts involved with the legislative process will follow. Two tracks of concurrent workshops will cover such topics as Public Outreach, Environmental Restoration, NPDES Permitting and TMDLs, Hurricane Impacts, Groundwater and Red Tide.

Visit <http://www.flera.org> for a Conference Program and registration information. For more information on the conference hotel visit <http://www.sarasota.hyatt.com/hyatt/hotels/index.jsp>.

Seminole DCA Decision

FLERA members will remember that the association strongly opposed measures introduced during the 2006 Session which would have nullified provisions in most county charters authorizing establishment of countywide standards, unless such measures were readopted by a vote of the municipal electorate. SB 1608 and HB 949 also prescribed similar procedures for adopting future amendments to county charters. Charters are an important mechanism by which the voters can authorize their County Commission to prescribe countywide standards for environmental protection from which municipal governments cannot opt out. (Go to <http://www.flsenate.gov> to find copies of the bills.)

While the legislation was defeated this year, a recent appellate decision seems to affirm the theory that such measures, even if passed by the Legislature in the future, would be unconstitutional. In *Seminole v. Winter Springs* (<http://www.5dca.org/Opinions/Opin2006/052206/5D05-81.op.pdf>) the Fifth District Court of Appeal found that the voters of a charter county have the power to pre-empt a city's home rule authority by amending their county charter to specify that the County Commission can set standards countywide, such as in environmental protection. The decision is important for charter counties in general and especially as relates to environmental standards.

Water Classification System Review Progresses

FDEP's Designated Uses Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) continues to meet on a monthly basis and is beginning to make progress on recommendations for revisions to the way surface waters are classified according to designated uses. The PAC is to have their recommendations completed in early 2007. The TMDL program has brought the need to review the classification system to the forefront. See http://www.dep.state.fl.us/water/wqssp/d_use.htm. FLERA member Rob Brown (Manatee) and Executive Director Kurt Spitzer are members of the PAC.

Research Suggestions Solicited

The Florida Center for Solid and Hazardous Waste Management (now the *Hinkley* Center for Solid and Hazardous Waste Management) at UF is responsible for coordinating the state's solid and hazardous waste research program. Headed by former FLERA President John Schert, the Center sponsors research at accredited colleges throughout Florida and has awarded more than \$3 million for over 100 research projects since 1988. Ideas for research needs can be logged at http://www.floridacenter.org/research_needs_survey_online4.htm via a short online survey. It only takes a few minutes!