



FLERA FOCUS!

Florida Local Environmental Resource Agencies

Your RESOURCE for Environmental Protection

www.flera.org

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FLERA Legislative Day – Mark your calendar for March 25th!

This is your opportunity to speak with your representatives or their staff. Start planning now! The FLERA Legislative Day is being held in coordination with the Florida Association of Counties Legislative Day and Reception. FLERA's Legislative Day will be held on Thursday, March 25th in Tallahassee, beginning at 10:30AM. The afternoon hours are available for you to meet with the members of your delegation.

FLERA Membership Renewals

FLERA's fiscal year begins January 1st. Members receive free educational days, updates on legislative issues, the *Focus* and the Annual Conference in August. *Send in your renewal today!*

Tropical Farms Stormwater Quality Improvement Project



Martin County's Engineering Department is constructing the Tropical Farms Stormwater Quality Improvement Project in east central Martin County in the Roebuck Creek Basin. The basin is slightly over 1,900 acres and is comprised residential neighborhoods (76%), agricultural (8%), light commercial (4%) and undeveloped land (11%). The project is designed to capture and treat, through wet-detention and biological nutrient uptake, the first one inch of runoff from approximately 448 acres of property that was developed prior to today's regulatory standards and therefore has no water quality treatment. Cost is estimated at \$3,437,000 and includes boardwalks, an educational kiosk, walking trails for public use, and over 9,300 linear feet of storm pipe! Contact Greg Nolte at gnolte@martin.fl.us for more information.

The Pace of Water: Slower, the Better

As submitted to the Tampa Tribune by Rick Garrity, May 2009

Few people realize that although water covers about 75 percent of the Earth's surface, about 97 percent of that water is oceanic, about 2 percent is locked in ice caps and glaciers and less than 1 percent is available as fresh water. Of this small percentage, the vast majority is in underground aquifers. So, although water may seem plentiful, the water that plays such a big role in our everyday lives needs to be carefully managed and protected. Read more at <http://www.flera.org/pdf/2010%20pdfs/HillsEPCWater.pdf>.

Polk County Environmental Regulatory Committee

Polk County strives to comply with regulatory and environmental laws but in the past, there were no established procedures for inspecting county facilities and many deficiencies were identified throughout the county. The Polk County Environmental Regulatory Committee (ERC) was formed through the county manager's office and represents divisions subject to environmental compliance. Primary divisions include Parks and Natural Resources, Fire Services, Waste Resources and Fleet Maintenance. Each division has a representative on the committee that brings technical expertise to the table. Knowledge is shared and questions are answered. The ERC has successfully negotiated outstanding consent orders, established inspection and reporting procedures, and responds to pending environmental problems in an efficient and cost effective manner. Each division works well together with no additional staff and zero extra dollars to the county's budget. There have been no violations since inception of the committee. For more information contact Mark Mikolon at markmikolon@polk-county.net

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Grant Opportunities

Dept of Agriculture Request for Proposal-Forest Health Improvement Initiative Grant Program

The Florida Division of Forestry will utilize 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding from the US Forest Service to conduct a competitive grant process inviting eligible participants to apply for funding to reforest public right-of-ways, parks, public schools, and other natural areas, as well as provide opportunities for tree remediation work which includes corrective tree pruning, hazard tree removal and rehabilitation of soil conditions for significant trees. For information including a grant application go to http://vbs.dms.state.fl.us/vbs/ad.view_ad?advertisement_key_num=83788.

EPA Seeks Applications for Environmental Community Grants

EPA is making \$2 million available in 2010 to reduce pollution at the local level through the Community Action for a Renewed Environment (CARE) program. EPA will award CARE cooperative agreements in two levels. Level I awards range from \$75,000 to \$100,000 and will help establish community-based partnerships to develop local environmental priorities. Level II awards, ranging from \$150,000 to \$300,000 each, will support communities that have established broad-based partnerships, have identified the priority toxic risks in the community, and are prepared to measure results, implement risk-reduction activities and become self-sustaining. Applications for the CARE grants are due March 9, 2010. EPA will conduct three Webcasts to answer questions from prospective applicants about the application process on Feb. 2, 23, and 26 from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. Go to <http://www.epa.gov/care/> for more information about the grants.

A Model for Sustainable Economics

The University of Florida Center for Training, Research and Education for Environmental Occupations (TREEO) has always been committed to maintaining a healthy environment through various efforts including sustainable measures in their processes and operations. Recently, the Center improved upon their sustainable practices, which has also helped their bottom line. UF/TREEO began making changes to its everyday operations to reduce waste in March 2009. This includes the reuse and recycling of paper products, composting of organic waste by the staff, streamlining marketing activities and ceasing the purchase of water bottles. Through these initiatives UF/TREEO found significant money savings.

Since March, over two thousand pounds of paper have been recycled/reused. Paper usage in printed promotional pieces has been reduced by one-tenth. A special water fountain was purchased to supplant the consumption of bottled water and savings will pay for the cost of the fountain in less than a year and a half. Recent renovations to the facility's auditorium saved money by using recycled carpeting. The old carpeting and 175 chairs went back to UF to be reused, contributing to the university's zero-waste efforts.

Here we teach great classes that encourage environmental responsibility," said Associate Director, Carol Hinton. "We need to be sure that we're really living it in our own facility."

For more information contact Alyssia Portee at aportee@treeo.ufl.edu or 352-392-9570 x 231

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