

**Springs Education and Outreach Campaigns
Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)
Meeting Summary**

**June 23, 2022, via Teams
9:30 AM – 11:42 AM**

Attendees

Nicky Aiken, Silver Springs State Park
Alys Brockway, Hernando County
Stacy Burke, Volusia County
Tiffany Busby, Wildwood Consulting
Lauren Campbell, DEP
Jessica Fetgatter, DEP
Hollie Greer, Alachua County
Sam Hankinson, DEP
Mark Heidecker, Tallahassee
Moirra Homann, DEP
Alyse Howell, Volusia County
Nathan Jagoda, DEP
Chandler Keenan, DEP-DWRA
Laura La Beaur, SJRWMD
Marie Lackey, Seminole County
Emily Lawson, Orange County
Craig Littauer, DEP State Parks-D2
Tina McIntyre, FFL Agent/Seminole Co.
Megan Martin, Volusia County

Nick Mccray, Lake County Public Works
Dorian Morgan, Uppercase Inc
Joss Nageon de Lestang, Marion County
Rachel Novak, Marion County
Gordon Onderdonk, Hernando County
Amanda Peck, DEP-NPS Management
Troy Roberts, SRWMD
Rachel Novak, Leesburg
Rick Owen, District Biologist, DEP State Parks-D2
Michele A. Sager, SWFWMD
Courtney Schoen, Tallahassee
Marcus Thompkins, DEP-DWRA
Gordon Onderdonk, Hernando County
Gabriel Vicari, UF-IFAS/Marion Co.
Shannon Wetzell, Seminole Co.
Kelly Young, Volusia County
Yilin Zhuang, UF-IFAS/Central and N. Central FL

Welcome and Introductions

Introductions

Lauren introduced herself as the new coordinator of these meetings, taking over from Mary Paulic, who retired last year. Everyone introduced themselves.

DEP Updates

Lauren reported that there is a new division director, Kim Shugar, and a new deputy director, Ken Weaver, for the Division of Environmental Assessment and Restoration (DEAR). Also, the 2021 STAR report that includes BMAP project, TMDL updates, and other information on water supply will be posted online before July 1st. She added that the project updates will all be done online now through a project portal. Finally, DEP is expanding the springs monitoring network.

Lauren noted at the last meeting there was a green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) presentation last time by Dr. Eban Bean and Nathan Jagoda. She asked if there are any questions about that tool. And initial feedback on these items? There were no comments. Amanda added that DEP is hoping to add more messaging this year to the publication tool.

Comment: Craig stated, "I just wanted to say I really like the NPS publication tool that I've used so far. I've only done a little bit with the flyers and posters for RVs using campground dump station for wastewater. Helpful for new campers. Overall, the tool seems very promising."

Q: Tina asked if Lauren could share the website to the publications tool.

A: The nonpoint source publication tool is here: <https://npspublications.com>. Also, the GSI site is located here: <https://gsi.floridadep.gov>.

"Gauging Impacts From Fertilizer Education: A New Tool"- Tina McIntyre, Seminole County

Q: What is the website for the study publication?

A: The publication is available here: <https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/SS705>.

Q: Alys Brockway noted in Hernando County, they have had difficulty getting into the big box stores. Are you working with the store managers or the corporate office?

A: We are mostly using the Master Gardeners, IFAS Extension; they have been helpful because they were already set up at a Lowe's Help Desk and already had a presence in the stores. They also spoke to the regional manager that helped with implementation. With local nurseries and Ace Hardware stores that are franchises, you need to go to each one directly.

Q: Courtney asked if most people hire professional fertilizers or performed by homeowners.

A: Tina responded that it is pretty split between the two. The homeowners seem excited about trying to learn about their yard and what to do. It does depend on the neighborhood; the more affluent properties tend to hire out, but they still like to know the information.

Q: Chandler stated it is impressive to see the accumulated impacts for the watershed. Can you talk a little bit more about how you promoted / targeted the participants?

A: Tina replied that Saturday classes were poorly attended; there was too much competition with other fun, weekend events. Weekday classes were better attended. The free bag of fertilizer really promoted attendance and even had repeat

attendance. The continuing education units (CEUs) requirements also helped for professional applicators. Incentives seem to be key for attendance. Most people will not select a fertilizer class without some incentive. They use Facebook, collaborating with other counties, etc. to get the word out.

Q: Could you talk more about the survey methods you used to capture results? Did you have good participation in the surveys from the workshops?

A: Tina commented they use Qualtrics through the University of Florida. Qualtrics is a very high-quality survey system. The survey tool also sends an email reminder to fill out the survey. The reminders help with the response rate and are based on getting the email address from the citizen.

“Save Our Springs and Rivers”- Megan Martin and Dorian Morgan, Volusia County

Q: Laura La Beaur asked, “Do you know why there was such a decline in sample size for the evaluation survey vs. the pretest?”

A: Dorian answered that the sample size was related to the budget. We knew that the budget was low for the evaluation, but we still wanted to gather some results. The survey was based on a 95 % confidence with a 5 % error plus or minus, so it is a valid survey despite the survey size for the post-campaign being smaller than the pretest survey.

Q: Moira asked if there was overlap in the workshop/ Academy attendees and the survey respondents.

A: Megan responded that they didn’t look into the overlap potential. Dorian added that for the pre-test, there was no overlap because the workshops had not yet been held; the dates were delayed because of the Covid pandemic.

“Think About Personal Pollution (TAPP) to Address Nonpoint Source Pollution (NPS)”- Mark Heidecker, City of Tallahassee

[TAPP - Think About Personal Pollution \(tappwater.org\)](http://tappwater.org)

Comment: Mark noted that the city sometimes creates “reverse graffiti” using a stencil and a pressure washer to discourage blowing lawn waste into the storm sewer.

Q: Lauren asked for how long will the PSAs run.

A: For last year’s campaign, they ran a lot. The fertilizer campaigns is running now for six weeks. The Wakulla springs will be ongoing. It’s long so social media and other sites. Leon Co. is also using the Wakulla springs. The city has a septic-to-sewer

program as does Leon County. It supports those projects and others in the plans. The wastewater treatment feasibility study and the master plan for septic systems.

Q: Tiffany asked if the public service announcements (PSAs) and other media cover much of Wakulla County, where Wakulla Spring is located.

A: Mark replied that, yes, the media reaches Wakulla County somewhat. The city does get calls from residents from the larger, regional area based on the campaigns.

Q: Moira noted that she likes how the springs PSA focuses on the good things about the springs and not on the bad things/the problems. It's nice to see some messaging that is positive.

A: Mark added that the Wakulla Springs water quality is improving with a 70 % decline in nitrates over the past 15 years, so the city tries to show that there are good things that have been happening. Some of the local groups really preach gloom and doom, so it is important that people are aware that the efforts have improved the springs.

Q: Chandler asked, "Are y'all doing any evaluation to track impact - surveys after the campaigns, hits on the website, number of people looking into the septic-to-sewer conversion program?"

A: Mark responded, yes, we used to perform more of a formal process with a survey company. Now, they use data analytics through marketing firms. For example, how long were they on the website, did they watch the whole thing?, how long did they watch? They use those tools much more than cold call surveys. Yes, they have a septic-to-sewer program and so does Leon County.

***"New Fertilizer Ordinance / Education and Septic Upgrade Incentive Program"-
Emily Lawson, Orange County***

Q: Alys asked, "Does your fertilizer ordinance cover commercial applications? Do you have an idea (guess even) of the number of people applying their own fertilizer vs. having it applied by a lawn care company?"

A: Emily replied that the commercial applications are covered by the ordinance too. In the 2008 survey by the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD)-- they looked at the professional versus homeowner application rates, but those results were disputed by other data. We estimate about 50 % are homeowner applied. Alys added that they (Hernando County) have a waiting list for their septic system upgrades. You may wish to check with Citrus County as they opened and shut their subsidy program to see how they promoted their program. Emily responded that even when they reached out to residents, no one yet has completed the entire application. Alys will send Emily some contact information.

Q: Laura commented, "I really love your PowerPoint template!"

A: Thank you!

Q: Courtney asked about the fertilizer nonapplication zone to 25 feet.

A: Emily replied that if a property is adjacent to a waterbody, the expanded the fertilizer nonapplication area to 25 feet.

Update of Agency Activities

Amanda shared that DEP *Flip My Florida Yard-Season 3* television program applications are open now. Season 2 will be airing soon, starting at the end of July. Amanda requested help getting the word out for volunteers for Season 3. The first known Season 2 airdates for PBS are as follows: Sunday 7/24/22 @ noon on WXEL Channel 42 serving Boynton Beach & West Palm and 7/24/22 @ 11 am on WPBT Channel 2 serving Miami.

Shannon gave a Seminole County project update. The county has a DEP grant for groundwater well monitoring in the Wekiwa Springshed. This expanded the geographic area of the groundwater monitoring. They are trying to determine the nitrate source evaluation using isotopic data. That will help pinpoint what types of projects they need and to match the education efforts to those nitrate sources. They had 11 groundwater wells that were not being sampled for some years. The county contracted with Wood to assess the existing wells and seven were deemed functional and then the county added four additional wells, taking land uses and septic system use into account. Wood starting sampling the wells at the beginning of the year. A mid-project will be provide in August 2022 and the sampling will be completed by the end of 2022. The data will be combined with data from Orange County.

Lauren provided a link to the FDEP Business Portal to sign up for a login for future BMAP project updates. Please ask everyone who will be performing project updates to set up a login by July 31st.

<https://www.fldepportal.com/DepPortal/go/home>

Wrap-Up and Next Steps

Lauren noted that the next meeting will be in the October timeframe and may be in person or a hybrid. Lauren will reach out to the group to select a date.

The meeting ended at 11:42 am.

Action Items

Alys--Send Emily some contact information for Citrus County.

Lauren—Schedule the next meeting, with October as a target date.