



FLERA FOCUS!

Florida Local Environmental Resource Agencies

www.flera.org

Volume 2, Issue 4

Annual Business Meeting

The Annual FLERA membership meeting was held on August 1st in conjunction with the 2007 Annual Conference at the Sarasota Hyatt. Andy Squires (Pinellas) was elected President; Lori Cunniff (Orange) as Vice President; and, Rob Brown (Manatee) was elected Secretary-Treasurer. Rick Garrity (Hillsborough) assumed the position of Immediate Past President. Kevin Carter (Broward) and Ebenezer Gujjarlapudi (Jacksonville) were elected as at-large members of the Board of Directors. A private-sector representative to the Board will be chosen shortly.

FLERA Awards Presented

Linda Stewart of Orange County received FLERA's 2007 Commissioner Award at the Annual Conference. The award is presented for exemplary leadership on environmental issues at the local, regional or state level. Commissioner Stewart won this year's award based on her work in reducing air pollution in transportation programs and reducing the size of the community's carbon footprint. *Dick Eckenrod* of the Tampa Bay Estuary Program was presented with FLERA's Environmental Leadership Award. The TBEP is widely regarded as being one of the most successful NEPs in the country and Mr. Eckenrod has led the organization since 1991.

Hillsborough County Wetlands Rule Amendments

After months of discussion and sometimes heated debate, Hillsborough County has revised its policies concerning wetlands protection. The new initiative, which was approved by the County Commission this past August, consolidates multiple agency approvals and reduces an applicant's time when seeking project approvals. A new basis of reviews and an applicant handbook were created. The "Hybrid" approach saves taxpayers over \$365,000 while still maintaining local government oversight. For more information on the updated program, go to <http://www.epchc.org/faq.htm>.

Orange Going Green!

The "Orange to Green" Climate Change Summit hosted by Orange County on September 25 was a great success! Governor Charlie Crist visited the Summit as well as expert panelists on the topics of the Challenges of Global Warming, Transportation and Alternative Fuels, Green Building and Recycling, and more. On July 19, 2007, the Orange County Commissioners signed a Resolution to join the Cities for Climate Protection Campaign. The Campaign is run by the premiere organization assisting local governments in reducing greenhouse gas emissions, the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives, or ICLEI. As a participant, Orange County pledges to take a leadership role in promoting public awareness of the causes and impact of climate change. For more information on the Summit and the steps Orange County is taking to turn color, visit <http://www.ocfl.net>.

Dues Revisions

FLERA members approved a revision to the association's dues structure during the Annual Meeting. The changes will result in an increase in membership fees for most FLERA members and is one of the recommendations resulting from the long range planning process that the Board of Directors completed over the past several months. The changes will be effective January 1, 2008. Contact FLERA staff at 850/561-0904 for more information. The new rates will be posted on the FLERA website November 1st.

Wildlife Grants Available

Florida's Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) is seeking proposals for the Wildlife Grants Program for 2008-09. As part of Florida's Wildlife Legacy Initiative, the FWC manages the State Wildlife Grants Program, which is a federally-funded matching grants program that provides financial support for projects that address conservation needs identified in Florida's Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy. This year's criteria are focused on the Legacy Initiative's priority habitats and filling data gaps on fishes and invertebrate species. Visit <http://myfwc.com/wildlifelegacy/ApplyForGrant.html> for more information, or contact Brian Branciforte at 850/410-0656 or Brian.Branciforte@MyFWC.com.

New Members

Please welcome our new FLERA members: Alex Wood, *Advanced GeoSpatial*; Nancy McCann, *City of Tampa*; and, Mark Brandenburg, *Miller Legg & Associates*. Eleven new members joined FLERA in 2007 - bringing the total membership to 52 organizations!

"Providing Community-Based Environmental Protection"