

e-Resource is a monthly electronic communiqué designed to keep you apprised of the community and legislative activities undertaken by the Southwest Florida Water Management District and provide up-to-date information on important water issues.



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Annual Water Conference Focuses on Hurricanes

The 31st Annual Conference on Water Management was held September 6–8 at the Westin-Innisbrook Resort in Palm Harbor, Florida. The conference, co-sponsored by the state's five water management districts and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, provided a forum for attendees to share information on emerging technologies, discuss policy and technical issues, and address challenges in managing Florida's water resources.

This year's conference had a record attendance of 610 water managers, state and local government officials, and representatives from academia and the business community. In addition, 38 companies provided information on their products and services.

Keynote speaker Max Mayfield, Director of the Tropical Prediction Center/National Hurricane Center, focused on the history of hurricane activity in Florida and how the current

weather phenomena is expected to affect the number and severity of future storms. Other speakers cited the eight hurricanes since 2004 that have had major impacts on Florida and discussed the "new reality" of water management. These storms caused serious damage to our state's infrastructure and homes and dramatically affected the lives of Florida's residents. Additional effects of these storms have contributed to the destruction of environmental restoration projects; degradation of water quality in rivers, lakes and estuaries; and impacted the financial and staff resources of water management districts and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, who are required to respond to the emergencies generated by the storms. Panelists shared information on comprehensive studies, new technologies and management practices to address these issues.

Field studies to the Lake Maggiore and the Kapok Park restoration sites were

also offered, along with two half-day workshops, including a workshop on low impact development that provided an opportunity for discussion on the implementation of low impact development methods and environmentally friendly approach to developing land and managing stormwater runoff.

The conference ended with a panel discussion on the state Water Protection and Sustainability Program and featured Senator Paula Dockery, sponsor of Senate Bill 444, the legislation that created the program. The Senator asked the panelists questions about the progress of the program and specifically if there are ways to improve it, including moving forward to increase funding for the program. This year, the Southwest Florida Water Management District received \$15 million for alternative water supply projects.

Stay tuned for information on the date and location of the 2007 water management conference.



At the annual conference, Audubon of Florida Policy Director, Eric Draper presents award to the Peace River/Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority for innovative use of alternative water supply strategies to benefit the environment. The award was accepted by DeSoto County Commissioner Jerry Hill, Chair of the Authority. Also pictured are State Senator Paula Dockery and SWFWMD Executive Director Dave Moore. This is first award Audubon has awarded to recognize an alternative water supply project.



Wetlands Bill Passes House *Federal Update*

The U.S. House of Representatives has passed the North American Wetlands Conservation Act (NAWCA). This legislation, first enacted in 1989, has authorized more than 1,500 conservation projects involving more than 3,200 partners, which has resulted in the protection and restoration of more than 23 million acres of wetlands.

Congressman Richard Pombo (R-CA), Chairman of the House Resources Committee, sponsored the legislation, and the bill has broad support from conservation organizations throughout the United States, as well as 20 co-sponsors, including Congressman Adam Putnam (R-FL).

The goal of the NAWCA is to conserve remaining wetland habitat. "Wetlands are among the world's most productive environments," said Congressman Pombo. "They are critical to the survival of birds, fish and wild-

life, as well as the people who live along our coasts." According to the U.S. Geological Survey, for every 2.7 miles a hurricane travels across marshes and wetlands, the storm surge is reduced by one foot.

For the past five years, Congress has appropriated approximately \$40 million each year for the program, and this legislation would extend existing funding levels for the next five years. However, under current law, the maximum authorization could be up to \$75 million a year in grants to states and local governments through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to do wetlands conservation work.

The House bill has been received in the Senate and the companion legislation, S. 3617, sponsored by Senator James Inhofe (R-OK), is currently on the Senate Calendar.

Upcoming Cooperative Funding Initiative Workshops

October 12, 2006 — 10:00 a.m.
Brooksville District Headquarters
2379 Broad Street, Brooksville, FL 34604-6899
*Citrus, Hernando, Lake, Levy, Marion, Pasco,
Sumter counties*
Contact Jimmy Brooks at (352) 527-8131

October 19, 2006 — 10:00 a.m.
Tampa Service Office
7601 U.S. Highway 301 North, Tampa, FL
33637-6759
Hillsborough, Pinellas counties
Contact Rand Baldwin at (813) 985-7481

October 19, 2006 — 2:00 p.m.
Sarasota Service Office
6750 Fruitville Road, Sarasota, FL 34240-9711
Charlotte, DeSoto, Manatee, Sarasota counties
Contact Terri Behling at (941) 377-3722

October 20, 2006 — 2:00 p.m.
Bartow Service Office
170 Century Boulevard, Bartow, FL 33830-7700
Hardee, Highlands, Polk counties
Contact Brett Cyphers at (863) 534-1448

The Senate Committee on Environmental Preservation has undertaken three projects during the interim, two stemming from legislation passed during the 2006 Session. House Bill 1347 appropriated \$310 million for the acquisition of the Babcock Crescent B Ranch, created a nonprofit corporation to operate and manage portions of the ranch, and created a citizen support organization to be operated for both the direct and indirect benefit of the ranch. Committee staff will review the acquisition process, the creation of the nonprofit corporation, as well as the submission of the plans required under the law.

Legislation passed to implement the Northwest Florida Water Management District (NFWFMD) Environmental Resource Permitting program with the NFWFMD and DEP developing rules for the program jointly. Rulemaking is under way and committee staff will monitor this process, as well as the use

of the \$2.74 million appropriated for the implementation of the program.

The Water Protection and Sustainability Program has entered its second year, providing state funds for alternative water supply projects along with substantive criteria for the program. In 2006, the Legislature appropriated \$60 million statewide for alternative water supply project construction costs. Committee staff will continue to monitor the progress of this program, including rules and procedures adopted for the program and Governing Board actions that involve project selection.

Southwest Florida
Water Management District

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