



FLERA FOCUS!

Florida Local Environmental Resource Agencies

www.flera.org

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Legislative Session Approaches

The FLERA Board of Directors has reinstated legislative services as member benefit for 2009 – and not a moment too soon! Two Sessions of the Legislature are currently scheduled: The 2009 Regular Session (which begins in March) and the Special Session (beginning January 5th) that will focus on cutting over \$2 billion from this year's budget! Clearly the issue of regulatory reform or the "streamlining" of the "overly demanding regulatory system" will be a top priority for the new Speaker of the House during the Regular Session. Watch for e-mail alerts from FLERA on priority issues beginning in January. FLERA leadership and staff will be meeting in Tallahassee in early January to discuss strategy on this and other issues likely to be considered during 2009.

Concerning the 2009 Session, be sure to mark your calendar for **FLERA's Legislative Day** on March 26, 2009. A legislative briefing will be presented from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at Sittig Hall in the Florida League of Cities building (301 South Bronough Street) at Kleman Plaza in downtown Tallahassee. Immediately following the briefing, members will have the opportunity to visit with the members of your Legislative Delegation at the Capitol. More information and the registration form will be available soon at <http://www.flera.org/membership.html>.

Estuary Board Endorses Model Fertilizer Ordinance

The Tampa Bay Estuary Program's Policy Board in November approved a model ordinance regulating urban fertilizer use in the Tampa Bay region. The ordinance is intended to reduce nutrient pollution from stormwater flowing into the Bay and other surface waters. Local governments are encouraged but not required to adopt the ordinance, which:

- Bans application of nitrogen and phosphorous on lawn and landscape plants from June 1-September 30, the summer rainy season.
- Prohibits application of nitrogen or phosphorous fertilizer within 10 feet of a water body.
- Restricts the retail sale of nitrogen and phosphorous fertilizer during the summer.
- Establishes a licensing and certification program for lawn care professionals.
- Urges local governments to provide information about the nitrogen content of reclaimed water to customers using reclaimed for lawn irrigation.

TBEP estimates that residential runoff (including fertilizer residues) accounts for about 32% of the nitrogen carried in stormwater to Tampa Bay. They estimate that a compliance level of 50% with the ordinance could reduce the Bay's nitrogen burden by 84 tons per year and save millions in costly stormwater treatment projects for local governments in the Tampa Bay region. For more information please contact Nannette Holland O'Hara at Nannette@tbep.org. The model ordinance and supporting documents can be viewed at <http://www.tbep.org/Fertilizer/FertilizerHomePage.html>.

Mapping the Lake Worth Lagoon

The Palm Beach County Department of Environmental Resources Management recently identified and characterized the types and the extent of habitats that exist within the Lake Worth Lagoon to better manage and protect marine and coastal resources. Aerial photography of the County's estuarine waters was acquired in 2007 to map, classify, and determine the extent of four essential fish habitats: seagrasses, mangroves, oyster reefs, and spartina, commonly known as cordgrass. These images were then compared to images acquired in 2001 and have been used to determine what the large scale trends (increases or decreases in habitats) were over that six-year timeframe. See the results and review the map at <http://www.co.palm-beach.fl.us/erm/downloads/pdf/newsletters/2008fall.pdf>

FLERA Membership Events

The **November Quarterly Educational** meeting "New Monitoring Requirements for MS4 Permittees" was well attended with 50 participants from Central Florida. Kelly Hammer-Levy, Director of the Watershed Management Division in Pinellas County and Dan Homblette, NPDES Environmental Program Supervision of Orange County, presented information on the new and expanded requirements for monitoring outfalls (as opposed to traditional ambient water quality) that FDEP is requesting in many MS4 permits up for renewal.

More Education from FLERA!

FLERA co-sponsored two solar workshops in September and October with Orange County Environmental Protection Division. The events were held locally in Orange County and approximately 100 citizens attended to learn about *Solar Hot Water Systems* and what financial incentives were available. The event was free thanks to sponsors, Allsolar Service Company, American Solar Energy, Orlando Utilities Commission, Progress Energy, Sunworks Solar System and Superior Solar. If you are interested in coordinating a similar workshop in your community, please contact Lori Cunniff at lori.cunniff@ocfl.net.

It's time to renew your membership with FLERA! Be sure to send in your renewal today!