



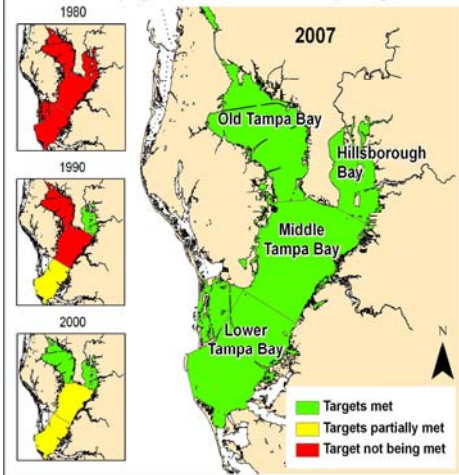
FLERA FOCUS!

Florida Local Environmental Resource Agencies

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Attainment of Tampa Bay Estuary Program's Chlorophyll-a and Water Quality Targets



Water Quality

Attainment of Tampa Bay Estuary Program's Chlorophyll-a and Water Quality Targets The Hillsborough County EPC began monitoring water quality in Tampa Bay in 1975. Up until the early 1990's, most segments of the Bay were not meeting WQ standards. The series of figures (left) illustrates the overall trends in water quality improvement between 1980 and 2007, expressed in terms of attaining targets for Chlorophyll-a. Chlorophyll-a is widely used as an indicator of the overall condition of a surface water. As levels of Chlorophyll-a decrease, the depth of light penetration increases, resulting in improved environmental conditions and a healthier bay. The trend has been one of overall improvement in water quality for all segments of the Bay. For example, in the last two years, Tampa Bay has consistently met expected targets for Chlorophyll-a. Better management of "point source" discharges (primarily from wastewater treatment plants) over the years has made a significant contribution to improved water quality. The present challenge is to better manage the "non-point" source discharges to the Bay, so that water quality improvement continues.

Air Quality

Green Government Initiative Spearheads Project to Reduce Diesel School Bus Emissions

School buses may be the primary way for kids to get to school but through innovative partnerships we can also ensure that school buses are the cleanest way to get to school. In accordance with Mayor Crotty's *Orange to Green* initiative, a pilot project to reduce school bus diesel emissions has evolved. Through a collaborative effort between the County's EPD's Air Quality Management section (AQM), Orange County Head Start and Orange County Public Schools (OCPS), 94 school buses were retrofitted with "high performance" diesel oxidation catalysts (DOC) in early 2007. Eleven Head Start buses and eighty-three OCPS buses were involved in this project. Emission reduction is achieved by placing state-of-the-art controls on the existing school bus fleet. The AQM section has dedicated over \$100,000 toward the project as part of a campaign to bring awareness of available and practical solutions to diesel engine emissions. For more see <http://www.flera.org/pdf/NL0608busretrofit.pdf>.

Anti-Idling Campaign to Protect Young Lungs

Have you ever left your car running while waiting to pick someone up? Running errands? Sitting at the drive through? Mobile source emissions are the number one cause of air pollution in Central Florida. In an effort to reduce respiratory ailments amongst school children, the Environmental Protection Division (EPD) has collaborated with Orange County Public Schools, the American Lung Association, Metroplan Orlando, and Orange County Commissioner Linda Stewart to institute "idle free" zones at the pick-up and drop-off locations at Shenandoah and Pine Castle Elementary Schools. Read <http://www.flera.org/pdf/NL0608antiidling.pdf> to see how to start an initiative at your school.

Resource Protection

Manatee Concerns Cause Dock Application Denials

Last September, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) through the Army Corps of Engineers began denying multi-family and commercial dock applications in Boca Ciega Bay because of the rising number of watercraft-related manatee mortalities in Pinellas County. Since then, Pinellas County Department of Environmental Management (DEM) staff has met with the USFWS on several occasions to resolve the issue. The USFWS believes watercraft-related manatee mortalities can best be reduced by adding additional slow speed zones for boaters, increased law enforcement and public education. Both FWS and DEM staff acknowledge the lack of funding for increased efforts. DEM staff is particularly concerned about the high cost to create and enforce new speed zones and has questioned the likely effectiveness of reducing mortalities with new slow speed zones. Later this summer, DEM staff is meeting with a regional coalition composed of resource managers and bay user groups to work through the USFWS recommendations.

Tree Project at Oakland Park Wins Top State Honor

A two-year project to relocate and preserve the Oakland Park community's largest specimen trees was recognized as the state's Best Project for 2008 at the recent Trees Florida conference. More than 50 large specimen trees were relocated or preserved in order to give Castle & Cooke Florida's Oakland Park a natural tree canopy at the outset of community development. The largest tree relocated was 60 feet tall and two feet in diameter and weighed in at more than 50 tons. See <http://www.lawnandlandscape.com/news/news.asp?ID=6354> for the complete story.

2008 FLERA Annual Conference Cancelled

It is with great disappointment that we announce that FLERA's 2008 Annual Conference (July 30 – August 1) has been cancelled. The downturn in the economy and the passage of Amendment 1 has not only affected state and local governments in Florida but other organizations as well. Given the cutbacks in staff, training and travel authorizations, FLERA had seen a significant reduction in the ability of our membership to attend this year's Conference in Sarasota. We expect the financial condition of Florida's local governments to stabilize this coming fiscal year and FLERA's 2009 Conference will proceed as planned.

"Providing Community-Based Environmental Protection"