

Florida STORMWATER EDUCATION

Resources for Stormwater Education from the Stormwater Management Academy—University of Central Florida



Volume 10 Number 3

Summer 2009

Scoop it, Bag it, Trash it!

Stacie Greco, Alachua County EPD

Alachua County's Environmental Protection Department (ACEPD) recently unleashed a pet waste public outreach campaign. The effort is funded by the Gainesville Clean Water Partnership and has the lofty goal of making cleaning up after your pup a community norm.

ACEPD is leading this campaign due to high bacteria levels in Gainesville's urban creeks. Common sources of this fecal pollution are leaky wastewater infrastructure, failing septic systems, urban campers, pet wastes, and wildlife. Wildlife sources are almost impossible to control, while faulty wastewater infrastructure and septic systems can be difficult to locate and expensive to repair. Pet waste is a source that can be significantly reduced by modifying the behavior of pet owners.

The campaign is using social marketing techniques to encourage citizens to adopt the desired behavior of scooping, bagging, and trashing pet wastes. For example, research shows that one of the barriers to this behavior is not having a bag with you when your dog does its business. To overcome this barrier, ACEPD is distributing bag dispensers with the catchy "scoop it, bag it, trash it" logo for citizens to attach to their dogs' leashes. Key chain flashlights should prove helpful for those that say they cannot see it when their dogs go out at night.



PHOTO COURTESY ALACHUA COUNTY

The campaign was also designed to reinforce the benefits of cleaning up after pets. One of two commercials heavily aired on television highlights this point as a little girl jumps across the screen shouting for her mommy after stepping in some poop that was not scooped.

This commercial will also be shown in local movie theaters this summer.

ACEPD recognizes that the messenger can be just as important as the message, and that citizens are more likely to clean up after their pets if encouraged to do so by their veterinarians. ACEPD has partnered with local veterinarians, supplying them with posters, pamphlets, and magnets to distribute and discuss with their clients.

To help determine the success of the pet waste campaign, a pre-campaign telephone survey was conducted, establishing a baseline for self-reported behaviors and beliefs. A post-campaign survey will be conducted and compared to the baseline results.

Learn more about Alachua County's new Pet Waste Program online at www.AlachuaCountyWater.org, or contact Stacie Greco at 352.264.6829.

Poo-lution Ad Earns People's Choice Award

Alachua County's Environmental Protection Department earned the 2009 People's Choice Award at the National Nonpoint and Stormwater Outreach Conference in Portland, Ore., on May 13.

The ads aim to combat "poo-lution" from cat and dog waste as many of the creeks in Alachua County are listed as Impaired Waters by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, due to their high levels of fecal coliform bacteria.

In his acceptance speech for a county press release, department director Chris Bird thanked senior environmental specialist Stacie Greco

for her work in obtaining funding for designing and implementing the pet waste campaign. Bird said, "These public service announcements are a key element of Alachua County EPD's public outreach campaign designed to encourage citizens to scoop, bag, and trash pet waste at home and around the community." Bird thanked the Gainesville Clean Water Partnership for funding the campaign.

Sources: June 2009 *DIG* Newsletter, Indigo, North Central Florida's Green Building Supply Store, www.indigogreenstore.com; *The Gainesville Sun*, May 25, 2009, www.gainesville.com.



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Spotlight on Nanette Holland O'Hara

Public Outreach Coordinator, Tampa Bay Estuary Program

What is your professional background?

My background is in journalism and communications. I graduated with a B.S. in Journalism from the University of Florida in 1982 and then worked for the next 13 years as a newspaper reporter specializing in science and environmental issues for Florida TODAY, the Florida Times-Union, and The Tampa Tribune. I left the frantic world of daily newspapers in 1995 and owned my own environmental writing and communication business for the next three years. The Tampa Bay Estuary Program was among my first clients. I came to work full-time for TBEP in 1998, and have been here ever since.

What are your responsibilities as public outreach coordinator of the Tampa Bay Estuary Program?

On a broad level, I am responsible for communicating the program's goals and successes to the media and the public, and for developing strategies to improve community awareness of bay problems and solutions. I work with a variety of partners to develop and implement educational programs, targeting diverse audiences from waterfront homeowners to K-12 teachers, to boaters and anglers. I also coordinate production of all external communications, including our newsletter, our website (www.tbep.org), news releases, and special reports.

Describe several successful programs you have implemented with the Tampa Bay Estuary Program.

I am most proud of a 60-minute documentary film I produced about four years ago, called "Tampa Bay: Living Legacy," that chronicled the natural and cultural history of the bay, its gradual decline, and recent recovery. The film aired on both our local PBS stations. We also developed a high school teaching curriculum to accompany the film.

Ongoing educational campaigns that I developed (and am still expanding) include our "Eyes on the Bay" program to enlist citizens in monitoring for and eradicating invasive plants and animals, and our "Bay-Friendly Boater" program that provides special kits containing information and useful tools to promote environmentally friendly boating.

Describe the new program you are initiating to reduce pet waste pollution in the Tampa Bay area.

A few years ago, I launched a pet waste education effort called "Pooches for the Planet" to promote proper disposal of doggy doo, preventing nutrient and bacterial contamination of our waters. I've tried to give this admittedly "icky" subject a light, humorous treatment in my campaign materials while still making the point that Fido's droppings can seriously impact our lakes, rivers, and bays. I've utilized a number of social marketing techniques in these efforts, with some heartening success. I did extensive education in my own waterfront neighborhood along the Hillsborough River, setting up a pet waste "Information Station" monthly for 8 months to talk to dog owners utilizing our park about the importance of picking up after their dogs. I asked them to take a survey to assess their knowledge of dog waste as an environmental problem, and in return gave them magnets and "Bags on Board" bag dispensers that clip to their dog's leash, so they'd always have a bag for pet waste handy. The City of Tampa generously agreed to add two additional pet waste bag stations in the park.



I monitored my success by mapping the number of dog poop piles in our park and greenway using a handheld GPS unit. Over the 8-month research period, I documented a 48% decrease in poop piles!

Now I am expanding the program to other neighborhoods, animal shelters, vet clinics,

and pet supply stores. Vet clinics and pet supply outlets are provided with "Pooches for the Planet" educational materials, along with a personal visit from one of our "Pooches" emissaries to encourage them to display the materials and answer any questions.

A special promotion is being launched with animal shelters in the region to provide eco-friendly

"Pooches for the Planet" tote bags containing goodies and information to all who adopt a dog or puppy from a shelter. Adoptive "parents" who complete a follow-up survey are eligible for great prizes, including gift certificates for dog training classes and vet care.

Doorhangers are provided on request to Tampa Bay area neighborhoods so residents can deliver the message of responsible pet ownership and care, directly to their neighbors.

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Movements In Hillsborough County: From Study to Action

*John McGee, Hillsborough County
Stormwater Environmental
Programs Coordinator*

Hillsborough County has recently completed the first phase of a project to reduce bacterial contamination of our lakes and rivers from pet waste that is left outside. Phase One of this project was to characterize the population of pet owners. After a thorough literature search to find out what has already been done, Hillsborough County Stormwater Environmental Programs conducted a series of focus groups and an internet survey.

The focus group locations were selected by cross referencing zip codes with the highest dog populations and water bodies that are impaired with bacteria. It was no surprise that these tended to be the three most populous areas of suburban development. A focus group was held in each of these areas as well as at the annual Lake, Pond and Stream Night educational event hosted by the Stormwater Environmental Programs. Focus group

participants were selected from pet stores, veterinary offices, and dog clubs.

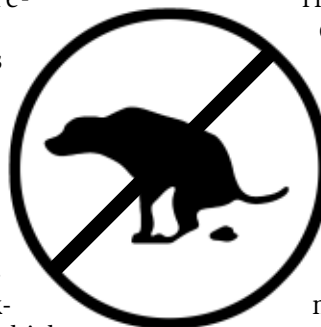
In addition, an online survey was developed and advertised through various email lists and websites. The survey received 201 responses.

The survey and focus groups revealed that the primary dog walkers are by far women between the ages of 20 and 50 from middle to upper middle class suburban communities. Most respondents identified dog walking as a social activity in which they could connect with friends and neighbors. Not surprisingly, most said they always pick up after their dogs.

Respondents seemed reasonably knowledgeable about problems associated with pet waste. They identified that cleaning up after their dogs was a matter of health, personal responsibility, and respect for others. Many people also identified a lack of education, lack

of disposal facilities, forgetting bags, and general “ickiness” as barriers to cleaning up waste.

Following this characterization study, Hillsborough County Stormwater Environmental Programs plans to develop a pilot project to encourage scooping of waste in areas where disposal facilities are not offered, such as neighborhood blocks and road right-of-ways. This will compliment additional pet waste pilots in dog parks and community commons being conducted in Pinellas County by the Tampa Bay Estuary Program. The goal of the pilot phase of the program will be to determine the best ways to encourage people to clean up after their dogs. Phase Three will involve wider scale implementation of the project.



For more information contact John McGee, mcgee@hillsboroughcounty.org, or 813.744.5671. View the full report or find out more about Hillsborough County Stormwater Environmental Programs at www.hillsborough.wateratlas.org.

At a Glance...

Waste Education and Eradication Project

With a grant generously supplied by the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program (www.sarasotabay.org/), the City of Bradenton Beach through its advisory committee the SCENIC WAVES Partnership is ready to implement its project to eradicate pet waste from the city's land and waters.

Ten pet waste stations have been installed in locations along the bayfront and adjacent lands. Each station is visible in the right-of-way with signage and a “biobag” dispenser. The free-to-the-public biodegradable bags are meant to encourage responsibility among



pet owners. An associated education campaign has begun with door hangers and media ads. For more information contact Lisa Marie Phillips at 941-778-4619, or email: lmphillips@cityofbradentonbeach.com.

Sewage-Sniffing Dog Hunts for E. Coli Sources Along Michigan River

Bay City, Michigan writer Jeff Kart introduces Sable, a sewage-sniffing dog, in the September 16, 2008 *Bay City Times*. Sable is trained to sniff out the scent of human sewage and surfactants used in household detergents to detect illicit and failing septic connections that flow from homes into rivers and streams. Sable spent the summer of 2008 training and working in the Flint and Lansing, Michigan areas, sniffing out sewage and finding several illicit connections. — http://blog.mlive.com/bctimes/2008/09/get_a_whiff_of_this_sewagesnif.html.

Stop Poo-Lution Poster Gallery



"Love the Dog, Hate the Doo"
City of Orlando
www.cityoforlando.net



**"This Footwear Is
Never In Fashion"**
Alachua County
www.alachuacounty.us



"Dogs Can't Flush"
Alachua County
www.alachuacounty.us



"Pet Waste Pollutes"
Sarasota County
www.sarasota.wateratlas.usf.edu

Reducing Pet Waste Pollution: Ideas and Resources for Outreach

"Pick It Up It's Your Doodie." Brochure from Cobb County, Georgia.

http://watershed.cobbcountyga.gov/pdfFiles/pet_waste_brochure.pdf

"If you think picking up dog poop is unpleasant, try swimming in it." Poster, Cobb County.

http://watershed.cobbcountyga.gov/pdfFiles/cwc_petwaste_poster.pdf

"Pollution Prevention Fact Sheet: Animal Waste Collection." Includes results from a dog waste collection survey and other study information and references.

www.stormwatercenter.net/Pollution_Prevention_Factsheets/AnimalWasteCollection.htm

Downloadable pet waste posters (24). Snohomish County, Washington. See samples at right.

http://www1.co.snohomish.wa.us/Departments/Public_Works/Divisions/SWM/Services/Water_Pollution/Pet_Waste_Posters.htm

Downloadable pet waste fact sheet. City of Carmel, Indiana.

www.ci.carmel.in.us/services/Engineering/stormwaterPDF2009/Pet%20Waste%20FactSheet%20Carmel.pdf

Orange County, Florida's Pet Waste Web Page.

www.orangecountyfl.net/cms/DEPT/CEsrvc/animal/Pick+up+After+Your+Pet.htm

Stormwater Management Academy's Pet Waste Video!

www.stormwater.ucf.edu/research/H2O4U_p3_puppy_videos.htm

A study and review of several promising pet waste reduction programs based on general barriers and benefits to pet waste removal.

www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/files/social_research_docs/Pet_Waste_Final_Report.pdf



Spotlight on Nanette Holland O'Hara

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What educational goals will the Tampa Bay Estuary Program focus on next?

I'm currently working with a talented group of colleagues on a social marketing campaign to convince homeowners NOT to fertilize their lawns during our summer rainy season to reduce nitrogen runoff. The campaign stems from a model ordinance regulating residential fertilizer use that the Tampa Bay Estuary Program developed at the request of our Policy Board. The ordinance includes a groundbreaking retail ban on the sale of lawn fertilizers containing nitrogen and phosphorous from June–September; it's been adopted by the city of St. Petersburg and is slated for consideration shortly in Manatee and Pinellas counties.

Our Policy Board also has asked us to lead development of a regional educational campaign about the ordinance. I anticipate that much of my time over the next few years will be devoted to this effort.

"Getting the Scoop on Poop" rack cards and fact sheets are available as PDFs online at www.tbep.org/publications/downloads.html.

Grant Opportunities

Attention Coastal Stormwater Educators!

National Marine Sanctuary Foundation's Ernest F. Hollings Ocean Awareness Trust Fund

The Foundation seeks to fund projects that educate and engage the public to increase their awareness of ocean issues and understanding of their relevance to future health and well-being. The Foundation will only consider projects that address these specific issues: **marine debris, human interaction with marine mammals, runoff and pollution, or public health issues** such as red tides or marine pharmaceuticals. Projects must include a conservation component **and** an outreach component. Visit www.nmsfocean.org/article/2009/07/01/announcing-request-proposals-ernest-f-hollings-ocean-awareness-trust-fund.

Proposal deadline is **August 14**. Please direct questions to Allison Alexander at allison@nmsfocean.org or 301-608-3040, x3.

NEA Foundation Offering Green Grants

Deadlines for applications are June 1, **October 15**, and February 1. "Green" grants will be emphasized this year where students learn about and are engaged in environmental preservation and protection. Public Schools are eligible and average award amounts are \$5,000. Visit www.neafoundation.org/grants.htm.

Upcoming Events

Watershed Institute

The Institute is targeted for watershed leaders in local government, watershed groups, and consultants. Special characteristics of the Southeast will be covered.

When: September 22–25, 2009

Where: Columbia, SC

Web: www.cwp.org/Calendar/WI09/WI09.html

Evaluation 2009

The American Evaluation Association's annual conference will bring together approximately 2500 evaluation practitioners, academics, and students, and represents a unique opportunity to gather with professional colleagues in a supportive, invigorating, atmosphere.

When: November 11–14, 2009

Where: Rosen Shingle Creek Resort, Orlando

Web: www.eval.org/eval2009/

2009 Florida Stormwater Association Winter Conference

Technical and policy-oriented workshops. There will be a pre-conference tour of stormwater projects in the Tampa area!

When: December 2–4, 2009

Where: Hyatt Regency, Tampa

Web: www.florida-stormwater.org/conferences/conference2009_winter.htm

Does your organization have an upcoming stormwater-related event? Send announcements to elise@editype.com.

Stormwater Management Academy
Managed stormwater is good water.



Florida Stormwater Education is produced by the Stormwater Management Academy. Funding is provided by a Section 319 Non-point Source Management Program Grant from US EPA through a contract with Stormwater/NPS Management Section of the Florida DEP.

Stormwater Management Academy

Public Education Programs

108 S. Babcock Street

Melbourne, Florida 32901

Phone: 321.722.2123

Email: lsouto@mail.ucf.edu

Newsletter email: elise@editype.com

Website: www.stormwater.ucf.edu

Executive Director: Marty Wanielista
Director of Public Education: Leesa Souto
Newsletter Coordinator: Elise Cassie
Newsletter Design: Gerry Cervenka

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INSIDE: Getting a Grip on Pool-tution

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