Volunteer Educators for Springs Protection
By: Peter Colverson, Normandeau Associates

Florida’s springs are in trouble. The record setting drought that we are in currently is creating record setting low flows for many of the state’s springs. Whether the drought is the only culprit remains open to interpretation since the springs must now compete with many permit holders for the all-important groundwater that represents their life’s blood.

Several state and local agencies, including the water management districts, have made springs protection a priority and supported that with education programs. Budget cutbacks have had a negative impact on those programs with a diminished effort being applied at this time of fiscal crisis for so many springs.

With the above in mind, an effort was recently launched in Marion County (home of Rainbow, Silver, Silver Glen and Juniper Springs) to train 15 citizen volunteers to go out and do educational programs on springs. This effort was funded by the Florida Wildlife Foundation through their annual Springs License Tag Grant Program. The grant was awarded to Normandeau Associates to work in partnership with the UF/IFAS Marion County Extension Service to do the training. Peter Colverson and John Linhoss were the trainers. The training program was implemented in January of this year.

Several of the trainees came from the University of Florida/IFAS Sustainable Floridians Program and this training added a new element to their toolbox of skills. This group has completed several hours of training already on materials about sustainability that they wish to share with their neighbors. Several of these people came from the On Top Of The World Community that is just west of Ocala and has put in place several sustainable practices associated with both landscaping and energy generation. Others were citizens with a demonstrated interest in springs protection and a few were state employees who were seeking new resources given the current difficulty that they have to either purchase or develop their own programs.

Each trainee received a package of materials on Springs Protection that included PowerPoint presentations, publications, references and packets of brochures. The material focused on the karst environments of north central Florida, the nature and behavior of groundwater, water resources, water use and the challenges springs currently face. The trainees learned how to set up and structure their presentations and the procedures needed to fulfill the grant. Each trainee was asked to complete at least one presentation with at least 15 participants by early June.

If this project is successful, we will endeavor to host additional training workshops in other regions around the state (subject to available funds) in an effort to reach more people with a springs protection message. Very few, if any, people deliberately pollute groundwater. This program seeks to spread the word widely about groundwater and springs protection and the kinds of everyday actions needed in our lives to make it a reality.
Stakeholder Analysis of a Collaborative Watershed Management Process: A Florida Case Study


This study focuses on a Florida watershed where development of a total maximum daily load (TMDL) and its implementation plan resulted in conflicts among stakeholders. The overall goal is to build a better understanding of stakeholder perceptions of water quality problems, water policy processes and decisions, and water management plan development in a region where these issues have become contentious. Findings are based on a stakeholder analysis using qualitative data collected through focus groups with agricultural producers, local governments, and environmental groups, and supplemented with additional qualitative data on the watershed management process. Stakeholder conflicts in this case study are associated with perceived flaws in the structural and procedural characteristics of the stakeholder involvement process: (1) suboptimal watershed stakeholder representation on the TMDL executive committee, (2) an inappropriate voting procedure for making TMDL decisions, (3) limitations in information sharing between regulatory agencies and watershed stakeholders, and (4) stakeholders’ doubts about whether tradeoffs associated with achieving the water quality targets were assessed adequately throughout the TMDL planning and implementation process. This study contributes to the literature on collaborative watershed management by analyzing stakeholder involvement given Florida’s unique institutional settings, where implementation of TMDL pollution abatement is mandatory. To read the full article CFEOR members click here.

Recent Research

Upcoming Events


- Society of American Foresters NC Division Meeting, June 7, 2012 in Rocky Mount, NC. “Quality wood for a quality market.” For more information contact: Pete Hancock, (252) 955-0473, phancock@gfrforestry.com

- Climate and Forests, What’s Changing? June 12, 2012 in Tallahassee, FL. Landowners and professionals learn about management practices that can help their forest management program adapt to a changing climate. For more information, contact Leon County Extension: (850) 606-5202

- Forest Stewardship Workshop: Grow Timber Revenue, June 19, 2012 in Marianna, FL. Guidance on timber management and marketing strategies that can increase returns from harvests, reduce costs, and encourage forest management. For more information: http://fsp-workshop061912.eventbrite.com/

- Webinar: Firewise Communities/USA, July 17, 2012. For more information: http://www.cafiresci.orgwui-webinar-registration

- Florida Small Farms and Alternative Enterprises Conference, July 27-29, 2012 in Kissimmee, FL. This conference is designed to provide farmers with up-to-date, research-based, in-depth educational information. For more information: http://conference.ifas.ufl.edu/smallfarms/
### Upcoming Events

- **Basic Wildland Firefighter Training (S130/190), August 6-10, 2012** in Gainesville and Melrose, FL. For more information: [http://s130-190.eventbrite.com/](http://s130-190.eventbrite.com/).


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**CFEOR Mission:**

To develop and disseminate knowledge needed to conserve and manage Florida’s forest as a healthy, working ecosystem that provides social, ecological and economic benefits on a sustainable basis.

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