

Florida Specifier



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DNA testing 5

Environmental technicians with DEP have drawn water and taken algae samples from locations along Hogan's Creek in Jacksonville that contains harmful levels of fecal coliform bacteria. They will subject the samples to testing that analyzes the DNA of the bacteria to determine whether it came from human or animal sources.

NNC ruling 7

A U.S. district court judge approved a modified consent agreement between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the state of Florida concerning the quality of the state's surface waters. The agreement ends a legal challenge that began six years ago, the outcome of which required the state to develop and enforce numeric nutrient criteria for surface water quality.

Albergo on the DSCP 10

Nick Albergo believes that it's time for the Florida Legislature to fully fund the successful Drycleaning Solvent Cleanup Program. We agree.

Port Manatee pilot project 15

Port Manatee officials are expected to sign off on an agreement with DEP that will permanently designate 1,000 acres of port property for industrial use. The deal will save time and money because the port will not have to file with the state for each incident when industrial contamination takes place.

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Got a story lead?

Got an idea for a story? Like to submit a column for consideration? Fire away. And don't forget to fill us in on your organization's new people and programs, projects and technologies—anything of interest to environmental professionals in the state. Send to P.O. Box 2175, Goldenrod, FL 32733. Call us at (407) 671-7777; fax us at (407) 671-7757, or email mreast@enviro-net.com.

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Photo courtesy of the city of Miami

Officials with the city of Miami continue their efforts to complete environmental assessments on over 100 parks there. Inspections have revealed elevated levels of contamination at several parks. Five parks have been closed after soil samples revealed the presence of possible harmful materials. Above, environmental technicians are at work in one park that was closed for testing. See story on Page 6.

Potential environmental impacts slow Space Florida launch site selection

By ROY LAUGHLIN

In strongly nuanced language, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, which manages the Merritt Island Wildlife Refuge, suggested that Space Florida and its contractors build their private launch facility somewhere other than the Shiloh area in northern Brevard and southern Volusia counties.

"The service strongly advises the FAA to consider and evaluate not only the proposed site, but alternative sites as well," summed up their opinion.

The refuge is home to at least 18 species—endangered, threatened or of special concern—that will be adversely

affected by the private spaceport development. The species include birds, reptiles, fish and insects.

FWS is worried that a launch facility on the refuge will adversely affect their ongoing habitat management activities.

Their most significant concern is their continued use of control burns to maintain habitat. Death and injury from vehicular traffic is a second concern.

Other effects include habitat fragmentation due to road and facility construction, noise, and the impact of artificial lighting on sea turtles and birds.

Aquatic organisms could also be subject to some of the disruptions of

habitat fragmentation, noise and lights.

In addition, water quality and quantity changes in mangrove swamps and wetlands were cited as exerting a potentially substantial deleterious effect.

The refuge is home to the second largest scrub jay population in the world. The jay is the keystone species in this area.

Layne Hamilton, refuge manager, said the refuge has 15-18 prescribed burns per year, more than any other refuge in the Southeast U.S.

The Merritt Island Wildlife Refuge is unique for its combination of high numbers of listed species and the high level of habitat management required to accommodate all of them.

Space flight project managers are wary of the effects of smoke particulates. That will affect FWS' controlled burning efforts.

"We now have restrictions year round south of State Road 402 due to launches," said Hamilton. "The one place we have not had restrictions is north of Beach Road. We burned more than three times last year. The area has some of the best scrub [habitat] we have."

If a commercial space launch facility is constructed in Shiloh, the ability to maintain habitat there will change drastically.

"We've never had a closure for a launch (in this part of the wildlife refuge). We're looking at a total change in the way we handle habitat and the way we handle visitors," she said.

The "handling" of visitors is a second substantial factor for both refuge

Sinkholes eyed as potential resource to augment flow of Hillsborough River

By PRAKASH GANDHI

Water officials with the city of Tampa said there will be no environmental risks from a plan to pump water out of Tampa area sinkholes to augment the flow of the Hillsborough River.

Up to two million gallons a day will be withdrawn from Blue Sink—a complex of sinkholes in Sulphur Springs—under the city's \$11 million plan. The water will then be piped to the base of the dam on the river and released.

Officials say the restored freshwater flow will help hold the salinity of Tampa Bay in check.

The city has received the backing of the Southwest Florida Water Management District, which has approved permits for the project.

But the plan has triggered contro-

versy and concerns from residents who live around Blue Sink. They fear that pumping water from the sinkholes will result in environmental damage.

City officials, however, said that permit conditions require regular monitoring of Blue Sink and pledged to resolve any problems the pumping might cause.

Brad Baird, PE, director of the city of Tampa's Water Department, said the plan will have major environmental benefits.

"We are trying to restore the lower Hillsborough River by adding fresh water flows from four sources and create an estuary for Tampa Bay," Baird said.

He noted that they expect to see

SINKHOLE
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SPACEPORT
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EPA releases latest version of stormwater runoff calculator software

Staff report

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency released Version 1.1 of its National Stormwater Calculator, a software program that estimates annual runoff from specific locations.

The update added algorithm data and climate models to the calculation to make predictions that take into account likely climate change influences.

Inclusion of these new capabilities gives a user the option to explore how future cli-

mate change scenarios will influence stormwater runoff.

The climate parameters now consider the variations in seasonal precipitation, the effects of more frequent high intensity storms and the changes in evaporation rates due to climate change.

The climate change parameters are those validated by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

In addition to climate model parameters, the computer program's algorithm takes into account local soil conditions,

slope, land cover and historical rainfall records.

The program is written with planners and resource managers in mind. For any U.S. location, a user may perform several model scenarios for comparison, including the use of green infrastructure scenarios.

Rain barrels and rain gardens that mimic natural processes can reduce stormwater runoff. This model can give insight into how effective such strategies would be.

In announcing its updated model, the agency said that polluted runoff is a major contributor to poor water quality in the nation's flowing waters, lakes and estuaries.

This model will assist implementation of green technologies that increase water conservation and reduce pollution from runoff.

The model and additional information is available at <http://www.epa.gov/nrmrl/wswrd/wq/models/swc/>.

USF to receive EPA grant. The University of South Florida's Center for Re-inventing Aging Infrastructure for Nutrient Management will receive a share of an EPA grant program totaling nearly \$9 million.

The center will use the money to study how local governments around the Tampa Bay area can identify and manage nutrients from aging wastewater collection and treatment systems.

This grant is a collaborative effort. Partners including the Corporation to Develop Communities of Tampa, Resources of the Future, the University of Florida, the University of Maryland and Yale University.

Funding is provided by the EPA's Science to Achieve Results program. Grant funding began in November 2013 and will continue for three years. Funding amounts will be up to \$2,221,000.

EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy announced the award of all four EPA STAR grants to address nutrient pollution. All were for similar funding amounts.

More information about this research is available at epa.gov/ncer/nutrient.

Haz waste manifest established. In January, the EPA issued a final rule that established a national electronic manifest system to upgrade the current paper-based system for tracking hazardous waste.

The rule authorizes e-Manifest use to

track hazardous wastes under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. The intent is to streamline the current system.

When fully implemented, e-Manifest could reduce the number of paper documents submitted by millions of pages every year.

Under terms of the 2012 Hazardous Waste Electronic Manifest Establishment Act, the EPA was authorized to establish electronic manifests as "legal equivalent of the current paper manifest forms used to track shipments of hazardous waste from generator sites to the ultimate site of disposal."

Manifest submission is voluntary. But in its announcement, the EPA said the goal is to promote the widest possible use of e-Manifest.

EPA would like to see the new system used agency-wide to reduce paper reporting burdens on regulated entities, while at the same time providing states and other entities quick and easy access to the forms' data.

EPA noted that an electronic system provides greater access for emergency responders concerning the identity and sources of hazardous wastes in transit between generator site and waste management facilities.

EPA's final rule for e-Manifest establishes the legal and policy framework. Implementation will require several more steps including the development of the electronic system and initial fee structure.

The agency plans to consult with states, industry and other stakeholders as it develops its software systems, particularly with an eye to ensuring cross-platform compatibility.

More information is available at <http://epa.gov/waste/hazard/transportation/manifest/index.htm>.

Honeybee decline research. Recently reported research results provide additional insight into the extensive decline of honeybee hives across the country.

Collaborating researchers at Pennsylvania State University and the University of Florida found that commonly used pesticides are more toxic to honeybee larvae than they are to adult honeybees.

Those pesticides are fluralinate, coumaphis, chlorpyrifos and chlorothalonil. The first three are used as insecticides and miticides. The fourth is a fungicide.

Ironically, the first two on the list are sometimes used by beekeepers to control varroa mite infestations in bee hives. Mite infestation is often a cause of honeybee colony decline.

The researchers also found that N-methyl-2-pyrrolidone, an emulsifier considered to be an inert ingredient in pesticide formulations, is notably toxic to honeybee larvae.

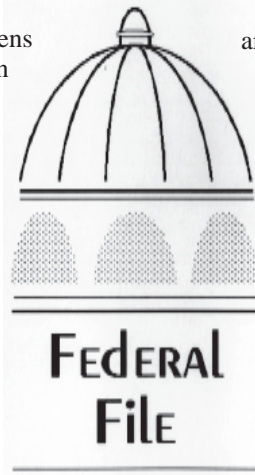
The research adds two new insights into the decline of honeybee hives.

First, the research focused on honeybee larvae. Invertebrate larvae are usually substantially more sensitive to environmental toxins than are adults. The EPA performs risk assessments of pesticides' toxicity to adult honeybees but currently not for larvae.

The researchers also tested the pesticides singly and in combination. They found substantially greater toxicity of mixtures of the pesticides compared to exposures to single substances.

The recent studies are an extension of the research group's earlier field investigations that showed that forager honeybees carry pollen contaminated by an average of six different pesticides back to their hives. The pollen is used by bees to make beebread, which is fed to the larvae.

This research adds much-needed per-



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Gainesville officials may take legal action against GREC biomass plant

Staff report

Officials with the city of Gainesville are considering legal action over a contract change with the Gainesville Renewable Energy Center that would add significantly to the city's expenses—an estimated \$106 million over the next 30 years.

The issue centers around former Gainesville Regional Utilities General Manager Bob Hunzinger's 2011 approval of a GREC contract change.

In March 2011, Hunzinger approved a contract modification that GREC sought after the Florida Department of Environmental Protection required a more expensive emission reduction system for the biomass plant.

City officials said the change added about \$3.5 million annually and \$106.1 million over 30 years for the purchase of electricity from the biomass plant.

Shortly before Hunzinger made his decision, the utilities' outside counsel urged him not to approve the contract changes.

In January, commissioners voted to send a letter to GREC representatives saying they planned to continue to review their legal options.

City officials noted that GREC has also threatened legal action.

City officials are also looking at making some changes to internal operating procedures that will prevent a similar situation from occurring again.

City policy requires that purchases in excess of \$50,000 go to a city commission vote for approval. That did not happen.

In the case of the biomass contract, the \$106.1 million impact over 30 years well exceeded \$50,000.

The biomass purchase agreement that commissioners approved in 2009 specifically gave the GRU general manager authority to implement the terms of the contract.

Public health in Islamorada. The Florida Department of Health is seeking up to \$53,000 from the village of Islamorada in the Florida Keys to fund a study to identify what makes the area so dangerous to public health.

Between 2006 and 2010, 247 people died of various causes in East Islamorada. The death rate there is 12.2 deaths per 1,000 people—more deaths on average than in any of the other 24 census tracts in Monroe County, according to state health officials.

Part of the study would involve interviewing several hundred residents to get their opinion of the health department assessment.

The department conducted a similar study in Bahama Village in Key West in 2012. As a result of that study, the low-income neighborhood obtained more than \$1 million in grants to renovate playgrounds and a gym to improve the health of its children.

Gasification technology ruling. A recent U.S. Environmental Protection Agency study concluded that the sewage sludge gasification technology patented by MaxWest Environmental Systems Inc. is not an incinerator.

The EPA determined that federal emissions guidelines and compliance rules for sewage sludge incinerators do not apply to MaxWest's sludge gasifier near Sanford.

The agency said that MaxWest's technology that breaks down sewage sludge through heating in an oxygen-starved environment prevents combustion and will therefore not be regulated as an incinerator.

The agency also exempted from incinerator regulations the second energy-saving step in the plant's process in which gases released from thermo-chemical reactors are scrubbed and then burned to create the heat needed to dry incoming sludge.

In a June 2012 report, the EPA praised the benefits of the gasification process for its emissions control and green energy benefits.

DeBary brownfield. The DeBary city council established a brownfield zone encompassing areas near the new SunRail station where a commuter train line is scheduled to start service in May.

The boundaries stretch across both sides of U.S. 17-92 on the south end of the city and include the Springview Commerce and Benson Junction industrial areas.

The brownfield decision could help the city benefit from state funding for environmental assessments, and incentives such as bonus money for industries that create jobs.

WM acquisition. Waste Management closed a deal to acquire Advanced Disposal of Panama City, more commonly known as Parker Sanitation Inc. Customers will see small changes, like different trash cans, trucks and billing invoices. Otherwise, service will continue as before.

Green council anniversary. To mark its 10th anniversary, the U.S. Green Build-

ing Council's South Florida Chapter plans to host programs throughout the year to promote the health, safety and environmental benefits that green building guidelines contribute to South Florida communities.

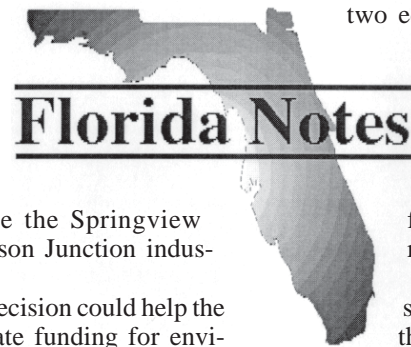
In 2005, the chapter held just two educational programs. This year, it will host more than 100 programs in eight counties.


All programs are open to the public unless otherwise noted. Sponsors for all programs are currently being sought.

The chapter's anniversary programs will be held through its Treasure Coast, Palm Beach, Broward, Miami-Dade and Florida Keys branches.

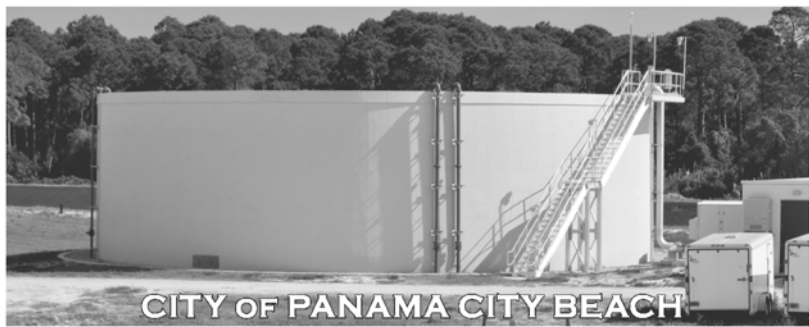
Progressions. Rick Dantzler, a former state senator who was the Democratic candidate for lieutenant governor in 1998, has become the new state executive director for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency in Florida.

Before taking the new job, Dantzler—a Winter Haven attorney—worked as head of the Tampa/Winter Haven branch of the business trial group of the Morgan & Morgan law firm.






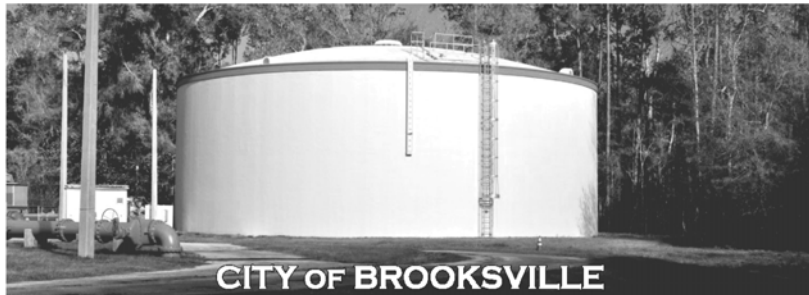
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Alachua County supports MFLs in principle, balks at draft levels

Staff report

The Alachua County Commission made a few decisions regarding the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's plan to establish minimum flows and levels, and recovery strategies for the Lower Santa Fe and Ichetucknee rivers.

The state's impending adoption of MFLs sets levels above which permitting for additional water withdrawals can occur without causing significant environmental damage to a particular body of water.

It is anticipated that levels for both the

Lower Santa Fe and Ichetucknee rivers will be below the initial MFLs that are set by DEP.

The Alachua County Commission took a proactive approach to the situation last month by voting to submit a letter to the DEP expressing support for the state's adoption of MFLs in principle, but not for the current draft, suggesting improvements to the rule including strengthening key elements of water conservation.

The commission is also considering hiring environmental and legal experts to help challenge the process, either by filing a formal administrative challenge

against the proposed rule, or by getting involved if another organization decides to file a challenge.

The North Florida Utility Coordination Group, a consortium of nine utilities, is allegedly contemplating such a challenge.

Lake County conservation. Lake County officials are considering becoming a Groundwater Guardian Community in an effort to educate citizens about the importance of protecting water resources to avoid significant impacts to local lake levels.

The South Lake Regional Water Initiative consists of the South Lake Chamber of Commerce, the county, and the municipalities of Groveland, Clermont, Minneola, Montverde and Mascotte.

The initiative targets regional solutions in the areas of reclaimed water distribution, minimum flows and levels of the region's lakes and rivers, alternative water supplies and water conservation.

There are more than 100 Groundwater Guardian Communities throughout the country but currently only one in the state of Florida, which is located in Hernando County.

The goal of GGCs is to better educate communities regarding diminished groundwater supplies in hopes that it will become a higher priority for all citizens.

A consultant for the St. Johns River Water Management District noted that there will be a demand of 300 million gallons of water daily by 2035 and only 50 million gallons that can be met by traditional sources.

Hydrogeologic studies show that Central Florida is now using about 94 percent of the total resources of the Floridan Aquifer—six percent shy of the point of depletion.

Polk County lake pollution. Preliminary data indicate that while some of Polk County's lakes don't exceed state pollution standards yet, they will soon if something is not done to reduce the amount of pollution flowing into them.

Polk officials approved a \$138,450 contract with Atkins North America to develop the data to persuade the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to reclassify the lakes.

Reclassifying the lakes will allow the county to address its lakes' problems without having to go through the extensive and expensive process outlined in the county's

stormwater permit.

The contract is the first funded by the county's stormwater tax, a special tax approved last year to fund projects needed to comply with state and federal pollution regulations. Atkins will also develop management plans for the lakes that are classified as polluted.

Preliminary data show that some lakes should be removed from the impaired list.

Those lakes are Annie, Eagle, Echo, Lowery, Marie, Menzie, Ned, Pansy, Sears, Swoope, Tracy and Weohyakapka.

Lakes Buckeye, Confusion, Hollingsworth, Martha, Maude and Silver do not have sufficient data and their status is unclear as a result of the lack of information.

In addition, insufficient data is available to determine whether several streams in Polk should be removed from the list, including Saddle Creek, Lake Lena Run, Lake Lulu Run, Peace Creek Drainage Canal, Thirtymile Creek and Wahneta Farms Drainage Canal.

Some lakes already have in place adopted or proposed plans to reduce pollution flowing into them. They include Alfred, Ariana, Banana, Cannon, Crystal, Cypress, Haines, Hancock, Howard, Hunter, Idylwild, Jessie, Kissimmee, Lena, Lulu, May, Mirror, Smart and Shipp.

Ichetucknee springshed plan. The city of Lake City is working in coordination with Columbia County and the Suwannee River Water Management District to improve water quality in the Ichetucknee River by reducing the city's wastewater nutrient loading by close to 85 percent.

The effort is an integral part of the Ichetucknee Springshed Water Quality Improvement Project.

The effort entails converting Lake City's wastewater effluent disposal sprayfields into wetland treatment areas that will reduce nitrogen levels through natural absorption, concurrently improving water quality and recharging the Upper Floridan Aquifer.


The Ichetucknee Springshed Water Quality Improvement Project is jointly supported by funding from DEP and SRWMD, with Lake City committed to providing some funding, plus the land needed to build the treatment areas, and the ongoing operation and maintenance costs of the areas.

WATCH
Continued on Page 16



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DNA testing of surface waters provides additional tool for water quality monitoring

By PRAKASH GANDHI

Major strides are now being made to reduce sources of bacteria from Hogan's Creek in Jacksonville.

Environmental technicians with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection have drawn water and taken algae samples from various locations along the creek that contains harmful levels of fecal coliform bacteria.

They will subject the samples to testing that analyzes the DNA of the bacteria to determine whether it came from human or animal sources.

DEP has worked since 2009 to lower the bacteria levels in Hogan's Creek and other tributaries of the St. Johns River to safe levels.

"The projects being implemented to restore the creek as a result of the restoration plan for the Lower St. Johns River tributaries are working," said DEP spokesperson Dee Ann Miller.

Partnerships with the city of Jacksonville, JEA, the state Department of Transportation, and city and county health departments have effectively reduced fecal coliform concentrations by 76 percent.

Miller said that all identified sources of human bacteria have been eliminated by infrastructure improvements, removal of improper wastewater connections and elimination of sewer overflows.

But she noted that additional efforts are required to achieve the necessary reductions for restoring the waterbody to good health.

"New laboratory tools will allow the department's scientists to more quickly identify whether fecal bacteria are related to humans, animals or other sources," she said.

Sampling at multiple sites will allow the agency to pinpoint specific segments of the creek where various types of bacteria are showing up in the water.

"Knowing which segment is the point of entry will also help identify and eliminate sources more efficiently," she said.

This will allow the department to implement well-targeted restoration strategies for not only Hogan's Creek, but all waterways around the state.

The new laboratory equipment and methods use DNA analyses of bacteria and modern tracers, including artificial sweeteners that persist in the environment, to distinguish human waste from other sources.

Miller said that with these tools, the department can establish monitoring protocols and adopt rules that require restoration based on monitoring results.

"Measuring fecal bacteria levels is easy," Miller said. "Unfortunately, readily

distinguishing the sources of the bacteria and the potentially harmful pathogens that may go along with them has historically been beyond scientific capabilities.

"We now have tools to address the issue and will craft rules and protocols that guide on-the-ground action to protect public health," she said.

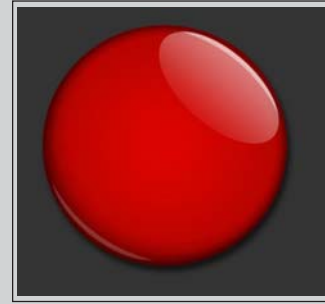
The department will eventually propose updates to Florida's bacteria standards for recreational waters. The changes will be presented to the state Environmental Regulation Commission and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for approval after a series of technical advisory committee meetings and other public workshops.

The department will also propose changes to its water quality assessment strategy to take advantage of the new lab tools and land use surveys.

Miller said that at the same time, the agency will develop a procedure—also to be adopted by rule—for calculating the pollutant load reductions and restoration targets necessary to protect public health.

She said that where high bacteria levels are detected, the department will direct actions that reduce the sources of the problems and restore water quality.

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Orlando joins energy efficiency project

Staff report

The city of Orlando joined a 10-city national effort to boost energy efficiency in city buildings. The project could lower energy bills by as much as \$55 million annually and could cut as much climate change pollution as generated by energy from 17,000 homes annually.

The new City Energy Project is an initiative from the Natural Resources Defense Council and the Institute for Market Transformation.

The program is designed to create healthier, more prosperous American cities by targeting their largest source of energy use and climate pollution: buildings.

The other cities involved are Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Denver, Houston, Kansas City, Los Angeles, Philadelphia and Salt Lake City.

The project will help the 10 cities craft customized plans for boosting energy efficiency in their buildings.

Commercial and residential buildings are responsible for about 75 percent of Orlando's carbon emissions.

More parks added to list of contaminated sites in Miami, Miami-Dade County

By DAN MILLOTT

As city officials continue to complete environmental assessments of all 112 parks in the city of Miami, new names are added to the contamination list.

The latest addition is Bayfront Park in downtown Miami. Bayfront is the locale for Miami's New Years celebration and other special events.

Harry James, the city's environmental compliance coordinator, said inspectors found elevated levels of heavy metals in the soil at Bayfront.

"The section of the park (where contamination was found) is seldom used. There are no play or recreation areas at the detection site," he said.

Because of that, Bayfront Park will remain open.

Five city parks are now closed after contaminants were found. Merrie Christmas Park, the first park where contaminants were found, closed last summer.

Four more parks were closed in November and December when soil samples revealed the presence of possible harmful materials.

One park, Blanche, remains open because it is covered with asphalt and arti-

cial turf that provides a protective seal. Despite that seal, the city has developed a corrective action plan that will thicken the existing turf and fill.

sions that the city returned to DERM on Feb. 7.

Once DERM approves the plan, the city can begin remediation work at Blanche

contaminants in the park, they were well below dangerous levels.

In addition to the city parks found to have contaminants, Miami-Dade County has also identified heavy metals in Brothers to the Rescue Park. But contaminants there were found to be below target levels.

Luis Espinoza, a spokesperson for DERM, said the county decided to fence off the area where the debris was found and perform more tests.

The Brothers to the Rescue Park is next to a location where the city of Coral Gables once operated an incinerator plant. That site now houses Coral Gables' maintenance yard.

The price tag to cleanup the parks in the city is conservatively estimated at \$3 million, but it could go higher.

City Commissioner Mark Sarnoff, whose district contains most of the parks, is pushing to get the parks reopened as soon as possible.

The cost for remediation of both Merrie Christmas and Blanche Parks will be covered by Miami-Dade County via a 2004 bond issue.

The county may pick up some of the cost in other parks, but they won't pay to replace the buildings.

Because much of the contamination is linked to locations where incinerators once operated, officials are directing consultants to test for ash in several nearby locations.

Ash from incinerators can contain arsenic, lead, barium and antimony.

Current Status of City of Miami, Miami-Dade County Parks

Merrie Christmas Park: Closed The city of Miami is developing a corrective action plan to submit to DERM. The plan is to complete remediation work by June, 2014, with possible reopening by mid-summer.

Douglas Park: Closed The city recently submitted a solid waste delineation report. A site assessment report will be completed according to the visual delineation areas reported. The city estimates that remediation work will extend into the fall of 2014.

Curtis Park: Closed The city closed the park in early February. Sections of the park will be reopened as areas are tested and/or mitigated.

Southside Park: Closed Southside will be closed until a complete site assessment is conducted. An approved remediation plan should be ready by May.

Billie Rolle Park: Closed Park will remain closed until a complete site assessment is completed.

Blanche Park: Open The corrective action plan was being considered by Miami-Dade County in early February. When implemented, work could be completed by June with the park fully functional by mid-summer.

Bayfront Park: Open Heavy metals were found in the soil, but the contamination was in a little-used part of the park. The city elected not to close the park for that reason.

The corrective plan was submitted to Miami-Dade County's Department of Environmental Resource Management on Jan. 31. The county asked for some revi-

Park. It will be necessary to close the park temporarily while the work is underway. The city is planning for a mid-summer reopening.

In December, state health officials and representatives from DERM conducted a public meeting regarding the status of Blanche Park. They told meeting attendees that while there were some levels of

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New report shows Florida falling further behind in solar panel installation

By PRAKASH GANDHI

Florida may be known as the "Sunshine State" but when it comes to tapping the sun for energy production, the state has fallen still further behind other states.

Nationally, solar panel installations continue to increase and were expected to be 27 percent higher in 2013 than in 2012.

But a recent report by the Solar Energy Industries Association indicated that Florida fell from 12th in solar installations to 18th in the third quarter of last year.

The lack of state leadership is one reason that Florida is falling behind in solar panel installations, say solar energy advocates. Another reason: Elected officials are catering to the desires of Florida's inves-

tor-owned utilities.

"We have a vacuum of policies relating to solar in Florida," said Mike Antheil, executive director of the Florida Alliance for Renewable Energy. "We will continue to fall further behind without some sort of policy in place."

California is the nation's leader in installed solar with about 4,000 megawatts.

Arizona, North Carolina, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Jersey, Hawaii, Colorado, Pennsylvania and

New York round out the top 10.

Florida has only about 200 megawatts of installed solar.

The state is likely to fall even further behind because it lacks policies that are found in 36 other states that promote the development of renewable energy, said Antheil. Solar advocates, like Antheil, say the state's leaders are making a mistake by not moving solar energy to the front burner.

"Unless something changes, we will continue to depend on our investor-owned utilities and to rely on non-renewable energy," he said. "We will always be at the mercy of the fossil fuel industry."

Another problem, say solar advocates, is that the state has tax hurdles for solar leasing companies. These prevent widespread deployment of residential and commercial building solar programs.

Leasing programs help property owners avoid the high up-front costs of solar installations. Antheil said the immediate prospects for any increase in solar panel installations appear to be grim.

"There seems to be no appetite among lawmakers for introducing any major new legislation," he said "Other states are...leaving us in the dust. We are the Sunshine State and we are not able to capture that sunshine."

"For solar to take off, there has to be a system in place that allows someone to build a solar system and sell it someone else," he continued. "That has happened in other places and led to massive development."

Officials with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection referred calls about the report to the Florida Department of Agriculture. Officials there said they had not seen the report and reserved comment.

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Judge signs off on Florida's NNC

By ROY LAUGHLIN

Judge Robert Hinkle of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Florida approved a modified consent agreement between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the state of Florida concerning the quality of the state's surface waters.

The agreement ends a legal challenge that began six years ago, the outcome of which required the state to develop and enforce numeric nutrient criteria for surface water quality.

The judge's ruling concludes the lawsuit, affirming that Florida's efforts to establish NNC meet the requirements of the court order and eliminating EPA's responsibility for enforcing water quality standards in Florida.

But environmental activists are unhappy with modifications made to the order last November during negotiations that led to the consent agreement.

At that point, criteria for "seasonal streams, canals and tidal waters" were removed from the rules. The definition of "canals" includes drainage ditches and armored streams. An attorney for EarthJustice, whose lawyers handled the case, said that the change will exempt 60 percent of Florida's surface waters.

Monica Reimer, a staff attorney for EarthJustice in Tallahassee, said the modification is extremely significant.

Before November, the EPA had downstream criteria for impaired lakes and estuaries that included methodologies for developing standards for upstream waters such as streams and canals. Those numeric standards and requirements for their consideration were eliminated during the final November negotiations.

Reimer said that excluding downstream standards introduced a substantial flaw in NNC development as a tool to control nutrient pollutants.

"When they removed the numbers for canals, there was no number for primary sources of pollutants coming into estuaries," she said.

Reimer said that the last minute change should not have been allowed as part of the process of approving the consent agreement. She characterized the change as a significant policy decision.

She believes that EPA should have had to prove that the consent decree actually needed to be changed—showing that there was a basis in fact for excluding canals, tidal creeks and intermittent streams.

"EPA has to prove there is a reason to change the consent agreement," she said. "The agreement (formerly) said that all waters are getting numeric nutrient standards. But now, all waters are not getting numbers."

In his Jan. 7, 2014, opinion on the consent agreement, Judge Hinkle specifically stated that DEP is no longer bound by the 2009 consent agreement's requirement to develop numeric downstream protection criteria, or numeric criteria for "South Florida streams, marine lakes, tidally-influenced flowing waters and conveyances used primarily for water management purposes with marginal or poor stream habitat components."

Even if the EPA had originally demanded NNC for these waters, the state of Florida was entitled to negotiate its own regulatory approach.

The EPA, after reviewing the proposed regulations, found they met the requirements of the Clean Water Act.

Environmental organizations that were plaintiffs argued that the 2009 consent agreement could not legally be changed so substantially during negotiations.

The judge addressed the issue on procedural grounds in several pages of his consent document. Citing judicial precedent and ethical consideration, he sharply disagreed with the critics.

NNC
Continued on Page 16

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Session 1

- 9:00 **Opening Remarks**
Joel A. Mintz, Professor of Law
Nova Southeastern University Shepard Broad Law Center, Fort Lauderdale
- 9:30 **A Recommitment Towards Developing an Accurate Conceptual Site Model Prior to Remedial Implementation**
Nicholas Albergo, PE, DEE
CRA, Tampa
- 10:00 **2014 Florida Legislative Session in Review**
John Fumero, Attorney
Nason Yeager, PA, Boca Raton

Session 2

- 11:00 **Destruction of Perfluorooctane Sulfonate and Perfluorooctanoic Acid Using Activated Persulfate**
Patrick Hicks, PhD, Technical Manager, Southeast Territory
FMC Corp., Philadelphia, PA
- 11:30 **Use of ZVI Catalyzed Hydroxyl & Sulfate-Free Radicals to Address BTEX Contamination via In-Situ Chemical Oxidation followed by Intrinsic Facultative, Biologically Mediated Processes**
Michael Scalzi, President
Innovative Environmental Technology Inc, Pipersville, PA
- 12:00 Luncheon: Sponsored by Advanced Environmental Laboratories

Session 3

- 1:30: **An Update: Broward County's Environmental Programs, Practices and Activities**
David Vanlandingham, PE, Senior Environmental Engineer (Engineer IV)
Broward County Environmental Assessment and Remediation Section
Additional representatives from Broward County will be joining this session.

Session 4

- 3:30 **Electron Acceptor Selection for Enhanced Bioremediation of Non-Chlorinated Hydrocarbons**
Brad Elkins, PG, MS, Technical Manager
EOS Remediation, Raleigh, NC
- 4:00 **Coupling Technologies to Maximize Terminal Electron-Accepting Process Zones and Reduce Time for Closure / Enhancing the Efficiency of Electron Donor Utilization in Bioremediation**
Don Ray, President
Performance Technologies, Tallahassee
- 4:30 **Design and Implementation of a Large-Scale Bioaugmentation/ Bioremediation Remedy at a Superfund Site in West Palm Beach**
Bill Ware, PG, Senior Geologist, Geosyntec Consultants, Boca Raton
Leighton Walker, Senior Staff Engineer, Geosyntec Consultants, Boca Raton
Will Burke, Senior Staff Hydrogeologist, Geosyntec Consultants, Boca Raton

Friday, May 9, 2014

Session 5

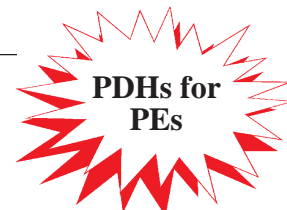
- 8:30 **Characterization of Groundwater Flow Patterns through Permeable Reactive Barrier Systems Created using Hydraulic Fracturing Technologies**
Richard Hall, Senior Scientist
FRx Inc., Cincinnati, OH
- 9:00 **Horizontal Remediation Wells Provide Rapid Site Closure in Florida**
Mark Uanino, Regional Manager
Directional Technologies, Tallahassee

Session 6

- 9:45 **Methods of Reducing Variability in Long-Term Monitoring Well Results**
Sandy Britt, PG, CHG, President and Principal Hydrogeologist
ProHydro Inc., New York, NY
- 10:15 **Distinguishing Chlorinated Solvent Releases by Stable Isotope Analysis**
Alan Jeffrey, PhD, Senior Environmental Forensics Consultant
Zymax Forensics / Pace Analytical Services, Escondido, CA

Session 7

- 11:00 **Update: Contaminated Soils Forum**
Richard Lewis, PE, PhD, Principal Engineer
CRA, Fort Myers



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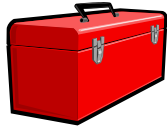
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C-111 Spreader Canal producing results one year after completion

By **BLANCHE HARDY, PG**

One year after the completion of the C-111 Spreader Canal Western Component, Everglades advocates are delighted with the initial outcomes.

“(We are) really encouraged by the results that we are seeing,” said Tabitha Cale, National Audubon Society’s Everglades policy associate.

The C-111 project is a symbol of the century-and-a-half paradigm shift Floridians made from considering the Everglades as a resource that needed to be controlled to a unique natural resource that needs to be preserved.

Since Florida was granted statehood, substantial alterations of the Everglades have been made to better suit the endeavors of man.

Multiple efforts to drain land for farming, and cut canals for navigation and flood control were undertaken. Many had negative impacts equal to—or greater than—their positive intent.

Flood control structures that functioned to protect property during storm events allowed saltwater intrusion during drought. Natural systems failed.

Finally in 1948, Congress authorized the multipurpose Central and Southern Florida Project which provided 1,000 miles of levees, 720 miles of canals and nearly 200 drainage control structures for flood control, municipal, industrial and agricultural water supply, prevention of saltwater intrusion, water supply for Everglades National Park, and protection of fish and wildlife resources.

While many of the efforts were successful for their human purposes, the ecological impacts were devastating.

In response, Congress granted authority to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to review the C&SF Project and recommend changes to restore the ecosystem.

The corps’ plan was approved, and with the signing of Water Resources Development Act of 2000, the \$12 billion Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan was underway.

Years later—after countless hours of study, design, compromise, funding shortfalls, legal challenges and no small amount of political brinkmanship—the first significant CERP project to reach completion, the C-111 Spreader Canal Western Component, opened in January 2013.

The project created a nine-mile hydraulic ridge to hold back stormwater and redirect natural surface water flows capturing millions of gallons of fresh water previously lost to Miami flood control structures and development.

The water now passes through Taylor Slough, which transects Everglades National Park and then discharges into Florida Bay. The water is intended to sheet flow and percolate into the ground to rehydrate wetlands.

Environmental advocates, who had questioned the likelihood of a single project achieving success unsupported by the proposed accompanying projects, are now encouraged.

“Salinity levels are dropping in Florida Bay,” said Audubon’s Cale. “The ecosystem is starting to improve, which is beneficial to wading birds.”

“Underwater vegetation now covers five times more area than previously recorded. This is good because this habitat sustains forage fish that are the wading birds’ primary food source,” she said.

Audubon was able to approximate the change in freshwater flow and salinity pre- and post-spreader canal operation by comparing data collected in the Coastal Mangrove Zone of northeastern Florida Bay during 2008-2009 to data collected during 2012-2013.

The years are virtually identical in rainfall volume and timing so change cannot be attributed to rainfall alone. Salinity was 78 percent less in 2012-2013 after the C-111 project became operational than it was prior to C-111.

“Audubon is encouraged by the early signs and expects the benefit will continue to improve as the project operates, which will cause a ripple effect throughout the Everglades,” Cale said.

DEP names NW FL Plant Ops award winners

Staff report

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection recently presented the 2013 Plant Operations Excellence Awards to Northwest Florida wastewater and drinking water facilities.

The 2013 Northwest Florida Wastewater Treatment Facility winner recognized was the Military Point Regional Advanced Wastewater Treatment Facility

The 2013 Northwest Florida Drinking Water Facility winners were the Bay County Water Treatment Plant, Destin Water Users Inc. and the Naval Air Station Whiting Field

Each year, DEP presents awards to domestic wastewater and drinking water facilities around the state that demonstrate excellence in operations and maintenance.

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Georgia responds to Florida's original action filing over water dispute in ACF suit

By SUSAN TELFORD

In the latest chapter of the on-going battle between Florida, Alabama and Georgia over water usage in the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint river basin, neither governor of Alabama or Florida will agree to sign a memorandum intended to prevent water-use information gathered by a stakeholders group from being used in the current Supreme Court case.

A group dubbed the "ACF Stakeholders" spent the past four years developing a sustainable water-use plan with the hope of releasing it this summer and ending the decades-long dispute.

The group, comprised of farmers, environmentalists, industries and utilities, adopted a resolution requesting that Florida delay action on its recent legal action in the case.

"We do not want to be brought into that legal process," said James McClatchey, chairman of the ACF Stakeholders and CEO of Southern Aluminum Finishing Co. in Atlanta. "We want to be able to develop our plan without worrying about that."

At a meeting late last year, the group developed confidentiality restrictions, a decision made by its 57 members.

Last fall, the group asked the three states to sign a memorandum of understanding that would prevent information that is being shared through the collaborative process from being used in any lawsuit, or in other way, without the group's permission.

Both Florida Gov. Rick Scott and Alabama Gov. Robert Bentley recently informed the group that their states would not sign the agreement.

Jud Turner, director of the Georgia Environmental Protection Division, called the refusals of both Florida and Alabama to sign the MOU "disappointing."

"We had not completed a full legal review of the MOU, but (Georgia) Gov. Nathan Deal was open to the concept of an MOU as a way to allow the states to continue to support the ACF Stakeholder work during any litigation," said Turner.

Work on Everglades reservoir in SW Palm Beach County resumes

By SUSAN TELFORD

Work is scheduled to resume on a water reservoir located in southwestern Palm Beach County. More than 16,000 acres of farmland will be used as a storage treatment area designed to improve water quality and help restore flow to the Everglades.

The project features newly constructed 10-foot tall embankments that can contain a pool of water up to four feet deep and provide habitat for nutrient absorbing aquatic plants.

About 21 miles of levees will be constructed, as well as a dozen water-control structures to move water toward the Everglades. The wetland treatment areas will use cattail and other aquatic plants to filter the water before it flows into adjoining treatment areas for additional cleaning.

Both the Everglades Foundation and Audubon Florida endorse the new reservoir design that provides better filtration over less space than the original design.

That design had called for 30-foot tall embankments capable of holding 62 billion gallons of water about 12 feet deep. Work was stopped in 2008 but most of the muck scraping and limestone blasting had already been done—contributing to the project's substantial \$280 million price tag.

"It's a great step forward to get the central part of the Everglades restored," said Eric Draper, executive director of Audubon Florida. "This is one of the critical features to get that done."

The reservoir will be deep enough for ample water storage but also shallow enough to provide a substrate for aquatic plants that uptake nutrient and phosphorous, thereby improving water quality.

"Without the governors signing the MOU, the future of the ACF Stakeholder group is called into question during the litigation between the states."

Alabama, Florida and Georgia have been embroiled in a federal court battle over water use in the ACF river basin since 1990. Both Alabama and Florida claim that the system is threatened by Georgia's unrestrained water use that is negatively affecting the seafood industry in Apalachicola Bay.

Georgia has countered that Florida officials, including Gov. Scott, are ignoring their own explanations for the 2012 collapse of the bay's oyster population, including changing climate conditions and overfishing as well as the decreased flow of fresh water.

Scott announced his lawsuit after negotiations between Florida and Georgia failed to produce a water-sharing agreement. The states have refused to release documents involving the water talks because of a 2010 federal court order that provided for confidential mediation.

The mediation followed a federal judge's 2009 ruling that Georgia cities weren't authorized to use water from Lake Lanier, a federal reservoir north of Atlanta. The 2009 ruling was overturned in 2011 by the 11th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals and in 2012, the U.S. Supreme Court refused to consider Florida's appeal in the case.

In its original action filed on Oct. 1, 2013, Florida said that Georgia's storage and use of water over several years has caused the collapse of the river system. Florida also claimed that the reduced water flow not only negatively impacted the oyster bays, but also threatened Sturgeon and endangered mussels protected by the federal Endangered Species Act.

Georgia recently responded to the U.S. Supreme Court regarding Florida's original action stating that "the protection of those species is to be decided by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which controls water flow through the operation of dams and reservoirs of the Chattahoochee River."

"It's definitely a better approach," said Everglades Foundation Senior Scientist Tom Van Lent, PhD, regarding the flow equalization basin. "This is the right plan."

Once completed, the reservoir will be capable of holding 20 billion gallons of water, and is expected to cost another \$60 million to complete.

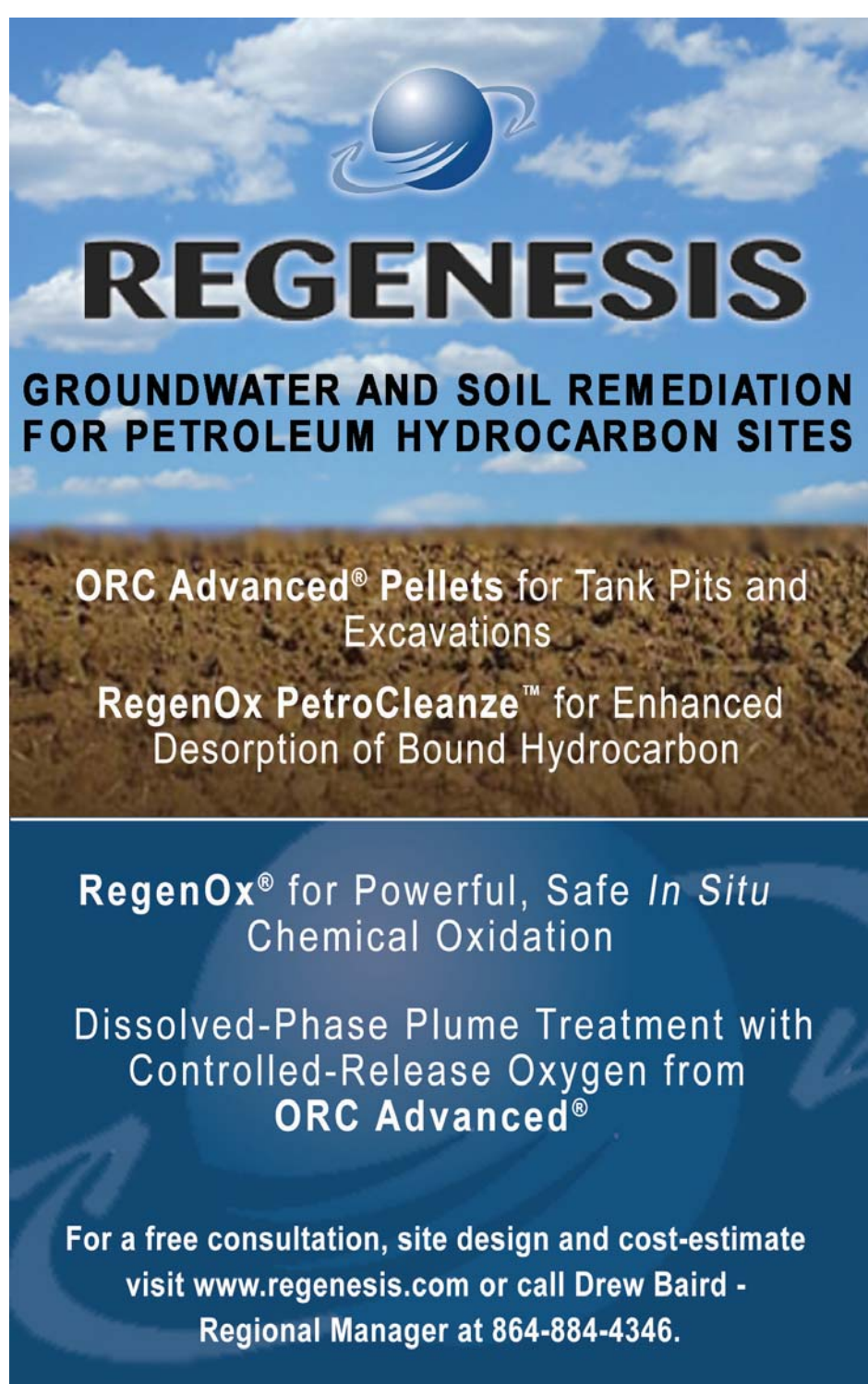
The corps is also reviewing Georgia's request to withdraw 190 million gallons a day from Lake Lanier—part of the update of its proposed 2015 Operating Manual.

"In sum, Florida has not pleaded facts plausibly suggesting that it will be able to establish clear and convincing evidence that it suffers substantial injury as a result of Georgia's consumption of water," Georgia officials wrote in a recently filed response to the Supreme Court.

Regarding its latest water usage dispute, Georgia officials wrote to the court.

"Florida, however, is not content to await the outcome of the corps' deliberative process. Instead, it seeks to bypass that entire proceeding by asking this court to engage in a common-law 'equitable apportionment' of the states' rights to those waters. But Florida has brought its case against the wrong party, in the wrong court and at the wrong time," the document stated.

According to Florida Department of Environmental Protection Spokesperson Patrick Gillespie had until Feb. 10 to respond.



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It's time for the Florida Legislature to restore full funding to the Drycleaning Solvent Cleanup Program

By **NICHOLAS ALBERGO, PE, DEE**

Despite the incessant whining of several well-paid lobbyists and notwithstanding some carefully orchestrated political wrangling by individuals who had little concern for the environment or the small businesses defined by drycleaner owners/operators, the Florida Legislature created the Drycleaning Solvent Cleanup Program in 1994 to provide a source of funding for rehabilitating sites and drinking water supplies contaminated by dry cleaning solvents.

The DSCP bill was sponsored by the Florida Drycleaners Coalition, a group of ordinary businessmen with little political experience and limited resources, but the sort of forethought normally associated with top prognosticators with roots in academia or the New York Times.

By creating a registration, taxation, tax credit and system of deductible payments on themselves and their industry, over 1,400 of the 1,563 dry cleaning sites that applied to the program became eligible for site rehabilitation in accordance with a priority ranking system established through a coordinated effort of state regulators and industry professionals.

The program was years ahead of its time.

No eligible person who owned, operated or otherwise could be held liable as a result of the operation of a dry cleaning facility or wholesale supply facility, subject to state administrative or judicial action.

The program even took into account the concerns of neighboring property owners and stated that a person whose property became contaminated due to the operation of a nearby dry cleaning or wholesale supply facility would also not be subject to administrative or judicial action brought by or on behalf of another to compel the rehabilitation of costs for the cleanup.

The DSCP was one of the first programs to embrace risk-based corrective action principles to achieve protection of human health and the environment in a cost-effective manner.

It also paved the way for the use of innovative cleanup technologies, regardless of whether or not such was previously used through a federal innovative technology pro-

gram.

Beyond just improving the process of cleaning up DSCP sites, the site cleanup section in the Division of Waste Management at the Florida Department of Environmental Protection has actively participated in sharing their knowledge of chlorinated solvent cleanup through the State Coalition for Remediation of Drycleaners and the Interstate Technology & Regulatory Council, thereby assisting with cleanup of chlorinated solvents for both public and private parties.

The DSCP has continued to improve over the years through the sharing of information and willingness to try something new and different, while evaluating the results.

Currently, 1,423 sites remain in the program; 326 assessments have been completed and 146

sites have been closed. The average cost of site assessment is \$85,000 and the average cost of site cleanup is \$285,000.

All in all, the program is working as it was intended and the assessment and remediation technologies applied to these sites, continue to improve.

Unfortunately, the funding support is waning. In 2009, roughly \$10,000,000 had been allocated to the program—\$1,700,000 more than the revenue realized through tax-

tion. But only 60 percent (\$6,000,000) is projected to be budgeted for 2014, even though the expected revenue through taxation is estimated at \$7,200,000.

This is a disturbing trend. For the past few years, the revenue generated through taxation for program use has consistently exceeded budgeted program funding. This begs the question: "Where is the excess DSCP tax money going and why?"

With recent reductions in appropriated funding to between \$4M and \$6M annually, the ability to effectively cleanup contaminated sites has been significantly reduced. At an average cost-to-closure per site of nearly \$400,000, the expected timeframe to address each eligible site, at the current funding level, exceeds 100 years!

It's time for the Florida Legislature to revisit the value of the DSCP and return the trust fund revenue shortage that was designed and generated for the specific purpose of implementing the program—one that is fully funded by the dry cleaning industry and their customers.

How many other programs offer such a return on investment? Through the DSCP, rehabilitated properties no longer have the stigma of pollution liability, making these properties more valuable for occupation or redevelopment, generating economic growth, increasing property values and tax revenues to the state of Florida.

What's more, it creates and secures jobs—the centerpiece of Gov. Rick Scott's job creation and economic growth agenda.

Nicholas Albergo, PE, DEE, is the founder of HSA Engineers and Scientists in Tampa, now a part of Conestoga-Rovers & Associates.

Year	Revenue Through Taxes	Budget for the DSCP
2009	\$8,426,505	\$10,149,427
2010	\$7,394,785	\$8,699,934
2011	\$7,205,503	\$4,000,000
2012	\$6,897,189	\$4,000,000
2013	\$6,913,866	\$4,000,000
2014 (Projected)	\$7,200,000	\$6,000,000

New airport stormwater rule increases safety, environmental protection while lowering costs

By **ABDUL HATIM**

On Oct. 1, 2013, Florida Administrative Code 62-330.449, General Permit for Construction, Operation, Maintenance, Alteration, Abandonment or Removal of Airport Airside Stormwater Management Systems went into effect.

This was the culmination of over a decade of data collection, model studies and administrative negotiations aimed at improving airport safety, effectively managing stormwater quality and quantity, speeding permit times and reducing construction costs.

The new rule represents success on all fronts and the

results are being applied in both other states and to other project types.

Under the leadership of the Florida Department of Transportation's Central Aviation Office and with full support from the Federal Aviation Administration, a stakeholders group was formed to address airport stormwater management in Florida.

The stakeholders group included officials from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the five water management districts, in addition to FDOT and FAA.

The DEP and WMDs jointly work to protect Florida's water quality and to manage extremes of flood and drought through both regulation and physical facilities.

Together, the state transportation and environmental agencies selected a consultant team to study the challenges facing the aviation community in managing stormwater runoff, collect data and suggest solutions meeting the requirements of aviation and environmental protection.

The multi-year data collection effort was conducted at a wide range of airports from large international facilities to small general aviation airfields in order to be representative of all of Florida's 130 public use airports.

Findings include:

- Airside pavements—aprons, taxiways and runways—have very good stormwater quality when compared to other land uses. In many cases, the water quality for nutrients in the direct pavement runoff is equal or better than natural sites.

- Overland flow is generally effective in reducing pollutant loads for those constituents that must be kept at or below natural background levels to avoid adverse impacts. This avoids wet ponds that can attract birds and other wildlife hazardous to aircraft operations.

- Designs based on average annual conditions best manage runoff quality. Designs based on specific storms advised by FAA can reduce costs and still provide flood protection for off-airport properties.

The general permit from DEP and the water management districts authorizes airport airside projects that can match nutrient loads from a natural vegetative community and that do not impact wetlands or cause offsite flooding.

The permit is issued within 30 days of application and accelerates project schedules significantly, which is crucial when working against accelerated schedules to obtain FAA funding.

The new rule references the Statewide Airport Stormwater Best Management Practices Manual that was prepared as part of the FDOT airport stormwater initiative.

The BMP Manual provides the "how to" information to evaluate and design systems that meet the project mission of "Clean Water—Safe Airports."

In 2013, DEP showed continued commitment to sound science and environmental protection

By **SUSAN BEASON**

Providing a more consistent regulatory process and "getting the water right" are priorities for the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. In 2013, the agency made good progress in reaching these goals.

Florida adopted more water quality criteria in 2013 than in any other single year during the previous decade. The department worked with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to adopt numeric nutrient criteria covering all lakes, rivers, streams, springs and estuaries within the state.

Florida's standards for nitrogen and phosphorus pollution are the most comprehensive in the nation. They exceed those of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency by taking into account the biological diversity and complexity of state waters.

Florida renewed its commitment in 2013 to the Ever-

glades and freshwater springs. Gov. Rick Scott worked to secure passage of an \$880 million Everglades Water Quality Restoration Plan, guaranteeing \$32 million in annual funding for long-term Everglades restoration.

In November, the department issued a permit for the L-8 Flow Equalization Basin, which will hold 15 billion gallons of water so it can be cleansed and moved south to the Everglades. A permit was issued in July for the A-1 Flow Equalization Basin south of Lake Okeechobee.

Also in 2013, Gov. Scott announced a \$10 million investment in Florida's springs, which was leveraged into \$37 million with commitments from state and local partners. Pollution reduction and water reuse projects will improve both water quality and quantity at Silver Springs, Weeki Wachee, Homosassa and others.

Site-specific cleanup targets have been set for nearly 350 springs statewide. Cleanup targets guide the department and its partners in forging comprehensive, five-year restoration roadmaps with projects affecting wastewater, stormwater runoff and other pollutant sources. Additional basin management action plans are in the works that will protect the 225 springs in the Suwannee and Wekiva basins, and the Silver and Wakulla systems.

A statewide environmental resource permit program went into effect in October, creating a uniform set of rules to protect wetlands and surface waters. The new ERP program standardizes fees, definitions, procedures and forms for the department and the five water management districts.

ERP permits are required for most construction activities and operations that could affect wetlands, alter surface water flows or contribute to water pollution, other than those activities and operations that are exempt from permitting or that fall below permitting thresholds. The

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Florida Specifier

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The Florida Specifier welcomes columns, articles and letters to the editor on any subject or issue pertinent to the environmental, regulatory and technical areas the newspaper covers. We reserve the right to edit all submissions for newspaper style and publish submissions on a space-available basis.

Calendar

March

MAR. 3 – Course: U.S. DOT Hazardous Materials/Waste Transportation, Orlando, FL. Presented by the University of Florida TREEO Center. Call (352) 392-9570 or visit www.treeo.ufl.edu.

MAR. 3-5 – Course: SWANA's Integrated Solid Waste Management Training Course, Silver Spring, MD. Presented by the Solid Waste Association of North America. Call 1-800-467-9262 or visit www.swana.org.

MAR. 4 – Course: Hazardous Waste Regulations for Generators, Orlando, FL. Presented by the University of Florida TREEO Center. Call (352) 392-9570 or visit www.treeo.ufl.edu.

MAR. 4 – Course: Refresher Training Course for Experienced Solid Waste Operators- 8 Hour, Orlando, FL. Presented by the University of Florida TREEO Center. Call (352) 392-9570 or visit www.treeo.ufl.edu.

MAR. 4 – Course: Refresher Training Course for Experienced Solid Waste Operators- 4 Hour, Orlando, FL. Presented by the University of Florida TREEO Center. Call (352) 392-9570 or visit www.treeo.ufl.edu.

MAR. 4 – Course: 8-Hour Training Course for Spotters at Landfills, C&D Sites and Transfer Stations, Orlando, FL. Presented by the University of Florida TREEO Center. Call (352) 392-9570 or visit www.treeo.ufl.edu.

MAR. 4-5 – Course: Initial Training Course for Transfer Station Operators and Materials Recovery Facilities- 16 Hour, Orlando, FL. Presented by the University of Florida TREEO Center. Call (352) 392-9570 or visit www.treeo.ufl.edu.

MAR. 4-6 – Course: Initial Training Course for Landfill Operators and C&D Sites- 24 Hour, Orlando, FL. Presented by the University of Florida TREEO Center. Call (352) 392-9570 or visit www.treeo.ufl.edu.

MAR. 4-5 – Course: Refresher Training Course for Experienced Solid Waste Operators- 16 Hour, Orlando, FL. Presented by the University of Florida TREEO Center. Call (352) 392-9570 or visit www.treeo.ufl.edu.

MAR. 4-5 – Course: Initial Training for Operators of Landfills and Waste Processing Facilities, Orlando, FL. Presented by the University of Florida TREEO Center. Call (352) 392-9570 or visit www.treeo.ufl.edu.

MAR. 4 – Course: Asbestos Refresher: Inspector, Tampa, FL. Presented by the University of Florida TREEO Center. Call (352) 392-9570 or visit www.treeo.ufl.edu.

MAR. 4 – Course: Asbestos Refresher: Management Planner, Tampa, FL. Presented by the University of Florida TREEO Center. Call (352) 392-9570 or visit www.treeo.ufl.edu.

MAR. 4-5 – Conference: Southeastern In Situ Soil and Groundwater Remediation Conference, Raleigh, NC. Presented by the Association of Environmental & Engineering Geologists and Redox Tech. Call (919) 678-0140 or visit www.redox-tech.com.

MAR. 5 – Course: Refresher Training Course for Experienced Solid Waste Operators- 8 Hour, Orlando, FL. Presented by the University of Florida TREEO Center. Call (352) 392-9570 or visit www.treeo.ufl.edu.

MAR. 5 – Course: Refresher Training Course for Experienced Solid Waste Operators- 4 Hour, Orlando, FL. Presented by the University of Florida TREEO Center. Call (352) 392-9570 or visit www.treeo.ufl.edu.

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MAR. 5-6 – Course: 24th Annual Cross-Connection Control Conference, Orlando, FL. Presented by the University of Florida TREEO Center. Call (352) 392-9570 or visit www.treeo.ufl.edu.

MAR. 5 – Course: Asbestos Refresher: Contractor/Supervisor, Tampa, FL. Presented by the University of Florida TREEO Center. Call (352) 392-9570 or visit www.treeo.ufl.edu.

MAR. 7 – Course: 8-Hour OSHA HazWoper Annual Refresher, Tallahassee, FL. Presented by the University of Florida TREEO Center. Call (352) 392-9570 or visit www.treeo.ufl.edu.

MAR. 7 – Course: Backflow Prevention Recertification Review, Fort Myers, FL. Presented by the University of Florida TREEO Center. Call (352) 392-9570 or visit www.treeo.ufl.edu.

MAR. 8 – Course: Backflow Prevention Recertification Review, Bradenton, FL. Presented by the University of Florida TREEO Center. Call (352) 392-9570 or visit www.treeo.ufl.edu.

MAR. 8 – Course: Backflow Prevention Recertifi-

cation Exam, Fort Myers, FL. Presented by the University of Florida TREEO Center. Call (352) 392-9570 or visit www.treeo.ufl.edu.

MAR. 11-12 – Course: Sequencing Batch Reactor Operation, Make it Work for You, Gainesville, FL. Presented by the University of Florida TREEO Center. Call (352) 392-9570 or visit www.treeo.ufl.edu.

MAR. 12-14 – Summit: Environmental Industry Summit XII, San Diego, CA. Presented by Environmental Business International. Call (619) 295-7685 or visit www.ebionline.org.

MAR. 14-14 – Course: Leadership Development for Professional Engineers, Orlando, FL. Presented by the Florida Engineering Society. Call (850) 224-7121 or visit www.fleng.org.

MAR. 14-22 – Course: Backflow Prevention Assembly Tester Training and Certification, Venice, FL. Presented by the University of Florida TREEO Center. Call (352) 392-9570 or visit www.treeo.ufl.edu.

MAR. 15 – Course: Backflow Prevention Recertification Exam, Bradenton, FL. Presented by the University of Florida TREEO Center. Call (352) 392-9570 or visit www.treeo.ufl.edu.

MAR. 17-20 – Course: Landfill Design and Construction, FL. Presented by the University of Florida TREEO Center. Call (352) 392-9570 or visit www.treeo.ufl.edu.

MAR. 17-21 – Course: Backflow Prevention Assembly Tester Training and Certification, Gainesville, FL. Presented by the University of Florida TREEO Center. Call (352) 392-9570 or visit www.treeo.ufl.edu.

MAR. 18-20 – Course: Activated Sludge Process Control & Troubleshooting, Gainesville, FL. Presented by the University of Florida TREEO Center. Call (352) 392-9570 or visit www.treeo.ufl.edu.

MAR. 21 – Course: Backflow Prevention Recertification Review, West Palm Beach, FL. Presented by the University of Florida TREEO Center. Call (352) 392-9570 or visit www.treeo.ufl.edu.

MAR. 22-30 – Course: Backflow Prevention Assembly Tester Training and Certification, Tampa, FL. Presented by the University of Florida TREEO Center. Call (352) 392-9570 or visit www.treeo.ufl.edu.

MAR. 22 – Course: Backflow Prevention Recertification Exam, West Palm Beach, FL. Presented by the University of Florida TREEO Center. Call (352) 392-9570 or visit www.treeo.ufl.edu.

MAR. 24-26 – Course: Backflow Prevention Assembly Repair and Maintenance Training and Certification, Gainesville, FL. Presented by the University of Florida TREEO Center. Call (352) 392-9570 or visit www.treeo.ufl.edu.

MAR. 24-28 – Course: Backflow Prevention Assembly Tester Training and Certification, Altamonte Springs, FL. Presented by the University of Florida TREEO Center. Call (352) 392-9570 or visit www.treeo.ufl.edu.

MAR. 24-28 – Course: Water Class A Certification Review, Orlando, FL. Presented by the University of Florida TREEO Center. Call (352) 392-9570 or visit www.treeo.ufl.edu.

MAR. 25-27 – Symposium: SWANA's Landfill Sym-

posium, Monterey, CA. Presented by the Solid Waste Association of North America. Call 1-800-467-9262 or visit www.swana.org.

MAR. 25-28 – Course: Water Class B Certification Review, Orlando, FL. Presented by the University of Florida TREEO Center. Call (352) 392-9570 or visit www.treeo.ufl.edu.

MAR. 25-27 – Course: Initial Training Course for Landfill Operators and C&D Sites – 24 Hour, Crestview, FL. Presented by the University of Florida TREEO Center. Call (352) 392-9570 or visit www.treeo.ufl.edu.

MAR. 25-26 – Course: Initial Training Course for Transfer Station Operators and Materials Recovery Facilities, Crestview, FL. Presented by the University of Florida TREEO Center. Call (352) 392-9570 or visit www.treeo.ufl.edu.

MAR. 25-26 – Course: Refresher Training Course for Experienced Solid Waste Operators – 16 Hour, Crestview, FL. Presented by the University of Florida TREEO Center. Call (352) 392-9570 or visit www.treeo.ufl.edu.

MAR. 25 – Course: 8-Hour Training Course for Spotters at Landfills, C&D Sites and Transfer Stations, Crestview, FL. Presented by the University of Florida TREEO Center. Call (352) 392-9570 or visit www.treeo.ufl.edu.

MAR. 25-27 – Course: Initial Training for Operators of Landfills and Waste Processing Facilities, Crestview, FL. Presented by the University of Florida

TREEO Center. Call (352) 392-9570 or visit www.treeo.ufl.edu.

MAR. 26 – Course: Refresher Training Course for Experienced Solid Waste Operators- 8 Hour, Crestview, FL. Presented by the University of Florida TREEO Center. Call (352) 392-9570 or visit www.treeo.ufl.edu.


MAR. 26 – Course: Refresher Training Course for Experienced Solid Waste Operators- 4 Hour, Crestview, FL. Presented by the University of Florida TREEO Center. Call (352) 392-9570 or visit www.treeo.ufl.edu.

MAR. 26 – Course: 8-Hour Training Course for Spotters at Landfills, C&D Sites and Transfer Stations, Crestview, FL. Presented by the University of Florida TREEO Center. Call (352) 392-9570 or visit www.treeo.ufl.edu.

MAR. 28-APR. 5 – Course: Backflow Prevention Assembly Tester Training and Certification, Fort Myers, FL. Presented by the University of Florida TREEO Center. Call (352) 392-9570 or visit www.treeo.ufl.edu.

MAR. 29 – Course: Backflow Prevention Recertification Review, Jacksonville, FL. Presented by the University of Florida TREEO Center. Call (352) 392-9570 or visit www.treeo.ufl.edu.

MAR. 30 – Course: Backflow Prevention Recertification Exam, Jacksonville, FL. Presented by the University of Florida TREEO Center. Call (352) 392-9570 or visit www.treeo.ufl.edu.



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MacDill AFB restoration complete after two decades of stops and starts

By DAN MILLOTT

This past October, restoration work was completed on 178.4 acres of land at MacDill Air Force Base as a cooperative venture with the Southwest Florida Water Management District

Phase 3 of the project on 111.5 acres started in 2012 and was the final step in removing unwanted plants and trees from the southeast corner of the base's property.

Nancy Norton, SWFWMD's project manager, said the area was overgrown with evasive plants. The unwanted plants were replaced by marsh grasses.

"While planting the grasses was important, we also had to alter the elevations so the unwanted plants won't grow back," she said.

The project involved the expansion of water channels, improvement to stormwater retention and restoration of low salinity nursery habitats. Work was completed at 15 different locations around the two MacDill golf courses, using 70,000 to 80,000 cubic yards of fill.

The project's design called for the creation of tidal platforms—part of the design goal to alter elevations.

The project altered the waterbody arrangements on the base by linking them together and creating a channel flow into Tampa Bay.

Brandt Henningsen, the district's chief environmental scientist, said that the restored flow accomplished a couple of important goals. First, it improved the level of salinity in the fish nursery habitat.

SPACEPORT From Page 1

personnel and northern Brevard County, whose local economy was hit hard when NASA ended space shuttle flights.

"We get 200,000 - 300,000 visitors to the area that will be closed during private launches," she said.

In addition to the birdwatchers and fishermen, the refuge opens substantial areas to hunters whose activities help control feral hogs.

The Federal Aviation Administration held two hearings in February to collect public comment. Detailed plans for the site were released the first week of February, in advance of the meetings. It was the first time the public had the chance to see the

Plus, as stormwater runoff from the base drains through the waterways, sediments are retained and excess nutrients are absorbed by the native plants so they never reach the bay.

The first phase of the restoration effort started back in 1993 and was completed in 1997. A second began in 1999. The two covered about 68 acres on the base.

details of the proposed launch facility.

The proposed site is a strip of land between the Indian River and State Road 3, straddling the Brevard-Volusia county line. One launch facility is proposed at each end of the strip, so both counties will have a facility.

Each platform could launch up to 12 spacecraft annually for a total of 24 spacecraft launches. It could be just a day or two between each launch event that the public and refuge personnel would be able to visit or work in areas now routinely open.

The area east of the launch site has a number of archaeological sites, from Precolumbian mounds to the Elliott Plantation site, a 1760s English colonial plantation with masonry foundations.

These artifacts would be subject to disturbance by sound and vibrations from the launches.

Dale Ketcham, chief of strategic alliances at Space Florida, said that security restrictions are the primary reason private launch companies prefer not to use the far more extensive facilities on NASA and Air Force properties at Cape Canaveral.

Foreign nationals and their payloads are scrutinized closely under current U.S. security regimes. Many of the expected private launches are likely to be for non-U.S. entities.

In the 1980s, U.S. firms accounted for 100 percent of the private launch business, which included communication and weather satellites.

Now, three other companies and gov-

The \$1.6 million effort is a SWFWMD project, but there has been a high level of coordination with MacDill officials throughout, said Henningsen.

Much of the funding came from the district's Surface Water Improvement and Management program. There was also financial assistance via a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

ernments offer launch services and they have 100 percent of the business, according to Ketcham.

Reducing the level of security and avoiding institutional oversight that may interfere with scheduling and ongoing work routines are seen as necessary conditions that Space Florida's proposed site will provide.

Obtaining an FAA license is seen as the biggest hurdle before private space launches can occur from the proposed Shiloh facilities, Ketcham said. After that, facility builders would need to get building permits, for example, from local authorities. He said that the facilities could be up and running within four years after FAA licensing.

This is the third time there has been a proposal to build a private space launch facility in this area. In the 1980s, the state of Florida acquired the lease on the property because NASA wanted to commercialize space flight during the Reagan administration. A subsequent attempt in the 1990s to provide state funding to develop the site failed.

The Merritt Island Wildlife Refuge exists through an extensive symbiosis between FWS and NASA. The space agency owns the land, purchased in 1963 as a buffer between space launches at the Cape and the communities surrounding it.

NASA now pays for FWS activities to maintain the refuge, including burning for habitat management and closure activities around launch events.

BEASON From Page 10

new statewide rules were based on rules that were in effect previously, but included numerous streamlining components designed to reduce regulatory burdens and increase statewide consistency.

The department also launched a new water permitting portal to streamline the process of applying for environmental resource permits and other authorizations. Anyone can go to the portal at <http://flwaterpermits.com> to determine what permits are needed and from which agency.

Residents and businesses can apply for commonly used permits, certifications and renewals, pay fees and submit compliance reports. The site allows permits to be processed online, saving time and money for both the regulated community and the agency.

In August, Gov. Scott announced that Florida would take historic action by filing a lawsuit in U.S. Supreme Court to stop Georgia's unchecked consumption of upstream water. Falling freshwater flows in

the Apalachicola River and increased salinity have sent Apalachicola Bay fisheries into steep decline. Decades of negotiations have been unsuccessful in addressing Georgia's unsustainable water consumption in the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint river basin.

An agency-wide emphasis on compliance assistance helps residents and business owners understand the rules and prevent environmental harm.

Department regulatory program officials conducted more than 6,400 compliance assistance events in 2013 and educated 62,000 customers about how to follow state rules. As a result, the agency's significant non-compliance rate dropped to below five percent last year.

Again, in 2013, the department showed its continued commitment to sound science and environmental protection.

Susan Beason is a public information specialist in the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Office of External Outreach & Public Education in Tallahassee.

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Port of Jacksonville presses forward with channel deepening effort

By ROY LAUGHLIN

For several years, the Port of Jacksonville has been planning to deepen its channel from the current 40 feet to 47 feet deep. Some portions will be dredged even deeper—to 50 feet—to meet the needs of the U.S. Navy.

The work is being done in anticipation of substantial increases in shipping through the deepened Panama Canal when that construction project is completed in 2015. For a port to accommodate the expected increase in traffic, it must be able to handle ships with the deeper draft that will transit the canal.

In addition to JAXPORT, the Port of Miami is expanding, including a tunnel to speed intermodal trucking from its port and the Port of Ft. Lauderdale is planning channel deepening work.

In Jacksonville, the proposed project will deepen 13 miles of the St. Johns River from the river's mouth to just west of the Dames Point Bridge near Blount Island. Two areas of the channel close to Chicopit Bay and Ft. Caroline National Memorial will also be widened.

This would result in the removal of 18 million cubic yards of dredged material, the equivalent of over 1.6 million dump truck loads.

Added to that, up to 56 million cubic yards of dredge material would be removed

during annual maintenance dredging over the 50-year life of the project. In addition, the enlargement of two turning basins is proposed.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is the agency responsible for defining a work plan that includes engineering for the project as well as compliance with environmental regulations and natural resources protection.

Channel deepening has raised concerns about several potential adverse environmental effects. The first concern is the blasting needed to break up rock. In its plan, the corps addresses in substantial detail concerns about rock blasting, for both environmental effects and facility damage. The corps plans to use "confined blasting" to minimize this concern.

In addition, the project's plan will address "two very minimal effects on the environment" by including an eel grass and wetland monitoring component and a salinity monitoring effort to characterize any salinity changes that occur if the deeper channel allows more ocean water inflow to the St. Johns's estuarine segments.

The corps is in the final steps of refining its project plan document.

At the end of February, the corp's Civil Review Board will determine by vote whether the project merits approval.

If the board approves, then the final step will be including the plan in the Chief

of Engineer's Report, expected to be signed in May, 2014. After that, by 2015, work is expected to begin.

JAXPORT officials have made public commitments to use organization funding for the preconstruction engineering and design phase. That will commence in June, 2014, and wrap up by September, 2014, according to Susan J. Jackson in the corporate communications office of the corps' Jacksonville District.

The federal Water Resources Act is the usual port project funding authorization mechanism. That bill was expected to be passed in January, 2014.

However, no action occurred to reconcile the Senate's approval to preauthorize

the act with a separate House bill, the Water Reform and Resources Development Act that was passed last December.

Because JAXPORT's project plan did not have final corps approval, it was not included in either of the two bills that were passed last fall.

Congressional delays make it is possible that JAXPORT's dredging project could have prerequisite corps approvals in time to be included before an authorization bill might be passed later this year.

"We have an energized and engaged delegation in DC," said Nancy Rubin, senior director of communications with JAXPORT. "We are not going to let the lights go out on this project."

HATIM From Page 10

The manual will continue to be updated as engineering advances support improved design methods.

While up-front engineering costs are higher due to added testing and analysis, construction savings far exceed the additional engineering costs. This is supported by airport projects that were constructed using the method prescribed in the airport stormwater initiative, but permitted under the slower and more elaborate individual permit process.

The costs of engineering for ten projects at three airports were about \$500,000 more expensive than standard designs. The construction cost savings for those same projects were about \$4.5 million compared to standard costs.

Savings came from smaller culverts, no ponds and no underdrain systems. These savings represent a 20-30 percent cost reduction on all new airport pavement projects, which could amount to \$10-\$20 million per year over the next 10 years.

The general permit is a major step forward based on data and engineering. However, it does not apply to all airside projects or to nonairside projects at airports. There are projects and airports that cannot use

the permit directly due to geology or pre-existing drainage conditions that may require wet ponds for quality or flood management.

The FDOT, FAA, DEP and water management districts are addressing these situations with a full-scale pilot study of a wet pond with special design features resulting from this airport stormwater study. These features are intended to minimize wildlife attraction while meeting the requirements for water management in a reduced area.

If the full-scale tests match predictions from computer simulations and physical scale models, these design features will become a part of the general permit in the future.

The public is the beneficiary of the safety, environmental protection and overall cost savings this airport stormwater initiative has produced.

Air travel safety is enhanced without compromising water quality or flood protection.

This project highlights the effectiveness of interagency focus on the common good of citizens of Florida.

Abdul Hatim is the aviation program development manager in FDOT's Aviation & Spaceports Office in Tallahassee.

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Waste Management transitioning fleet to include more CNG trucks

By PRAKASH GANDHI

Solid waste giant Waste Management has found a way to make its huge garbage trucks run through residential neighborhoods in Florida without burning a hole in your ears while being environmentally safer at the same time.

Through changing to compressed natural gas vehicles, Waste Management said it is helping to build a more environmentally sound and sustainable future.

To help meet a company-wide sustainability goal and reduce air pollution in Florida, the company has mobilized 141

new trucks that run on compressed natural gas—a much cleaner-burning alternative to gasoline or diesel fuel.

Waste Management will add 70 more CNG vehicles this year. By 2019, the company will have more than 500 CNG vehicles serving its residential and business customers throughout Florida.

The company's Florida Area Vice President Tim Hawkins said its compressed natural gas-powered vehicles benefit communities by emitting fewer greenhouse gases and pollutants.

"Every truck we replace with natural gas reduces our diesel use by an average

of 8,000 gallons per year, while simultaneously reducing annual greenhouse gas emissions by 22 metric tons," Hawkins said.

The move to convert the fleet to natural gas started five years ago. To fuel its new trucks, WM has opened its CNG Clean N' Green Fueling Station in Pompano Beach to ensure a ready supply of the fuel for its Broward County fleet.

The new fueling station will also make CNG available to commercial fleets and corporate CNG-equipped vehicles.

To date, the company has invested more than \$50 million in CNG trucks and fueling stations in Florida alone.

In 2007, WM committed to increase its fleet's fuel efficiency by 15 percent and reduce its fleet's emissions by 15 percent by 2020. Officials there said that the company has already met that goal.

WM currently has more than 2,000 natural gas vehicles on the road. Natural gas vehicles represent 80 percent of the company's new truck purchases.

Compressed natural gas is one of the cleanest fuels currently available for use in heavy-duty trucks. By replacing a typical diesel engine with a natural gas engine,

it can lead to reductions of up to 86 percent in air particulate emissions, 75 percent in carbon monoxide emissions, up to a 49 percent in nitrogen oxide emissions and a 25 percent in carbon dioxide emissions.

Waste Management now has 175 compressed natural gas trucks on the road in Florida with five CNG fueling stations in Pompano Beach, Venice, Tampa, Palm Beach and Fort Walton Beach. A sixth is being built in Melbourne and will open in March.

Natural gas has grown popular as an alternative to traditional fuels like gas and diesel as prices for it have dropped.

Other companies have been following the trend to CNG. UPS, FedEx Express and Florida Power & Light are among those firms converting vehicles to natural gas or using other alternative energy sources.

FPL, the state's largest utility, owns one of the largest green vehicle fleets in the nation with 1,750 bio-diesel powered vehicles and 550 plug-in or hybrid electric vehicles.

Last year, the Florida Legislature passed a bill that encouraged commercial fleet owners to invest in new natural gas vehicles through grants.

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SFWMD approves 'Glades land swap

Staff report

The South Florida Water Management District's governing board unanimously approved a three-way land swap considered necessary for Everglades restoration, despite newly revealed cleanup costs estimated at up to \$23 million.

Approving the land swap with Florida Crystals and Gladeview, the two private companies involved in the transaction, required the district to exempt its actions from a policy requiring leases on district-owned land to be put out for public bid, and a rule requiring appraisals used in real estate transactions to be no more

than four months old at the time the deal is closed.

The appraisal is estimated to be nine months old by the time the deal closes.

The land swap means the district is handing over land worth up to \$24.7 million more than it is getting in return—in addition to the estimated \$7.5 million to \$23.2 million cost to cleanup the land contaminated with copper and toxaphene.

"It's not a perfect deal," said SFWMD Executive Director Blake Guillory, who inherited the deal in September, a year after negotiation began.

But he noted that it was the best deal the district could get.

FEDFILE
From Page 2

spective on the increasing use of pesticides on citrus crops to control psyllid moths that spread lethal greening, and on corn to control root worms.

The researchers said that EPA should focus its attention on toxicity of insecticides to honeybee larvae, and its risk assessments should consider toxicity of pesticides used in combinations.

In some parts of the country, the collapse of honeybee colonies has been so extensive that crop pollination is now seriously jeopardized.

There's no technological substitute for honeybee pollination, so the decline of bee colonies is a serious threat to the production of many crops.

Challenge to sonar. The National Marine Fisheries Service issued a permit to the U.S. Navy to use sonar in waters off the California and Hawaii coasts through 2018 during military training exercises.

In response, the Natural Resources Defense Council filed suit to restrict Navy operations in waters that are home to multiple species of marine mammals that depend on sound to communicate and navigate in ocean waters.

Specifically, the lawsuit challenged an analysis performed by NMFS on which the service based its decision to grant the permit.

NMFS estimated 155 marine mammal deaths, more than 2,000 permanent injuries, and 9.6 million instances of temporary hearing loss and disruption of vital behaviors as a result of mid-frequency sonar use in submarine training exercises.

Nevertheless, the service characterized its own estimates as having a "negligible impact" on marine mammals.

In addition, the Navy determined that its training exercises were consistent with California's Coastal Management Program, a conclusion that the California Coastal Commission unanimously rejected.

The NRDC filed suit in the U.S. District Court in San Francisco on behalf of five environmental organizations.

A week earlier, EarthJustice filed a similar suit in Hawaii on behalf of five other environmental groups.

Both lawsuits aim to limit Navy exercises and practices that activists say harm marine mammals.

They also want the Navy to restrict night training exercises to reduce whale strikes and to schedule their training exercises outside of biologically important seasons for marine mammals.

The groups claim that the estimated effects reflect a 1,100 percent increase over the previous five-year period of Navy activities and that authorizing such a level of harm is in violation of the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

The environmental groups' challenges are likely to face a steep uphill battle.

In 2008, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the Navy's efforts to ensure national security trumped marine mammal protection.

That particular case involved 170,000 harms to marine mammals over the course of two years.

This lawsuit alleged that the substantially larger number of "harms" now justifies the tighter restrictions that were rejected the first time around.

The lawsuits also alleged that new research since 2008 will support their claims of significant harms to marine mammal populations when they are driven from their usual habitats by military exercises.

A spokesperson for NRDC noted that the group's lawsuit does not ask that Navy training exercises be stopped.

The lawsuits ask that the fisheries service authorization be voided and reconsidered, that the Navy be required to comply with state and federal environmental laws without exceptions, and that Navy training be restricted to specific areas and specific times of the year that avoid biologically significant seasons for marine mammals.

Port Manatee officials ready to sign on to DEP pilot project agreement

By DAN MILLOTT

Port Manatee officials will likely sign off on an agreement with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection that will permanently designate 1,000 acres of port property for industrial use.

The port's board of directors reviewed a proposal in January that would make Port Manatee part of a DEP pilot program, similar to one just implemented with the Jacksonville Port Authority.

George Isiminger, PE, senior director of engineering, maintenance and environmental affairs at Port Manatee, said the deal will save time and money because the port will not have to file with the state for each incident when industrial contamination takes place.

Under the current rules, the port must adhere to residential standards for cleanups and monitoring. Those standards are in place to protect local drinking water wells from contamination.

As an industrial site, acceptable levels of contaminants would be higher than in a residential area since drinking water used in the port is supplied by the water utility. Currently if there is a chemical spill at the port, the state must review each incident to determine if it is truly industrial in na-

ture.

The port will still be responsible for cleaning up any spills, and must assure that the spill has stopped and has not spread beyond the facility's property line.

The agreement would require less groundwater sampling, testing and paperwork following a spill, and sampling would not have to show the extent of the groundwater plume.

While there may be some slight variations, the Port Manatee agreement will be similar to one that DEP carved out with the Jacksonville Port Authority.

The agency said that their agreement with JAXPORT is "an important milestone in an agreement to ensure that environmental protection is conducted in a more streamlined manner and that it is compatible with port business without a reduction in levels of protection to human health and the environment."

DEP insists that there are no changes in testing standards. The Jacksonville Port Authority is still required to monitor groundwater quality within their property frequently.

The department noted that the agreement "provides flexibility to the port in using it as a legally binding institutional control designed to avoid the negotiation of separate site-specific institutional controls for access to contaminated media. This is cost saving to the port and the taxpayer."

The master plan for the port does not foresee the construction of single-family homes on port property in the future.

The agreement allows the port flexibility in addressing future expansion and infrastructure upgrades in contaminated areas "as long as any potential exposure path-

way to contaminated media is eliminated or addressed, as required by law," according to DEP.

"This agreement can serve as a model for the department's work with all of Florida's ports as a way to address environmental issues while supporting the importance of ports to our state's economy," said Jeff Littlejohn, PE, DEP's deputy secretary for regulatory programs.

In announcing the Jacksonville port agreement, the department noted that, with the agreement in place, JAXPORT will be able to efficiently close out sites without administrative delays.

Stormwater grants available from DEP

Staff report

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection is soliciting grant applications from local governments to fund urban stormwater best management practices. Applications are due this month.

DEP administers the grant program with annual appropriations from the Florida Legislature. Awards are targeted at projects designed to restore impaired springs, rivers, lakes, and estuaries—those waterbodies that do not meet Florida's stringent water quality standards.

SINKHOLE

From Page 1

other environmental and ecological benefits from the project as well.

"It will result in aquatic life spawning," he said. "There are no environmental risks or dangers that we know of."

The city and the Southwest Florida Water Management District have entered into a funding agreement setting aside \$44.5 million to develop the resources of Sulphur Springs, Blue Sink and the Tampa Bypass Canal.

Baird said extensive pumping tests and feasibility analyses have been performed.

"All efforts indicate Blue Sink can reliably provide 3.1 cubic feet per second toward the Lower Hillsborough River minimum flow," he said.

The Lower Hillsborough River minimum flow rule requires the flow at the base of the Hillsborough River Dam to be 20-24 cfs depending on the time of year.

Baird said the Lower Hillsborough River recovery strategy has been adopted by rule to install the infrastructure necessary for minimum flow compliance.

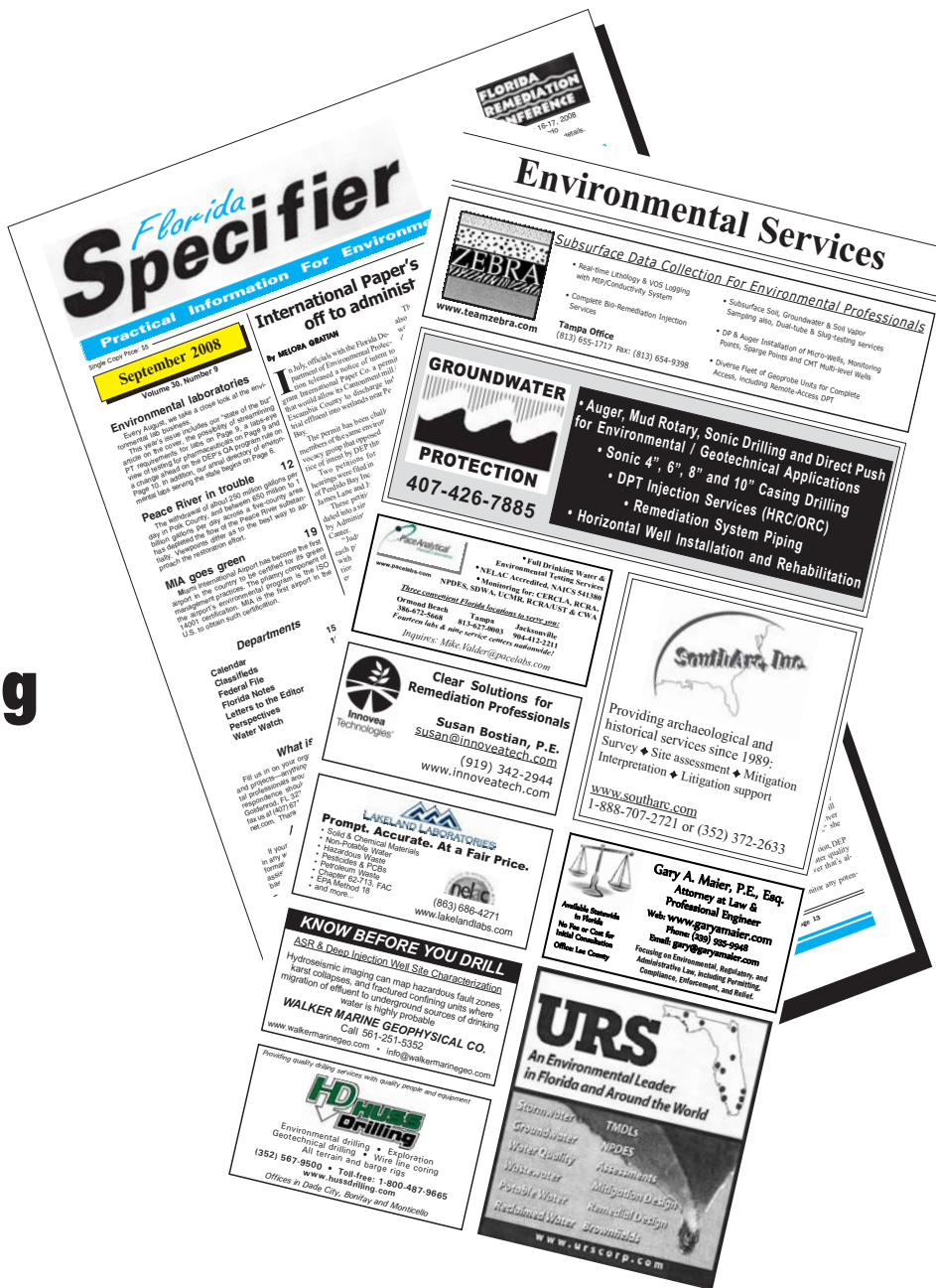
The recovery strategy names Sulphur Springs, Blue Sink, Tampa Bypass Canal and Morris Bridge Sink as resources for the Lower Hillsborough River minimum flow rule compliance.

In the permit application, city engineers said that, at most, the city would need to pump water from Blue Sink between 287 to 318 days out of the year. In some years, they might not need any water at all from the sink.

City studies show that none of the 800 wells within a one-mile radius is expected to be severely impacted by that amount of pumping.

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Contaminated Piney Point property sold to chemical company

By **BLANCHE HARDY, PG**

HRK Industries, owners of the Piney Point fertilizer plant responsible in part for contaminating HRK's Eastpoint Industrial Park, sold eight acres of property to Thatcher Chemicals of Florida LLC in a \$1.58 million deal approved by a federal bankruptcy judge last November. Thatcher currently occupies the site through a lease.

Thatcher Chemicals is part of the Salt Lake City-based Thatcher Company, a producer of food grade and industrial chemicals.

The Thatcher parcel is part of HRK's

fertilizer facility. The property contains the chemical plant, support structures and infrastructure.

Profit from this sale and two other approved sales involving approximately thirty acres is expected to relieve a portion of HRK's \$14 million debt, as well as resolve some outstanding environmental issues at the former fertilizer facility.

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection, along with Florida environmental contractors and service providers, are among those owed compensation under HRK's bankruptcy deal. The department's portion is \$1.2 million.

The Piney Point phosphate and fertil-

izer processing area has been an environmental and safety problem from near its conception in 1966 when Borden Chemical Co. first constructed a processing plant on the site.

Subsequent operations have resulted in contamination and investigations by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as well as DEP. Piney Point has been considered one of Florida's most environmentally threatened sites throughout its phosphate and fertilizer operations history.

Initially, county officials promoted the phosphate processing plant at Piney Point in order to support the shipping of fertilizer through Port Manatee. But within a few years, fish kills and cattle poisonings, attributed to process waste poisoning in the 1960s, gave way to enforcement actions for water and air pollution in the 1970s.

In 1989, a 23,000-gallon sulfuric acid spill required the evacuation of the surrounding area including Port Manatee. Two years later, two separate releases of sulfur dioxide and sulfur trioxide gas sickened people in the surrounding area.

The current issues began when Mul-

berry Corp. purchased the Piney Point plant from bankrupt Royster Phosphates Inc. in 1993.

After operating the plant for eight years, Mulberry notified DEP that they could no longer financially assure environmental security at the site. Forty-eight hours later, Mulberry abandoned the plant, subsequently declaring bankruptcy.

HRK Industries bought the facility from Mulberry in 2006, eventually receiving permission from DEP to use the then abandoned phosphogypsum stacks to store soils from the dredging of Port Manatee.

In 2011, a rip in a process storage liner released 170 million gallons of contaminated water into nearby Bishop Harbor. The rip was repaired, but the discovery of additional rips, grading deficiencies and collection of increasing volumes of rainwater in storage vessels prompted DEP to require corrective actions to prevent another spill. HRK declared bankruptcy.

With creditors owed \$21 million and site cleanups estimated in excess of \$50 million, it is likely that additional federal and state funds will be required to complete the cleanup.

the Escambia River.

According to DEP, it is estimated that over 100 gallons of crude oil was released from the pond in north Santa Rosa County earlier this year, some of it reaching the Escambia River.

Plant officials said that their response plan was activated, and all available means to contain and recover the oil were implemented upon discovery of the spill.

Recovery efforts were coordinated with local and state agencies, as well as contractors, to clean up the spill.

NNC

From Page 7

"Applying affected provisions of the consent decree prospectively is no longer equitable," he wrote.

At this point, the original lawsuit is completed. EarthJustice and its clients have the option to file an appeal with the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeal challenging Judge Hinkle's legal conclusion and its factual basis.

Reimer suggested that an appeal was likely to happen.

WATCH

From Page 4

DEP officials consider this project a significant step toward achieving the required nutrient reductions set for this spring system in 2012 as part of the restoration plan for the Santa Fe River and its associated springs.

Suwannee water quality project. The Suwannee River Water Management District and Lafayette County are coordinating a water quality improvement project on Lantana Road off of Highway 27 that will cut down on pollutants entering the Suwannee River, help to stabilize the riverbanks and treat stormwater runoff before it enters the river.

Lantana Road, a popular spot for the public to access the river, will soon undergo renovations that will improve the aquatic environment in the area.

Stormwater swales will be constructed along the road to capture the runoff, reduce its velocity and treat it before it goes into the river.

The district is providing \$36,875 to Lafayette County for the \$40,875 project via the Regional Initiative Valuing Environmental Resources cost-share program.

Escambia River crude oil spill. Cold weather may be the culprit that allegedly caused a holding-pond pump to fail, initiating a spill that flowed from a pond at a gas plant in Jay into a tributary creek of



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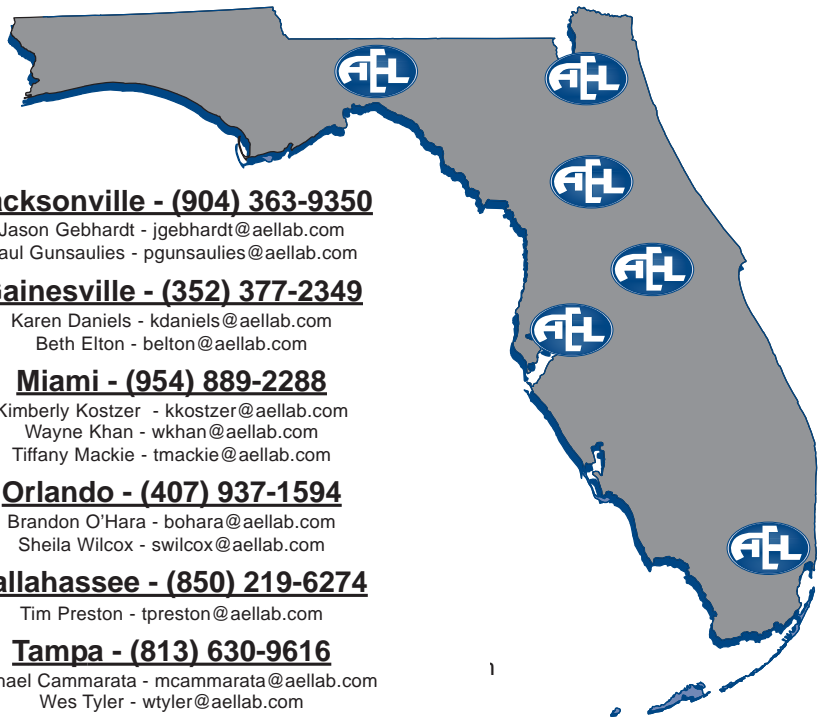
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