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Partnership News

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SUWANNEE RIVER Partnership

MEMBERS

Suwannee River Water Management District (Chair)
Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Florida Department of Health
Florida Department of Community Affairs
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. Geological Survey, Water Resources Division
Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University's Center for Water Quality
University of Florida, Institute for Food and Agricultural Sciences
Florida Rural Water Association
Suwannee River Resource Conservation and Development Council, Inc.
Gold Kist, Inc.
Southeastern Milk Producers
Florida Farm Bureau Federation
Florida Cattlemen's Association
Florida Fertilizer and Agrichemical Association
Florida Forestry Association

Florida Poultry Federation, Inc.
Florida Onsite Wastewater Association
Anderson Columbia Co., Inc
Nestlé Waters of North America
PCS Phosphate
Coca-Cola Dannon
The following Soil and Water Conservation Districts:
Alachua, Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lafayette, Levy, Madison, Santa Fe, Suwannee
The following County Commissions:
Alachua, Bradford, Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lafayette, Levy, Madison, Suwannee, Taylor, Union
The following Cities and Towns:
Alachua, Bell, Fanning Springs, High Springs, Lake City, Newberry, Starke, Trenton, White Springs
Adopt-A-River
Santa Fe Springs Working Group
Suwannee American Cement, LLC

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You may also contact Darrell Smith, Hugh Thomas or Joel Love at 386-362-0431.

BMPs SAVE MONEY for Bradford County Strawberry Growers

Combined efforts from the University of Florida, Bradford County Extension, University of Florida BMP Specialists and the Suwannee River Water Management District have resulted in the adoption of more efficient farming practices by Adam and Drew Wainwright of Wainwright Farms.



The Wainwright Farm is growing 7 acres of strawberries this season using Best Management Practices.

The Wainwright's took advantage of a cost share program sponsored by the Suwannee River Partnership that helped them acquire their own soil moisture and plant nutrient monitoring equipment. The monies also provided a laptop computer that is used to record and study the amount of water used by the crop. In addition to the equipment, the University of Florida provided technical field personnel to teach the Wainwright's how to use the equipment. By learning how to use this technology they will have the ability to apply these same principles on all of the crops they produce.

The Wainwright's were able to use the

information gained regarding strawberry crop water demand by irrigating only with the amount of water the crop could use at that time. The Bradford County water table is shallow, due to the close hard pan, and this information is tailored to those types of soils. Since fertilizer is delivered through the irrigation

system, any change in water management affects nutrient application. By closely monitoring nutrient levels in the plants, the Wainwright's were able to apply only the fertilizer the plant required.

It is hoped that more Farmers in the region will take advantage of these principles on their farms. All area growers and gardeners are welcome to attend a demonstration workshop on the Wainwright Farm in Bradford County on March 5th, 2007. Call 904-966-6224 for more information.

—Jim DeValerio, Bradford County Extension Agent



UF/IFAS Extension Agent, Jim DeValerio (right), shows Adam Wainwright (left) how to use a Sap Meter which detects the nutrient status of vegetable plants.

TOTAL MAXIMUM DAILY LOADS—Program Overview

What is a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL)?

A TMDL is the maximum amount of a given pollutant that a water body can absorb and still maintain its designated uses (e.g., drinking, fishing, swimming, shellfish harvesting). One water body may have several TMDLs, one for each targeted pollutant. Some pollutants for which TMDLs have been set include: total phosphorus, total nitrogen, iron etc.

Under Section 303(d) of the federal Clean Water Act and section 403.067 Florida Statutes (the Florida Watershed

Restoration Act), TMDLs must be developed for all waters that are not meeting their designated uses and, consequently, are defined as "impaired waters."

What do we expect to accomplish through the TMDL Program?

- **Cleaner Water** through more collaborative restoration efforts, with increased public involvement.

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PARTNER'S PERSPECTIVE: Wilbur Dean



Wilbur Dean, Soil and Conservation Board Member and Farmer

As a member of a Soil and Conservation Board, one might search far and wide and not come up with a better example of locally led conservation than that of CARES, County Alliance for Responsible Environmental Stewardship.

As a farmer, when I first heard the acronyms BMPs (Best Management Practices) I cringed because I wasn't sure how big a hammer I was going to be nailed with.

The Suwannee River Partnership has proven itself to be much more than just another regulatory agency by their total commitment to this project. The parameters for the BMP's have been developed locally and tested on our farms. The sound science and good stewardship practices encouraged through this program are ones that most farmers implemented already.

In this day of finger pointing and lawsuits, BMP's management programs and record keeping provide the documentation that is needed to prove that plant fertilizer and insecticide is applied using environmentally sound methods that will prevent leaching into our waterways or aquifers. The livestock, dairy and poultry industries also incorporate these same type practices to ensure that future generations will receive and enjoy a quality of natural resources that is as good as or better than the resources we have today.

The cost share and technical assistance programs have allowed farmers to retool and calibrate their equipment for maximum efficiency. With today's narrow profit margin this is often the difference between profit and loss.

The distinction of being a CARES farm is also like a certificate of certification that these farms have proven that they hold themselves to a higher performance standard. I am glad to see the positive, proactive approach of recognizing and highlighting these farm families.

Total Maximum Daily Loads—Program Overview

continued from page 1

- **Better Use of Science** to understand how human activities affect water resources in specific locations and cumulatively throughout our watersheds.
- **Better Protection** for water bodies, as people give more attention to preventing and reducing human impacts on water resources.

- **Better Working Relationships** among people and organizations at all levels in the public and private sectors.

How will TMDLs be developed and implemented?
TMDLs will be developed, allocated, and implemented through a watershed-based management approach (managing water resources within their natural boundaries) that addresses the state's major hydrologic basins organized into five groups.

Each group will undergo a cycle of five phases on a rotating schedule:

Phase 1: Preliminary Evaluation of water quality

Phase 2: Strategic Monitoring and Assessment to verify water quality impairments

Phase 3: Development and Adoption of TMDLs for waters verified as impaired

Phase 4: Development of Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP) to achieve the TMDL

Phase 5: Implementation of the BMAP and monitoring of results

For specific activities that take place in each phase, log onto dep.state.fl.us

DEP DISTRICT	GROUP 1 BASINS	GROUP 2 BASINS	GROUP 3 BASINS	GROUP 4 BASINS	GROUP 5 BASINS
NW	Ochlockonee St. Marks	Apalachicola Chipola	Choctawhatchee St. Andrews Bay	Pensacola Bay	Perdido Bay
NE	Suwannee	Lower St. Johns		Nassau St. Marys	Upper East Coast
Central	Ocklawaha	Middle St. Johns	Upper St. Johns	Kissimmee	Indian River Lagoon
SW	Tampa Bay	Tampa Bay Tributaries	Sarasota Bay Peace—Myakka	Withlacoochee	Springs Coast
S	Everglades West Coast	Charlotte Harbor	Caloosahatchee	Fisheating Creek	Florida Keys
SE	Lake Okeechobee	St. Lucie Loxahatchee	Lake Worth Lagoon—Palm Beach Coast	Biscayne Bay S.E. Coast	Everglades

IRRIGATION WORKSHOPS

Producers from Gilchrist, Levy, Lafayette, Hamilton, Suwannee and Madison counties attended irrigation schools facilitated by UF/IFAS Extension and the Suwannee River Partnership. The January workshops covered irrigation and nutrient management planning during the morning session. The afternoon was spent visiting demonstrations of irrigation tools, nutrient diagnostic tools, GPS systems and sprayer calibration technology. Over 100 producers attended the three area school locations.



Left: Mace Bauer from UF/IFAS demonstrates irrigation management tools



Above: Sprayer technology and calibration demonstration



Left: Using nutrient diagnostic tools

Dates to REMEMBER

- March 1 – May 31** Florida Yards and Neighborhoods Master Gardener Training, Levy, Dixie, Gilchrist Co. Extension, contact Anthony Drew 352-486-5131
- March 5** Strawberry/Vegetable BMP Field Day, Bradford Co. Extension, contact Jim DeValerio 904-966-6224
- March 14 – June 6** Florida Yards and Neighborhoods Master Gardener Training, Suwannee and Columbia Co. Extension, contact Carolyn Saft 386-362-2771
- March 17** Honeybee Short Course, Clay Co. Extension, call 904-284-6355
- May 1** Twilight Field Day, NFREC, call 386-362-1725
- May 1** Effective Advertising and Display, NFREC, call 386-362-1725
- May 2-4** Beef Cattle Short Course, Gainesville contact Matt Hersom 352-392-2390 for info or Pam Gross 352-392-1914 for registration
- May 5** Be a Hobby Beekeeper, Clay Co. Extension, call 904-284-6355