

**SUBMISSION BY
EMILY CASEY**

The proposed site in Levy County is ^{an} extremely unique ^{Greenfield site} and cannot be compared to other wetland areas throughout the Northern Tampa Bay area.

In the ground water modeling portion of the section written in support of P.E.'s water use permit application it is stated that the SFWMD "presumes an adverse impact to a wetland if the long-term median water level falls below the Minimum Wetland Level (MWL) as the District has assigned these elevations to "sentinel" wetlands. "The District states that it can extrapolate levels for wetlands that haven't had official levels set by similar wetlands in close proximity."

(5.3) Evaluation of Wetland Impacts p. B-6

A MWL is at 1.8 ft below normal pool and with a 1:1 relationship a 1.0 ft decline translates into a decline in wetland water levels. It is stated the methodology works in other areas but there are no sentinel wetlands or published MWL's in Levy County so data was based on estimations from other areas.

Surface water flows between 2 water management districts and into 2 separate rivers (The Wacassassa and the Withlacoochee). The site is located south and west

of 2 separate potentiometric highs which will result in the Floridan Aquifer water being consumed from both the North and the East, which means that what water flows south and/or west ^{and} will not be available to other users and/or the environment since 1.85 mgd is projected to be withdrawn.

Surface waters flow either into the 2 rivers or as sheet flow to the Gulf and a peistine estuary. I have observed water flowing from a high water lake at the corner of P.E.'s property, under 19 and flowing NW until it finds many swallots and thus goes directly down into the Floridan Aquifer. What will the quality of this water be? (in 10, 20 years). What will the quantity of this water be??

This water that flows into the swallots are most likely what feeds water to two springs close by. These two springs are two out of five known springs 2/5's which provide fresh water into the Wacassassa Bay River.

The Wacassassa Bay River have already experienced a dramatic drop in the flow rate, what will happen if more water is taken out of the system? Due to many features that this area has ~~that~~ ^{it} is not a place that can be compared to other places I asked you to understand the Environmental Impacts this would have, would be devastating.

Water matt

County responds to Save Our Waters Week

NANCY KENNEDY
Chronicle

Let's say you're a homeowner in Pine Ridge or Citrus Hills or Inverness. You've spent a lot of money on your house and a small fortune on your landscaping, so, of course, you want to keep your lawn as green as possible.

When it comes to fertilizer, the more the better — right?

So, you're out watering your lawn (which is the envy of your neighbors, it's so green and lush), not thinking about the poor little phytoplankton in the Crystal River.

Not thinking about decreased seagrass beds or algae blooms or how the actions of all of us affect the eco-balance of the waters that draw people to our community in the first place.

But you might think about it if, 10, 20 years from now, you go to order a grouper sandwich and discover there's no grouper anymore. Not only that, but the manatees have gone elsewhere, too.

Save Our Waters Week continues through Sept. 25. Sponsored by Citrus 20/20, in partnership with Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Southwest Water Management District, Citrus County government, the *Chronicle*, TCG and F.D.S. Disposal, the week is dedicated to educating the citizens of Citrus County about how we all can be "part of the solution, not the pollution."



Marine Academy student Jordan Miller, left, spots while Cody Fountain and Emily Dampeman pull a seine Gulf Beach in Crystal River. The students are studying the diversity of the habitats that exist in the grass recreation area.

Hundreds help in Adopt-a-Shore

AMANDA MIMS
Chronicle

Hundreds of local volunteers joined countless others around the world Saturday to free beaches and shorelines from debris and garbage.

In Citrus County, they spent four hours picking up litter in places from the Floral City pool of Lake Tsala Apopka to Crystal River.

Saturday's activities were part of Citrus County's 15th annual Save Our Waters Week and the 25th annual International Coastal Cleanup.

Volunteers on

Read more about waters week and see the second-place photo contest winner/ Page C1



At one time, the Crystal River was crystal clear. Not anymore. Now, the river is murky and dark, as are many of the other local water bodies.

On Friday morning as Beverly Hills resident Kenny Hum and a friend put their boat in the water at Pete's Pier marina, he recalled growing up in the

See WATER/Page A5

Read more about the waterways of the east side of Citrus County in Monday's edition.

the east side of Citrus County took to the Inverness, Floral City and Hernando pools of Lake Tsala Apopka and to the Withlacoochee River by boat, retrieving everything from rusty chairs to Styrofoam coolers and fishing poles. One airboat brought in a window from a house and one volunteer found a weed-eater.

"It's amazing," said Greg Schmukal, coordinator of the Adopt-a-Shore cleanup efforts on the east side of Citrus County.

Last year, volunteers cleaned up more than 8,600 pounds of debris in Citrus County. There were about 600 local volunteers this year and east side volunteers included members of the Citrus County

winner/Page C1

See the third-place winner/HomeFront

See "Jeopardy" dinner photo /Page A4



Thomas Gibbar helps Ron Bailey, Aaron Bailey and Joan after they had returned from picking up trash out on Lake County East Side Cleanup for the International Coastal

Airboat Alliance and a local Boy Scout troop.

The airboaters covered about 20 miles of water in Hernando Saturday morning.

"We do it to clean up the environment and take care of everything," said Ron Bailey, president of the Citrus County Airboat Alliance.

Others expressed similar sentiments.

"It's the Nature Coast. We have to keep it beautiful," said Thomas Gibbar, spray tech-

nician v partne event.

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"We] trash, s; Russell

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100,000 miles

Cars are now surpassing 150,000 miles./Page D1

Mighty muscadine grapes

Jane Weber writes about these sweet, Florida-friendly treats./Page E11

Afghans vote Violence disrupts efforts Saturday./Page A10

Idaho autumn Northwestern state shines in fall./Page A11

Raymond Chandler Author, wife reunited in death./Page B6



WATER

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area 35 years ago.

"I remember when it was really pretty," he said. "I went to the Marine Science Station when I was in high school and we dove out here all week and it was beautiful. It was like Silver Springs in Ocala is today.

"Not sure why it's so murky now," he said. "Everybody says it's from the nutrients in the fertilizers running off everybody's pretty green yards."

Gary Bartell, county commissioner and one of the founders of Save Our Waters Week, now in its 15th year, said the people who are new to the community don't recall when you could look into the water 20 feet down and see the white, sandy bottom.

"Personally, I think saving our waters is the most important issue facing Citrus County, even more than employment," Bartell said. "Employment, jobs, foreclosures — those are federal and state issues, and a lot of that we don't have control over. But we do have control over our environment."

When it comes to our local waters, students at the Academy of Environmental Science in Crystal River believe educating the public is vital.

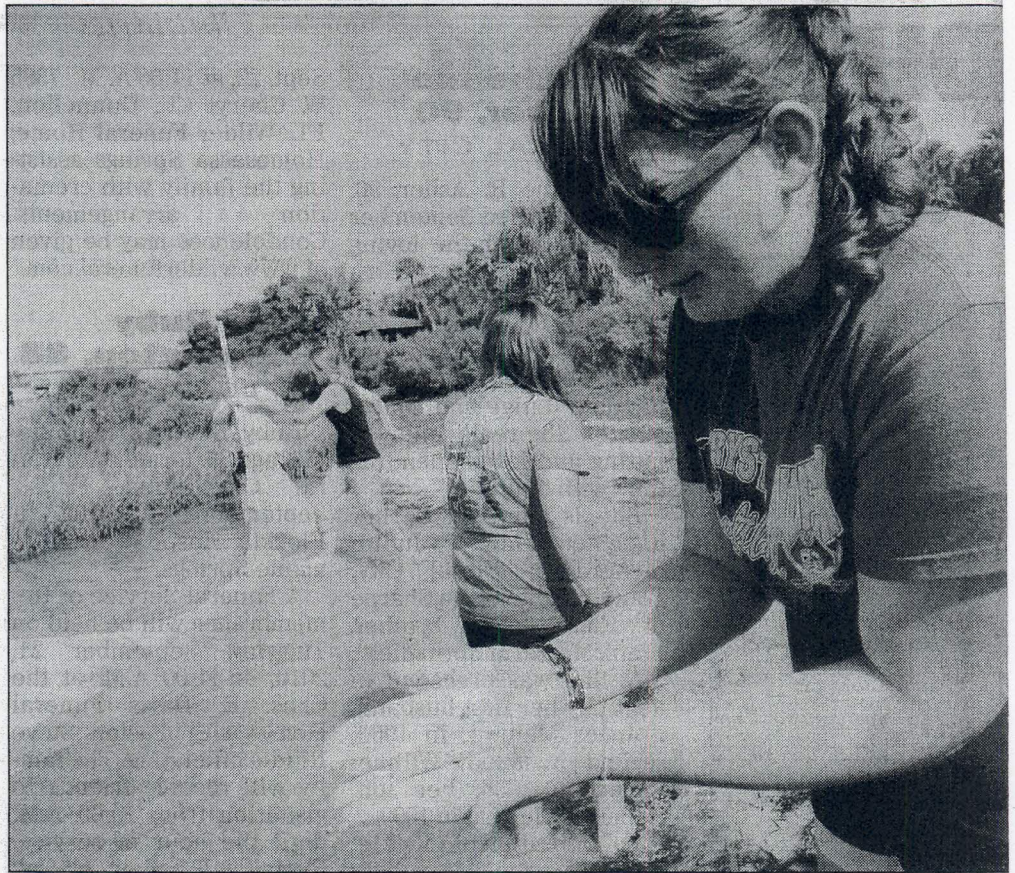
"Over-fertilization is really harmful," said Merci Ovard, a junior in Chuck Mulligan's marine science class. "Water is essential — to the seafood we eat, even if you just want to swim in it; you don't want to swim in green and disgusting water."

However, more than that, she said, the harm done by fertilizers eventually affects the base of the food chain, the plankton.

"So, it's really important," she said.

As Mulligan emphasized, it's not the use of fertilizer that's the problem; it's the overuse.

"What I want these kids to understand is that it's not just the impact on the water; that's not telling the whole



Sarah Breed looks at a shrimp before returning it to the water during a trip recently with th



Academy of Environmental Sciences students Jacey Volkman, left, and Bree Benson check the phosphate level Wednesday in a fresh water sample.

BRIAN LaPETER/Chronicle

“ We’ve put together a sewer system to eliminate a lot of the old septic tanks that were leaching

tilizing lawns is to the water, it's not the only negative factor, nor the only issue the county is working on.

Bartell said one huge

that's the problem; it's the overuse.

"What I want these kids to understand is that it's not just the impact on the water; that's not telling the whole story," he said. "The full story is, how are we impacting the organisms that live in the water? The base of that chain is the plankton."

From bright green lawn to dying phytoplankton, here's how Mulligan explained what happens: Joe Homeowner uses too much fertilizer. As he waters his lawn, or as it rains, the water seeps through the layers of dirt and sediment and then reaches the Floridan Aquifer.

Our drinking water, which is stored in Florida's aquifers, is increasingly threatened by human activities, according to information from the University of Florida Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants. It is particularly susceptible to contamination because the water table is close to the surface and the limestone bedrock is permeable.

As the water, full of nutrients, nitrates and phosphates from the fertilizer, passes through the aquifer, it makes its way into the natural springs, which feed into the rivers and out into the gulf.

"Because you've got microscopic protists in those springs areas, they have the ability to take the nutrients from the fertilizers — it looks like a buffet to them," Mulligan said. "With an abundance of food, you can get an algae bloom."

If that happens, the water turns green and slimy, but that's not all. As it grows, it uses up oxygen in the water,

“We’ve put together a sewer system to eliminate a lot of the old septic tanks that were leeching into the river bodies. I think it’s going to take five to 10 years to reap benefits or have people be able to see the benefits of it, but it’s the right thing to do.”

Gary Bartell

Citrus County commissioner.

and the lack of oxygen kills the fish, the plants and other marine life.

Dead fish and dead plants decompose, putrefy, rot.

There goes your grouper sandwich. There go the manatees.

"That's not saying that's what's going to happen, but the potential is there," Mulligan said.

Not every fish kill is a result of polluted water, said Karen Parker, spokeswoman from Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission. Most are commonly caused by weather-related factors, over which humans have no control.

However, we can control our actions that ultimately affect the quality of our shared water resources.

Through the Springs Program at the academy, Mulligan's students perform research on the local waters, and as they learn about the effects and causes of water quality deterioration, they conduct workshops with local middle school students.

"One of the things the kids do to make it real for the middle schoolers is, in the

dead of winter they'll go down a street and see brown lawn, brown lawn, bright green lawn," he said. "It's one generation teaching the next, so hopefully when they're getting out of school and in a position to make decisions about how we're impacting the environment and what role we're playing, they'll be a little bit more educated about it to make those types of decisions."

Commissioner Bartell said the county's proposed fertilizer ordinance to license commercial applicators and restrict the time of year fertilizers can be applied has faced heavy opposition from the fertilizer industry, but the proposed ordinance is still in the works.

"Pinellas County just passed a ban on quick-release fertilizer, which is a lot more stringent than ours," he said. "If we go that route we'll be sued for sure, but in my opinion, that's the right thing to do. Ultimately, it ends up in our water bodies."



As detrimental as over-fer-



BRIAN LAPETER/Chronicle
n, left, and Bree Benson check

tilizing lawns is to the water, it's not the only negative factor, nor the only issue the county is working on.

Bartell said one huge stride they've made is the centralized sewer system on the west side of the county, in the Chassahowitzka and Homosassa areas. Currently, they're working with the city of Crystal River to sewer the King's Bay area. On the east side of the county, work has begun in the Hernando area with plans to start work in Floral City, too.

"We've put together a sewer system to eliminate a lot of the old septic tanks that were leeching into the river bodies," he said. "I think it's going to take five to 10 years to reap benefits or have people be able to see the benefits of it, but it's the right thing to do.

"That's why in our comprehensive plan we steered our growth to the central part of the county to make sure that we didn't have those problems. There's nothing wrong with a septic tank, but when you have more than 10 or 20, that's when you start having problems," he said.

Currently, there are about 75,000 septic tanks in Citrus County, said Will Bryant, director of environmental health for the county health department.

"The biggest problem with the older systems is the (shorter) separation distance to the estimated seasonal

years shows that keeping pathogens under the ground surface and out of the ground water are both important," he said.



Another lesser problem is over-enjoying a water area — over-fishing, over-scuba diving, over-boating. Constantly going to an area impacts what goes on underneath the surface, Mulligan said.

His students take note of fish behavior, their fear of things that are larger than they are, such as humans.

"If you're a fish and you constantly see people coming into the area, you're going to go somewhere else," he said.

Because little fish are food for larger fish, if the little ones leave, the bigger ones will, too. Eventually, it upsets the entire ecosystem — and, once again, there goes your grouper sandwich.

"The misuse of the waters isn't a big problem in Citrus County, but it's one of the things I'm trying to get the kids to understand," Mulligan said.

There's also the problem of stormwater runoff that flows into drainage retention areas that serve as a catchall for all kinds of nasty stuff, from animal waste to oil from cars and everything in between, which seeps into the ground, which then goes

into the aquifer and into the rivers and lakes.

Although county residents can't solve every problem when it comes to our waters, we can each take part in solving some of them.

It comes down to pride of ownership, Bartell said.

"I can't stress enough to people how important it is that what draws people here is our water bodies," he said. "But people have become more educated and there's more of a pride of ownership, of not doing the things we used to do, like throwing beer cans in the water.

"Ten years ago, the county installed monofilament (fishing) line disposals at all of our boat ramps and parks," he said. "That's a tiny thing, but it has something that has a good effect. There's not a single solution to solve these problems."

Bartell went on to say, "When it comes to the condition of our waters, if you're talking compared to what it was 25 years ago, we've got some problems. If you're talking net results of not having a central sewer system, not having a fertilizer ordinance, not being cognizant of the importance of that — we're blessed here in Citrus County to have so many outstanding Florida waters, but it's going to take some time. It's not going to happen overnight."

LIGHT SHINE SERIES

Presented by
Shepherd of the Hills Episcopal Church

2010 - 2011

Sunday, October 3, 2010, 4pm

Beverly Hills Recreation Association Center
77 Civic Circle, Beverly Hills, Florida 34465

Silver Wings—Civil Rights:

The Fight to Fly—The Tuskegee Airmen



An award winning documentary film that tells the story of the Tuskegee Airmen. A group of men dreamed of taking to the skies. They had to fight to fly, but they won the respect of their county and they commanded a change in the nation. In person comments by the filmmaker, Jon Anderson, and by Hiram Mann, a member of the original Tuskegee Airmen.

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Admission is Free
No Tickets Required