

# THURSDAY, JULY 17, 2008

Compiled by: South Florida Water Management District  
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## Cleaner Water For Lake "O" and Everglades

07/17/2008  
WPEC-TV

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WPEC-TV

Cleaner Water For Lake "O" and Everglades

Wildlife aficionados have a new place to go to appreciate the beauty of the Everglades.

Today, the South Florida Water Management District, officially opened "Stormwater Treatment Area 1 West" for public use.

The treatment area is over 65-hundred acres large and it now has a new parking area that leads to a small park and a 200-foot boardwalk and gazebo. It overlooks a portion of the Everglades that is engineered to remove excess nutrients from storm water runoff. Nutrients that can be bad for the region and negatively impact Everglades restoration efforts.

All of this, as the public enjoys nature at the same time.

There is also 3-mile trail along the levee, surrounding the Stormwater Treatment Area for hikers, bicyclists and photographers.

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## RIC WILDLIFE AFICIONADOS HAVE A NEW PLACE TO GO, TO APPRECIATE THE BEAUTY OF THE EVERGLADES.

07/16/2008  
News 12 at 11 PM - WPEC-TV

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News 12 at 11 PM - WPEC-TV

RIC WILDLIFE AFICIONADOS HAVE A NEW PLACE TO GO, TO APPRECIATE THE BEAUTY OF THE EVERGLADES. TODAY, THE SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRI OFFICIALLY OPENED "STORMWATER TREATMENT AREA 1 WEST" FOR PUBLIC USE. (VO)THE TREATMENT AREA IS OVER 65-HUNDRED ACRES LARGE, AND IT NOW HAS A NEW PARKING AREA THAT LEADS TO A SMALL PARK AND A 200-FOOT BOARDWALK AND GAZEBO, OVERLOOKING A PORTION OF THE EVERGLADES, ENGINEERED TO REMOVE EXCESS NUTRIENTS FROM STORM WATER RUNOFF. NUTRIENTS THAT CAN BE BAD FOR THE REGION AND NEGATIVELY IMPACT EVERGLADES RESTORATION EFFORTS. ALL OF THIS, AS THE PUBLIC ENJOYS NATURE AT THE SAME TIME. (SOT)(CHIP MERRIAM)WE'RE OPENING UP THIS STORM WATER TREATMENT AREA 1 WEST WHICH IS VERY CLOSE TO AN URBAN AREA IN PALM BEACH COUNTY, FOR ACCESS BY THE PUBLIC TO ACTUALLY COME OUT AND RECREATE, TO WALK AROUND AND SEE THE WILDLIFE THAT USES THESE SYSTEMS AND TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THINGS THAT YOU JUST DON'T SEE ANYMORE WHEN YOU DRIVE AROUND I-95. (VO)THERE IS ALSO 3-MILE TRAIL ALONG THE LEVEE, SURROUNDING THE STORMWATER TREATMENT AREA FOR HIKERS, BICYCLISTS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS.

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## **New rec area open to hikers, bikers, bird watchers**

07/16/2008

Palm Beach Post - Online  
Kleinberg, Eliot

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Water managers have opened their newest recreation area, on a 6,670-acre stormwater treatment tract west of Wellington.

The South Florida Water Management District's Stormwater Treatment Area 1 West, about 20 miles west of State Road 7, features parking, a 200-foot viewing platform and gazebos.

A 3-mile trail, along a section of the levee, is open to hikers, bicyclists, photographers and bird watchers. Fishing is allowed in the outer canal.

This is the third stormwater area the district has opened to recreation. The district's 52,000 acres - more than 81 square miles - of treatment areas hold and filter water before it flows to the Everglades.

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## Several back-to-back rainy days put SW Florida under water, helps area rebound from recent drought

07/17/2008

Naples Daily News

CANDACE BRAUN

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CANDACE BRAUN-Naples Daily News

Michelle Mattei's prayers for precipitation have been answered. Now she's wondering if she should have been more specific. "Last year we were in such a drought that I prayed for rain," the 37-year-old Naples resident said. "Then I woke up this morning and heard the thunder and said, 'enough is enough.' It's been nonstop." An area of low pressure that had been hovering over part of the Gulf of Mexico can be blamed for the continuous rains that's blanketed Lee and Collier counties.

This, along with the typical afternoon thunderstorms that occurred over the summer, launched Southwest Florida into a rainy season that's twice as wet as the 2007 season so far, causing flooding that closed some Marco Island roads Wednesday and keeping many residents indoors.

Since Jan. 1, Collier County has seen more than 26 inches of rain, compared to 11.32 inches during the same time period in 2007. Similarly, Lee County has received 10 extra inches of rain in the year to date, jumping from 16 inches in 2007 to just more than 26 inches as of Wednesday, according to the National Weather Service.

After forming offshore earlier in the week, the low pressure area drifted inland, causing a slew of thunderstorms Tuesday and Wednesday. Drier days are ahead for Southwest Floridians, however, as the weather system moves north. "The steady rain should pull away" Wednesday night, said Paul Close, meteorologist for the National Weather Service. "The moisture will still be around so there's still a chance of rain on Friday, but those showers will be more scattered." The low pressure area should move into southern Georgia by tonight, Close said, dragging most of the wet weather with it. Since it has already moved inland, he said the chances are slim that it could develop tropical storm characteristics.

### Multiplying mosquitoes

Much to many residents' chagrin, the weather system won't leave without providing the area with a parting gift of sorts: a bevy of breeding grounds for mosquitoes.

Since the rains have been virtually nonstop throughout the Fort Myers area, Lee County Mosquito Control inspectors haven't been able to spray larvicide in all of the puddles that keep popping up throughout the area. "We have three days to get them under control when the mosquitoes are in their immature stage," said Shelly Redovan, Lee County Mosquito Control deputy director. "We really only have one day left." Should the rain continue in

this pattern Thursday, the organization will have to focus on treating the adult population of mosquitoes. Because of this inconvenience, Redovan said Lee County residents can anticipate more mosquitoes in the area. "This is kind of the lull before the storm," she said, noting that mosquito control will be out in full force as soon as they can, doing aerial sprays and undergoing other measures to keep things under control.

Naples residents also can expect an increase in the buzzing bugs over the next few days, as the Collier County Mosquito Control faces the same struggle.

Until the situation is under control, public information officer Adrian Salinas encourages residents to drain any containers holding rain water, wear lightweight, long-sleeved clothing, and look for mosquito repellents containing DEET.

#### Rain waterlogs tourists, raises Lake O

In addition to producing more mosquitoes, the rain has had its own pestlike qualities. For the Ciprani family, it meant their Naples vacation had to be spent almost entirely indoors. "We've gone to the movies twice, we went to the mall, we drove to Sanibel Island in the rain and we walked along the pier in the rain," said Lori Ciprani, 42, a Pennsylvania native. They had hoped to spend Tuesday, their last day in the area, at the beach, but the weather made them decide to visit the Coastland Center instead.

Though the rainy weather put a damper on some people's outdoor activities, it's benefited Lake Okeechobee, which reached its lowest levels in recorded history in July 2007. Water flows from the lake down the Caloosahatchee River to the coast. "It's been rebounding. All of the rain is definitely helping, but we're still 2 feet below the water shortage line," said Susan Gray, deputy director for the South Florida Water Management District. Tuesday's precipitation, which provided 1.3 inches of rain in Collier County and more than 1 1/2 inches in Lee, caused Lake Okeechobee to rise by one-tenth of an inch. If the rain continues at the same pace for another three or four weeks, Lake Okeechobee will reach its historical average for this time of year, though Gray said that's highly unlikely, as this amount of rain is very unusual. "It could be early fall before we cross the water shortage line," she said. "It'll take awhile."

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## **SUSAN SANDERS WITH THE SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT**

07/16/2008

Fox 4 News at 10 PM - WFTX-TV

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Fox 4 News at 10 PM - WFTX-TV

BUT IS IT ENOUGH HELP US WITH THE WATER SHORTAGE WE'VE BEEN US WITH THE WATER SHORTAGE WE'VE BEEN FACING? FOX 4's ROSEMARY CONNORS CONTINUES OUR FOUR IN YOUR CORNER TEAM COVERAGE. SHE JOINS US LIVE FROM CAPE CORAL, WITH HOW THIS RAIN IS IMPACTING OUR ENVIRONMENT. AMY, WE'RE AT A FIELD ON CULTURAL PARK BOULEVARD, AND AS YOU CAN SEE THE STEADY RAIN WE'VE RECEIVED THIS WEEK HAS DRENCHED THE GRASS. MANY NEIGHBORHOOD S ARE SEEING EXCESS WATER LIKE THIS IN THEIR STREETS AND IN THEIR YARDS, BUT IN TERMS OF THE WATER SHORTAGE DON'T LET THIS RAIN FOOL YOU. THESE DAYS THERE'S WATER, WATER JUST ABOUT EVERYWHERE, BUT DESPITE THE GREEN GROWING GRASS AND THE FILLED CANALS, WE ARE STILL FACING A WATER SHORTAGE. "You have to look back and think of all the rain we didn't get last winter and all the rain we didn't get last summer. And so what we're doing right now is playing catch up. " AND THAT COULD TAKE AWHILE. SUSAN SANDERS WITH THE SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT TELLS ME SHORT OF A TROPICAL DEPRESSION WATER LEVELS WILL REMAIN LOW. "The aquifers are starting to replenish themselves. They're not up to the levels they should be for this time of year. You can kind of look at Lake O and figure it out- Lake O is a little over 10 feet right now. That's about 3 - 4 feet below what it should be for this time of year. " FOR SOUTHWEST FLORIDA, THAT'S A PLUS BECAUSE THAT MEANS THE CALOOSAHATCHEE RIVER WILL NOT RECEIVE ANY EXCESS WATER FROM LAKE O ANY TIME SOON. IN THE MEANTIME FOR SOME THE RAIN IS ENOUGH. "The rain that we've received over the past week has just done a marvelous job. " CONNIE BARRON WITH THE CITY OF CAPE CORAL EXPLAINS AT LEAST 25 THOUSAND HOMES IN THE CITY USE A WELL SYSTEM TO GET THEIR WATER, AND FOR NOW THERE'S NO SIGN OF THEM DRYING UP. "Their wells are are in pretty good shape right now. We've seen the water tables go up by over the last thirty days at least ten feet in the north and the south areas. " WHILE THE RAIN HAS FILLED THE CAPE'S WELLS, IT'S ALSO QUENCHED WATER-DEPRIVED PLANTS AND VEGETATION. MICHEAL NASHWINTER WITH DANNY YATES NURSERY SAYS FOLKS SHOULD USE THIS TIME AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO CONSERVE. "They need to adjust their irrigation accordingly, if we get excess amounts of rain such as these past few days - they can either opt to turn it off or lessen the time I would opt to turn it off until it's starts to dry out. " IF THIS RAINY SEASON KEEPS THIS PACE HOPEFULLY IT WILL BE AWHILE BEFORE WE DRY OUT. BY THE WAY ON AVERAGE PEOPLE USE MOST OF THEIR WATER TO IRRIGATE THEIR LAWNS SO IF PEOPLE COULD TURN THEIR AUTOMATIC SPRINKLERS OFF WHEN WE HAVE A STEADY RAIN THEN THAT WOULD HELP THE WATER DEFICIT. LIVE IN CAPE CORAL, ROSEMARY CONNORS, FOX 4 NEWS. ENVIRONMENT AND WEATHER-BOXES QUESTION: SPEAKING OF CONSERVATION, I KNOW THE WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT HAS HINTED THAT WE'LL GO TO YEAR-ROUND WATER RESTRICTIONS, COULD AN OVER-ACTIVE RAINY SEASON CHANGE THAT? AD LIB, AMY BACK TO YOU.

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## **WATER LEVELS AT LAKE OKEECHOBEE ARE MAKING A COMEBACK.**

07/16/2008

ABC 7 News at 11 PM - WZVN-TV

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ABC 7 News at 11 PM - WZVN-TV

THAT IS WEDNESDAY, RIGHT HERE ON ABC7 STARTING AT 7:30. WATER LEVELS AT LAKE OKEECHOBEE ARE MAKING A COMEBACK. THE SECOND LARGEST FRESHWATER LAKE HAS A BUMP IN ITS WATER LEVEL. THE 730 SQUARE MILE LAKE, WHICH SUPPLIES DRINKING WATER, HAS INCREASED. BUT IT HAS BEEN UNDER STRESS FOR MANY YEARS. JUST LAST YEAR WATER MANAGEMENT LEADERS WERE WATCHING THE LEVEL AS IT WAS EXPECTING TO REACH A RECORD LOW, AND IT DID. THE BIG LAKE REACHED ITS LOWEST POINT ON JULY, 2007. BUT THE LAKE HAS NOT ALWAYS SUFFERED FROM DROUGHT CONDITIONS. IT HITS ITS HIGHEST COMMISSIONS 50 YEARS AGO. TODAY, IT STANDS AT ABOUT 10.7 FEET, ABOUT TWO FEET BELOW ITS AVERAGE FOR THIS TIME OF YEAR. BUT A BOOST NONETHELESS. TONIGHT WE ARE KEEPING OUR EYES ON THE LAKE'S WATER LEVELS. YOU CAN ALSO. JUST LOG ON TO OUR WEBSITE ABC-7.COM.

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## **LAKE OKEECHOBEE, WE'RE BETTER THAN WE WERE LAST YEAR, BUT WE'RE STILL BELOW AVERAGE.**

07/16/2008

Weather Channel, The

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Weather Channel

WELCOME BACK IN TO "ABRAMS & BETTES: BEYOND THE FORECAST". WATCHING THIS LOW PRESSURE AREA INTERACTING WITH FLORIDA RIGHT NOW, HALF ON WATER, HALF ON LAND. IT'S STARTING TO WEAKEN NOW, PRESSURE IS RISING, BUT WE HAVE GOT A LOT OF RAIN THAT'S BEEN FALLING WITH THIS SYSTEM. AND WE HAVE GOT TREMENDOUS AMOUNTS OF RAIN SO FAR THIS MONTH ACROSS THE STATE OF FLORIDA SO IT'S REALLY HELPING US CHIP AWAY AT OUR DROUGHT HERE. SO WE CAN ACTUALLY ERASE THE DROUGHT WITH THAT TROPICAL SYSTEM. LET ME SHOW YOU WHAT'S UNDERNEATH THESE CLOUDS. IT'S AN INTERESTING STORY. WE HAVE DEFINITELY GOT ROTATION IN THERE, BUT PLACES LIKE TAMPA AND ST. PETE, DOWN TOWARDS FT. MEYERSES, WE HAVE HAD HEAVY AMOUNTS OF RAIN ALL MONTH LONG. A CLOSE-UP VIEW, YOU CAN SEE THESE ALL AROUND US NOW, AS YOU WORK YOUR WAY JUST SOUTH OF TAMPA BAY DOWN TOWARDS SARASOTA. THE BEACHES PROBABLY NOT THE BEST OF PLACES TO BE TODAY. PLACES LIKE FT. MEYERS, WE'RE TRY RIGHT NOW,

IN NAPLES WE HAVE HAD AN INCH AND A THIRD AND IN SAR SOCIETY THAT AN INCH AND A HALF OF RAIN. THE WATER DRAINS VERY EASILY BECAUSE OF OUR SANDY SOIL, BUT IT DEFINITELY HELPS TO GET SOME RAIN ON ALMOST EVERYTHING HERE. LET ME SHOW YOU THE FORECAST CHBLGS AND FOR FLORIDA, WE'RE DEFINITELY GOING TO STICK WITH THE CLOUD COVER. NO QUESTION ABOUT THAT, BASICALLY A STALLED FRONT TO THE NORTH, LOW PRESSURE INTERACTING WITH THAT. WE HAVE GOT A RAINY SETUP FOR US FOR THE NEXT SEVERAL DAYS. NOT NECESSARILY A BAD FORECAST, TROPICAL MOISTURE IS A WELCOME THING THIS TIME OF YEAR, ESPECIALLY CONSIDERED AS FAR AS FOREST FIRES GO, WILDFIRES ACROSS FLORIDA, WE'RE ALL LOOKING AT PROBABLY AN INCH PLUS OF RAIN OVER AT LEAST THE NEXT 36 HOURS. I WAS TALKING ABOUT THE DROUGHT. THE DROUGHT IS SOMETHING WE HAVE CERTAINLY SEEN IMPROVEMENTS IN. LET ME SHOW YOU EXACTLY WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN WITH ALL THIS YEAR. FOR US, WE'RE LIKELY TO SEE AN INCREASE IN MOISTURE AS I HAVE BEEN TALKING ABOUT OVER THE NEXT COUPLE OF DAYS. THERE'S THE DROUGHT MONITOR FOR FLORIDA AND FOR FLORIDA, IT'S BASICALLY BEEN JUST ALL ORANGES AND YELLOWS FOR US WHICH HAS MEANT DRY TO A MODERATE DROUGHT, YOU CAN SEE WE HAVE GOT A LOT OF YELLOW NOW, SOUTH FLORIDA, WE DON'T HAVE ANY KIND OF A DROUGHT. AND IN TAMPA, WE DON'T HAVE ANY KIND OF DROUGHT AT ALL. CURRENTLY IT'S 70%. THREE MONTHS AGO, 27%. SO IT HAS GOTTEN WORSE ALTHOUGH IT'S NOW STARTING TO GET BETTER BECAUSE OF THE TROPICAL MOISTURE WE'RE STARTING TO SEE. LAKE OKEECHOBEE, WE'RE BETTER THAN WE WERE LAST YEAR, BUT WE'RE STILL BELOW AVERAGE. OUR AVERAGE LAKE LEVEL IS 13.72, OUR CURRENT LAKE LEVEL IS 3 1/2 FEET BELOW THAT.

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## Heavy rain floods areas of Marco

07/16/2008  
WBBH-TV

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MARCO ISLAND: A large chunk of the island is under water and the massive amounts of rain forced hundreds of homes to be without electricity and roads to be shut off to traffic. We found out if crews will be able to get everything cleaned up by the time you head to work.

On Wednesday, it was all about rain, rain, and then some more rain across Southwest Florida. But Marco Island residents actually saw some flooded yards and roadways. 'The water kept coming up farther and farther toward my garage,' said Marco homeowner Robert Hayward. 'It was just more than I had ever seen,' said homeowner Heather Schuett. 'The entire road and the median was underwater.' At times Collier Boulevard, just south of the Jolley Bridge, and surrounding streets on Marco Island looked more like lakes than roads. 'It was unbelievable. It was like one vast lake out in front of everybody's house,' said Hayward. In fact, many cars even had to be towed as a result of those flooded roads.

And Marco Island Public Works crews worked feverishly for hours to clean out pipes and drain water out of streets. 'Up to eight inches in about two hours in high tide where everything settled on the catch basins and we're cleaning the grates off,' said Mike Daniel of Marco Island Public Works.

As rain showers weakened, crews pumped pools of water across the street and into a nearby canal in an attempt to get Collier Boulevard up and running once again. 'This is pretty bad - bad as it ever got,' said Hayward. But around 7 p.m. on Wednesday evening, some relief came as the first rays of sunlight for the day could be seen.

About an hour later, roads began to re-open and homeowners could leave their driveways without having to wade in water.

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## **IN PLACE. SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT PLANS ON**

07/16/2008

WINK News at 7 PM - WINK-TV

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WINK News at 7 PM - WINK-TV

Trey: WITH THE WRAP OF TODAY'S STORIES, EVEN THOUGH WATER LEVELS ARE RETURNING TO NORMAL, WATER RESTRICTIONS ARE LIKELY GOING TO STAY IN PLACE. SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT PLANS ON ENFORCING RESTRICTIONS YEAR AROUND TO HELP CONSERVATION EFFORTS.

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## **Help South Florida's environment Reduce stormwater runoff by using barrels, ground cove**

07/16/2008

Palm Beach Daily News

KEITH PATTON

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## KEITH PATTON-Palm Beach Daily News

Rain barrels can collect stormwater runoff from roof and gutters.

In the summer rainy season, it is important to be conscious of reducing the amount of stormwater runoff.

Stormwater runoff is caused by excessive rain or irrigation water on our property. This water can contain fertilizers, bacteria and other contaminants. Stormwater runoff is not treated; when it washes off our yards, it flows into storm drains and into Florida's bays, lakes and rivers.

There are easy ways to reduce stormwater runoff on our property. Where possible, use rain barrels to collect stormwater from the roof and gutters. The runoff from roofs also can be directed into gutters that drain onto the lawn and plant beds, instead of flowing onto concrete patios and into storm drains.

Soil erosion can occur during rain or excessive irrigation. Erosion can be prevented by planting ground covers or lawns. Areas under large trees or steep slopes where grass will not grow can be planted with a variety of ground covers. Planting ground covers helps retain soil, reduce erosion and add attractive bits of foliage or color to the landscape.

Mulch is an excellent way to help the yard absorb stormwater. Mulch also helps prevent water evaporation after a rain storm. It can be used to reduce the need to irrigate and fertilize yard plants.

Bricks, flagstones, pavers and gravel increase porous surfaces on patios, walkways and driveways. Porous surfaces allow stormwater to seep through instead of running into stormwater drains.

Creating low areas in the landscape such as rain gardens and terraces will catch stormwater. Low areas help to hold and filter stormwater after a rain.

Picking up garbage and pet waste from the yard helps to prevent these contaminants from entering storm drains.

Spreading cat litter over oil spills or leaks on the driveway and then gathering the litter and disposing of it in a garbage can is a greener way to clean up after vehicles.

Sweeping grass clippings, soil or fertilizer from the driveway and back onto the lawn also helps prevent pollution from entering storm drains.

For more information, see the Florida Yards and Neighborhoods program Web site is <http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu/>

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## Swales aid natural water flow

07/17/2008

News-Press - Cape Coral Bureau  
Liberatore, Brian

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Steady rainfall has left pooling in many Cape front yards  
By Brian Liberatore • News-Press

With steady rain drenching the region, many people have called Cape Coral officials concerned about the water pooling in the shallow valley that runs through their front lawn.

Don't worry, the city says. The standing water means that valley, known as a swale, is working.

"A lot of people don't understand what swales are there for," said John Ridge, a public works services supervisor with the city. "They're there for a purpose."

The swales may hold water, but then it slowly flows into the canals, which tie into the rivers and estuaries and into the Gulf of Mexico.

So when should residents be concerned?

Ridge says if the water in the swales hasn't gone down 72 hours after the rain stops, then call the city. Otherwise, check to make sure there's nothing blocking the storm drains and let the swales do their job.

If there is a problem with the swale system, the city will send out a crew to repair it. In June, the city completed 72 swale projects affecting about 170 homes.

This year, the city found a faster way to complete the swale improvements, cutting into the backlog of complaints. About 550 projects remain, Ridge said, down from a high of 1,000.

The swale system is meant to replicate the natural flow of water through the region. Before the Rosen brothers touched off a development explosion in the Cape a half-century ago, the region's natural topography kept the water flowing slowly back into nearby estuary systems. The system allows for a delicate balance between freshwater and the salt water.

"In an estuary system where salt water meets fresh, it's really, really important," said Eli Fleishauer with the state's Department of Environmental Protection.

Before man-made buildings dominated the Cape's landscape, the water was held up in natural pools or absorbed into the ground. With the addition of impervious roadways and rooftops, the rainwater is inclined to rush unabated into the city's canals and into nearby estuaries. The swales slow that process. They hold the water, allowing particles and pollutants to be absorbed back into the ground, and release the water slowly.

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## Weir almost completed

07/17/2008

Orlando Sentinel

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Orlando Sentinel

Construction of a water control weir in the Kissimmee River, the largest single structure ever built by the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD), is nearing completion. The weir is one of four emergency improvement projects undertaken this year to protect major water control structures when Lake Okeechobee experiences very low water levels.

South Florida's record-breaking water shortage could have resulted in instability at four vital water control structures (S-65E, S-71, S-72 and S-84) when a significant difference occurred between water levels immediately upstream and downstream of these structures. District experts determined that this would most likely occur if the tailwater level at Lake Okeechobee dipped below 10 feet, but water levels became high upstream in the Kissimmee River and Lake Istokpoga basin.

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## St. Lucie River to benefit from alliance between Martin and water management

07/17/2008

Stuart News

Kane, Jason

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By Jason Kane-Stuart News

MARTIN COUNTY — The St. Lucie River soon will be a little cleaner now that Martin County and the South Florida Water Management District have combined resources to pay for four big projects.

The county and the water management district, which oversees water resources from Orlando to the Keys, will each chip in \$5 million for the projects, approved last month, in the coming year.

Water quality in the St. Lucie Estuary has deteriorated in part because of excessive nutrients, caused when elements such as nitrogen or phosphorus enter the water or soil from fertilizer or other sources. The county marked the four projects as critical for the cleanup of waters coming from Lake Okeechobee and the St. Lucie watershed, said Temperince Morgan, the Northern Everglades program implementation manager for the water district.

Officials hope these projects will improve the timing, quality and

quantity of waters flowing into the estuary in coming years.

## THE PROJECTS

Building two storm water treatment areas in Old Palm City to serve about 106 acres of residential land, helping reduce sediment and nutrients flowing to the St. Lucie River and Estuary.

Starting in December, crews will remove about 253,000 cubic yards of muck from the Manatee Pocket of the St. Lucie Estuary, helping improve navigation for boats and reducing pollution, as well as creating a sediment trap to make the muck easier to remove in the future.

A sewer service will be installed in the North River Shores area, providing about 450 lots with an underground collection system. The water will then be pumped to a treatment plant to be cleaned and reused.

A water quality retrofit on Manatee Creek will improve drainage on 833 acres of residential, commercial and industrial land, helping to eliminate discharges into the Manatee Pocket. The second and third phases of this project will provide additional water treatment at the Dixie Park Wastewater Treatment Plant.

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## The Audit

07/17/2008

Columbia Journalism Review

Elinore Longobardi

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Elinore Longobardi -Columbia Journalism Review

Sugar, Sugar

Credit to Florida newspapers for stellar reporting on U.S. Sugar deal By

A Credit to the Florida press for its reporting on the state's agreement

to

buy nearly three hundred square miles of the Everglades from U. S. Sugar.

We first read about the plan in The New York Times and The Wall Street

Journal. Despite our initial excitement about such a major conservation

project, those pieces left us scratching our heads on several points.

Why would U.S. Sugar suddenly sell out and close shop? Why would the state

pay more for the company than it seems to be worth? How much of the land

will really be used for conservation, which is the stated purpose of the

deal?

To follow these and other loose ends left by the two New York papers, we

took a digital trip down to Florida for a look at local and regional coverage, and we came away knowing a lot more. The St. Petersburg Times shed some light on why U.S. Sugar sold out, noting a 2006 federal court ruling that said one of its practices violated the Clean Water Act. Several months later, a state agency ended the practice. This hit U.S. Sugar hard, and, in the time-honored corporate response to regulation, the company's lobbyists appealed to Crist: 'I knew what they wanted and that our administration wasn't excited about embracing any more,' Crist said. So he figured that 'maybe it was time to take a quantum leap forward.' Crist said that when he first proposed buying everything U.S. Sugar owns, 'originally there was some surprise' among even his staff. 'But the more people thought about it, they thought, why not?' The South Florida Sun-Sentinel fills in more gaps by providing the point of view of Robert Coker, senior vice president of U.S. Sugar: Coker said U.S. Sugar went to Gov. Charlie Crist with its list of usual concerns-higher farming costs, infrastructure, transportation, Lake Okeechobee and the federal lawsuit pending against it -and about seven months ago the governor brought up the idea of selling the whole company to the South Florida Water Management District. So the environmental lawsuit wasn't the only factor in U.S. Sugar's taking the deal. That makes sense. The sale would have been a drastic response to one environmental ruling. This raft of issues leads us to wonder how much U.S. Sugar is worth. Florida offered \$1.75 billion, which comes to about \$350 a share. That's well above two previous offers of \$293 a share that the company turned down, and much higher than the \$180 to \$204 its shares have traded for privately in recent times, reports the St. Pete Times, which also notes the company will get to operate for six years-and presumably earn money-before winding down operations. Florida is acquiring everything from the business, even though all it really wants is the land. The St. Petersburg Times reports this quote: 'They're acquiring us lock, stock and barrel,' said U.S. Sugar's public relations director, Judy Sanchez. 'It's soup to nuts. That's the only way

we'd do the deal.'

That makes it sound like U.S. Sugar had the upper hand, or at least a

pretty

strong bargaining position. But that raises the question of CEO

Robert

Buker's defense of the deal in The New York Times, in which he said that the company had no choice but to sell because the state had the upper hand,

and

could have pushed them off the land with laws, rather than with \$1.7

billion

dollars.

So the state's fine price is just charity and it's buying an entire sugar

operation, rather than just the land, for no reason at all? This

makes no

sense, and the NYT doesn't question the assertion.

Not that the Florida pieces are perfect. They don't always follow through

on

thoughts, but they do provide plenty of information and let readers draw

their own conclusions. For instance, trying to calculate the worth of U.S. Sugar-not an easy task-the St. Pete Times finds a

government appraiser who thinks the price overvalues the land by more than double, but also quotes a conservation

official who thinks the price may be a "bargain." And so the piece ends with

no real conclusion. But we'll offer one.

The fact is, these are two different ways of measuring value.

Zech, the

appraiser, is looking at it from a market standpoint. Danter, the

conservationist, is looking at the deal as a piece in the state's

conservation plans. Both of these are legitimate measures of value.

But what if the government weren't the purchaser? What if the purchaser

were

a private company? A corporation would never pay such a high

price, so why

should the government?

This brings us back to one of the Sun-Sentinel stories, which notes that

U.S. Sugar has not always been consistent about the worth of its business,

recently touting sugar prices and its business as strong.

Yet, previously, U.S. Sugar Corp. executives have said they're worried

about

the long-term future of the sugar-cane industry in the United States.

While

Congress continues to protect the industry by limiting imports and propping

up prices for domestic sugar, cane production faces growing regulatory and

environmental hurdles. And moves toward more open trade have boosted pressure to increase sugar

imports.

That's a good catch. In short, U.S. Sugar complained about hard times when it needed help, but boasted about strength when the appraisers started snooping around. Given the state of the American sugar industry, we're more inclined to believe the first characterization.

So what is the high price really for? Conservation, yes, but what does

that mean? Even the Florida press has tended to be a bit vague on this one, a

bit

too willing to buy into the vision of lolling crocodiles amid rows of Mangrove trees. But here's the St. Petersburg Times:

But more than 100,000 acres of it could be turned back to farming-perhaps

growing crops for use as fuel, said Department of Environmental Protection

Secretary Mike Sole.

'I don't need 187,000 acres for environmental restoration,' said Sole-an

assertion that was already stirring opposition among environmental

activists

who have long wanted to restore the broad expanse of the River of Grass.

So the government is buying this land at a very high price in large part

to

cultivate biofuel crops. That's hardly the conservation touted by the

Journal and NYT.

This deal was reached in almost complete secrecy, as The Miami Herald and

others pointed out. As details solidify, journalists and other observers

need to stay sharp on this deal and not let Eden-like promises cloud their

vision.

After all, politics are never far from view. The local press prominently

reported that this environmentally conscious deal comes just after Crist's

abandoning of his objection to offshore drilling.

At the same time, Crist's name is floating around as McCain's potential

vice-presidential running mate.

We trust the Florida press to stay on the case.

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## **Sugar Deal Is Not So Sweet**

07/16/2008

Miami New Times

Bob Norman

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Bob Norman-Miami New Times

Charlie Crist gets a bogus hero medal for bailing out Big Sugar.

Florida Gov. Charlie Crist's plan to buy U.S. Sugar for \$1.75 billion has been described by Florida newspapers as 'bold,' 'ambitious,' and 'grand.'

Kyle T. Webster

Charlie Crist, Big Sugar, U.S. Sugar, Florida Crystals, sugar industry

Now it's time to throw 'stupid' and 'irresponsible' into the mix.

It's true that the deal, in its broad strokes, might look like a masterpiece. It will conceivably rid the Everglades of the lion's share of its pollution and set the stage for the ecosystem's rebirth. In the long run, it's something that needs to be done, and that makes it difficult to argue with.

The devil in this deal, however, is in the details, and they stink like the blackest swamp muck in the stopped-up River of Grass. Not only does the plan present a possible financial nightmare for the state, but also it obviously overprices U.S. Sugar and reeks of undue influence from both the industry and some of the governor's closest allies in state government.

Begin with the bottom line, the \$1.75 billion price, which the state intends to borrow and pay off with property tax dollars over 30 years at an actual cost of \$3.5 billion. The state, to make the plan work, must also negotiate a major land deal with the other Big Sugar concern in the state, Florida Crystals, which is run by the notoriously tough Fanjul family.

This is in the midst of what looks to be a long recession where homeowners are already overburdened and the state is so broke it cut \$1 billion from public education.

'People can't afford to drive down the road to get something to eat,' Hendry County Commissioner Darrell Harris says. 'Teachers are getting laid off, state workers are getting laid off. And [Crist is] spending \$1.75 billion on this?'

Understand that Harris, like most of the 40,000 people in his county, doesn't like this deal. Part of the reason for that is it will likely decimate Hendry's economy.

Still, if the deal was a good one for the state, the timing might be forgiven. Now consider what the state is buying. U.S. Sugar is saddled with debt, under pressure from lower-priced sugar imports, and dependent on massive federal price subsidies to turn whatever relatively meager profits it is making right now.

Oh, and the company also created all of that pollution we're spending all of those billions to clean up. For that it gets a huge buyout (or bailout, if you prefer).

Harris says he believes the state is about to pay way too high a price for the sugar company and its 187,000 acres. Asked what he thought would be a fair price, he said, 'About a billion.'

Gaylon Lawrence is pretty sure the state is overpaying, too, and the wealthy banker and landowner ought to know. He recently thought he'd bagged Big Sugar himself, before it got away.

The 73-year-old Missourian, who splits his time in Vero Beach, wanted to buy U.S. Sugar, and in 2005 found a willing seller in the company's CEO, Robert Dolson.

The price: about \$1.1 billion, including a \$575 million sale price plus the assumption of about \$500 million in debt, taken on by the company, to update the sugar plant.

'That was Dolson's suggested price, not mine,' Lawrence told New Times last week in his first interview regarding the deal. 'We settled on \$575 million plus the debt. We thought we had a deal.... We were looking at this as a keeping situation, as a family situation. It would have taken us five years to make it a good solid investment.'

It's no wonder Dolson thought the price, which amounted to just more than \$1 billion, was good for the company. It represented a 50 percent premium in the private stock price, from \$200 a share to \$293 a share. Most businessmen would call that a sweet deal.

Lawrence says he and Dolson were confident the terms would be accepted by the board, which is controlled by the descendants of U.S. Sugar founder Charles Stewart Mott, who made his initial fortune as a General Motors partner and shareholder. The Flint, Michigan-based C.S. Mott Foundation, with more than \$2.5 billion in assets and related entities, still owns a majority of U.S. Sugar, while workers have a 38 percent stake.

The current chairman of the U.S. Sugar board is William White, the husband of Mott's granddaughter. As much as the late Mott was respected in Clewiston, White is distrusted, viewed as a distant landlord who cares little about the company while collecting the government-subsidized dividends for the foundation.

White and the board rejected the offer from Lawrence, and Dolson was soon sent packing from his CEO job with a \$10 million company parachute (though Lawrence says he doesn't believe the rejected offer had anything to do with the departure).

'The farther [the Mott family] gets away from the source, the less they know about it,' Lawrence says. 'They thought they were doing right.'

The Lawrence negotiations were never revealed to the workers, whose stock continued to be valued by the company around \$200 despite the Lawrence offer. A group of former employees sued U. S. Sugar earlier this year alleging the Lawrence negotiations were proof the board defrauded them.

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## No Spoonful of Sugar for a Town's Bitter Pill

07/17/2008

Time - Online

HECTOR FLORIN

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HECTOR FLORIN-Time

There's an unmistakable bitterness in the air in America's self-styled 'sweetest town.' Last month's deal to close down U.S. Sugar in the name of saving the Florida Everglades may have been greeted with environmentalist hallelujahs around the nation, but for Clewiston it sounded a death knell. Clewiston, population 7,300, is a company town, and its primary employer is to shut down its operations under the plan to sell U.S. Sugar's 187,000 acres to the state. The locals are angry and exasperated that this still-unplanned mammoth act of environmental engineering will come at the expense of their town's livelihood.

U.S. Sugar has its headquarters here, and is not only the town's largest employer, but also the very hub of its economic and social life. Besides jobs, it has offered the town's wealthier residents, as well as private farmers, additional income by buying up the sugar cane they cultivate on their own land holdings. And it has bolstered the middle class by providing some financial aid and scholarships to college-bound children of employees. Employees, current and former, fill many local elected offices; the town's main road is Sugarland Highway, and U.S. Sugar built Cane Field Stadium at Clewiston High.

Although the end of an era has been decreed, the ax will fall on U.S. Sugar's 1,700 local jobs only in 2014 at the earliest. And that gives the town and Hendry County time to create an alternative economic plan. Although there's much talk of expanding the region's industrial, commercial and tourism base, Clewiston Mayor Mali Chamness, a resident since 1963, is adamant that the focus must remain on the land: 'Agriculture - that is our option. We're a farming community. We want to stay a farming community.' Sugar employees, and the local businesses they sustain, will leave town unless a similar economy can be created, she said. 'They've effectively devalued our county. We cannot be a viable community without agriculture. Just about 100 percent of what we do is agriculture-based.' Banker and community leader Miller Couse echoes a widely held view that Clewiston was thrown 'under the bus' by not being looped into the secret discussions that resulted in U.S. Sugar's sale. The city and Hendry County plan to lobby aggressively for the town's needs to be considered, and for help making the economic adjustment to the departure of U.S. Sugar. Still, America is littered with examples that show there's no easy fix when a company town loses its economic engine. 'If you just take U.S. Sugar out of the mix and don't replace it with anything, it'll be catastrophic,' said Antonio Perez, one of the town's four attorneys. Perez also grows cane that's sold to U.S. Sugar, and runs a private school on land donated by the company.

Jack Roney has seen it all before. He represented the Hawaiian

Sugar Planters Association in Washington, D.C., from 1989 to 1996, but was laid off when mainland Hawaii, once the biggest sugar producer in the chain of islands, stopped growing cane. High production and transportation costs, as well as compliance with the state's strict environmental standards, had proved too costly, prompting the island's two sugar companies to depart. No industry replaced those jobs, and 'it's been years trying to recover' from the loss, says Roney, now director of economics and policy analysis for the American Sugar Alliance. 'I think this will be a very difficult adjustment for the workers in the town of Clewiston,' he adds. 'Agriculture really is the backbone of so many communities. It's a terrible shock to those communities if they lose a major job source.' Couse, chairman and CEO of the First Bank of Clewiston, owns 500 acres of land on which he grows cane sold to U.S. Sugar. Not only is the fate of private growers like him now in limbo, but so are other plans: This week, a meeting was held to decide the fate of a planned \$14 million expansion, including a new emergency room, planned for the town's 55-year-old hospital. But the local stakeholders decided to move ahead.

Their attachment to intimate community is shared by Kartrice Greaves, a third-generation Clewiston native whose great-grandfather, grandfather and two uncles worked for U.S. Sugar. Growing up, she didn't think she'd ever want to raise a family in town because 'there was nothing to do; there are no malls.' But after graduating from Florida A&M University in Tallahassee in 2001 with an education degree, she moved back. Husband Jeremy, 28, runs the town's alternative school, and Kartrice, 29, is set to open Little Disciples Learning Center, a child-care center for pre-schoolers, next to Cane Field Stadium in August. She returned to Clewiston, she said, because 'it's small. You know everybody. You know your neighbors.' While the couple was out of town on June 24, Jeremy's mother called them about U.S. Sugar's announcement and told them Clewiston would disappear without the big company around. 'His mom was like, 'Well, you need to start looking for homes here [in Broward County, to the south]. How are you going to be able to teach if you don't have any children to teach?' We were like, 'That's true'.' But the Greaves plan to stay put, for now, in the absence of any clear idea of what may come next. Says Greaves, 'I'm just going with the flow.'

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## **The Promised Land**

07/17/2008

Naples Daily News

RUSSELL TUFF

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Russell Tuff-Naples Daily News

### The Promised Land

Lack of funding for a water restoration project in Lee County now has South Florida Water Management District scrambling to remove some property they probably didnt need in the first place. Many acres of the project were taken by condemnation, forcing people out of homes and property, only to find, 10 years later, that they really dont need all of the projected acreage.

Now that land could help SFWMD keep a promise to another group of people adversely affected by a different restoration project.

In its 2003 road easement agreement with Collier County, the SFWMD promised to find a section of land for ATV use. Local recreational users predicted what has become reality -- the District cant find any property to make good on its promise.

Now land is available, but because it is located in Lee County, the prospect will likely be contentious.

The reality is -- the land is already disturbed, the District cant afford to restore it, ATV use would be available to Lee, as well as Collier residents, and there are no residents nearby to agitate.

Unfortunately, unlike flooded land, practical thinking doesnt always hold water.

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## **ATVers eye land surplus**

07/17/2008

Collier Citizen

Costello, Kenneth

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By KENNETH COSTELLO - Collier Citizen

An overly ambitious plan to restore natural water flow in Lee County may be the answer to fallout from an equally ambitious plan to restore natural water flow in Collier County.

In 2003, Collier County turned over its road easements in Southern Golden Gate Estates to the South Florida Water Management District for the Everglades restoration project, in exchange for \$20 million and a promise to find 640 acres for ATV riders displaced by the project.

Since that time, SFWMD has not been able to secure the land for ATV use, frustrating Collier commissioners and local ATV users.

Now, news that the District is considering swapping a portion of its Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed project has caught the eye of local ATV task force members delegated to assist with the land search effort.

CREW was launched in Bonita Springs in 1995, after flooding from

Tropical Storm Jerry drove local rivers over their banks and hundreds of residents out of their homes.

The controversial 4,670-acre Bonita land buyout was intended to restore natural water flow and prevent residential flooding. In the process, many homeowners were forced to give up their land and homes, through condemnation.

Today, the District is in a financial struggle to complete the CREW project, which is currently \$14 million over budget and needs an additional \$16 million to complete. Instead, SFWMD officials are considering selling land located south of the Kehl Canal and north of Bonita Beach Road to Lee County. Lee County Commissioner Ray Judah will take the proposal back to his board to consider purchasing the acreage through the county's condemnation land program.

A group of Collier County ATV riders say the acreage would be perfect for ATV use.

"That land has historically flooded, this was nothing new," says task force member Kevin Knight.

The task force would like SFWMD to deed 640 acres of the Bonita land for ATV use.

But the group knows they may have a hard sell ahead, as the land sits in Lee. Task force member Brian McMahon predicts Judah will oppose the proposal.

"Would he rather see a shopping center there if they sell it on the open market?" McMahon asks. "We are going to have to convince Commissioner Judah that this is a better use."

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## **Lantana: Water district allows town up to 907 million gallons**

07/17/2008

South Florida Sun-Sentinel

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South Florida Sun-Sentinel

Lantana can use up to 907 million gallons of water per year for the next 20 years under a new permit approved by the South Florida Water Management District.

That equates to about 2.48 million gallons of water per day for the community, where the water supply was threatened by salt water seeping into fresh water supplies during back-to-back years of drought.

The district during the past two years required Lantana to cut back on pumping to stop salt water from foiling wells near the coast.

The new permit requires the use of two new wells farther inland, and relies on ongoing Water restrictions to help cut back on the

town's draw on freshwater supplies.

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## Contenders for District 4 School Board seat stress experience

07/17/2008

South Florida Sun-Sentinel

Freeman, Marcus

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Winner of District 4 seat will finish Kanjian's term  
By Marc Freeman | South Florida Sun-Sentinel

The District 4 seat on the Palm Beach County School Board has been a revolving door over the past two years:

Bob Kanjian left last August after less than a year in the post to fill a vacancy on the Palm Beach County Commission. Two months later, the governor appointed Carrie Parker Hill to fill the spot temporarily.

Now, after less than nine months, a special election Aug. 26 will decide who gets the seat for what would have been the last two years of Kanjian's term.

Hill, a South Florida Water Management District executive, hopes to stay in the office until at least November 2010. She needs to defeat only one challenger in the nonpartisan contest: John E. McGovern, of Boynton Beach.

District 4 includes beachfront communities from Delray Beach to Singer Island and a swath of neighborhoods west of Interstate 95 in the south part of the county.

The seven-member School Board approves policies and budgets for a school system of more than 168,000 students. Board members receive a \$40,887 annual salary.

The low-key matchup between Hill, 50, and McGovern, 63, has been absent clashes or controversies. Both candidates are promoting their experience and positions.

Hill's campaign Web site highlights praise from Gov. Charlie Crist, who last year boasted that she "has the skills to make a positive impact for the students of Palm Beach County."

Hill, who lives near Boynton Beach, said her goals include: increasing the county's high school graduation rate, which was 71.8 percent last year; increasing affordable housing choices for teachers; improving FCAT scores; providing safe schools; and expanding healthy-living programs for students.

In her board tenure, Hill worked to save Boynton Beach's Galaxy Elementary from closure; the school instead will be modernized. And the board agreed with her suggestion to establish a new advisory committee on technology matters. Hill lists her efforts in founding the Schoolhouse Children's Museum in Boynton Beach as her proudest community accomplishment prior to joining the

board. She also served on the school board of St. Mark Catholic Church in the city. She has a son, stepdaughter and grandson.

McGovern, who applied for the board appointment that went to Hill, says he has a more extensive background in education than his opponent.

Until last month, he served as a consultant running education programs for Palm Beach County Circuit Court. The position was a casualty of budget reductions.

McGovern, who moved to Florida in 1999, describes himself as "the more knowledgeable education professional and public policy specialist."

His lengthy resume includes teaching and administration jobs in Connecticut and New York.

According to a 1992 article published in the Hartford Courant, McGovern resigned as superintendent of schools for the Hartford (Conn.) Archdiocese under pressure, after three years in the post.

The newspaper quoted McGovern's resignation letter, which cited an evaluation praising his administrative skills but noted his "arrogance." McGovern wrote that he sought to challenge "tradition and current practice and I do not believe that I have anything to apologize for."

In an e-mail this week, McGovern said he was not forced to resign, but he "had a significant difference with the archbishop of that diocese and hence it was time to move on."

If elected, McGovern says he'll work on: ensuring "quality public education" for all students; treating teachers like professionals; addressing the educational needs of foster children; and pushing for FCAT reforms.

McGovern's other community activities include serving as president of the Palm Beach County affiliate of the Boston-based Catholic lay group Voice of the Faithful, which supports victims of clergy sexual abuse.

Marc Freeman can be reached at [mjfreeman@sun-sentinel.com](mailto:mjfreeman@sun-sentinel.com) or 561-243-6642.

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## **Martin administrator proposes property tax increase**

07/16/2008

Jupiter Courier

George Andreassi

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George Andreassi-Stuart News

Property tax rate comparison

Median home taxable value: \$229,000

Current property tax rate: \$6.834 per thousand dollars of assessed value

Property tax bill: \$1,564.99

July 3 property tax rate proposal: \$7.036

Property tax bill: \$1,611.24

July 15 property tax rate proposal: \$7.264

Property tax bill: \$1,663.46

STUART A shrinking tax base prompted County Administrator Duncan Ballantyne to propose a higher property tax rate for 2009 on Tuesday that would cost the typical homeowner an extra \$52.

Boosting the Martin County property tax rate to \$7.264 per \$1,000 of assessed value could make up for a \$4.4 million shortfall in the 2009 budget as a result of the \$2 Billion drop in the tax base, Ballantyne said.

The proposal would result in a county property tax bill of \$1,663 for the owner of a median value home of \$229,000.

None of the county commissioners expressed support for a bigger increase in the property tax rate going into a week of budget workshops starting Monday. Nor did any of the commissioners say they wanted to cut \$4.4 million from the proposed \$363.7 million budget.

When he initially released the 2009 budget on July 3, Ballantyne proposed a property tax rate of \$7.036 per \$1,000 of assessed value, which would have meant a property tax bill of \$1,611 for the typical homeowner.

The current property tax rate is \$6.834 per \$1,000 of assessed value, which would yield a tax bill of \$1,565.

While they did not make any decision on raising the property tax rate or cutting the proposed budget, the commissioners offered differing opinions on whether the commissioners and administrators should take a pay cut.

Commissioner Michael DiTerlizzi, a Republican candidate for the open state House seat in District 81, said he suggested voluntary 10 percent pay cuts for the commissioners and administrators based on a survey distributed to 6,000 residents in Palm City and Jensen Beach that brought in 600 responses.

One of the issues in my budget survey was a lot of people felt administration has to take some cuts, DiTerlizzi said. I wouldn't recommend dramatic cuts but an ... adjustment backwards of 10 percent is not a dramatic cut for anybody. We need to show the residents we are really serious.

A 10 percent cut for the county commissioners and top 20 paid

county managers could save Martin County about \$280,000.

The state Legislature and the Stuart City Commission volunteered to take a pay cut in recognition of the declining economy, DiTerlizzi said.

Commissioner Lee Weberman agreed.

There's no real cuts to management; there's no shared adversity, Weberman said. We need to show the rest of the employees we're serious.

But Commissioner Susan Valliere said she did not want to demoralize the county's top brass when they are working so hard to cut their budgets, while providing the services residents want.

I want to chime in right now about the concept of cutting the pay of employees: I will not support that, Valliere said. I value all of our employees.

Valliere suggested that the commissioners save \$625,000 by cutting their district funds of \$125,000 each.

In other business

The Martin County Commission took the following action

Adopted a resolution urging the South Florida Water Management District and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to speed up buying land and completing construction on the Indian River Lagoon South project.

Approved a rate increase for Lifestar helicopter ambulance service that will raise the bill of a typical patient to \$12,598, a hike of \$1,416, or 12 percent more than the current rate. The increase is needed to help cover rising fuel costs.

Agreed to continue trucking of solid waste to the Palm Beach County landfill, instead of the Okeechobee County Landfill, for 90 days to determine if Martin County can save money. The new arrangement has been in effect for 60 days.

Decided to advertise a proposed change to the county's noise ordinance that would prohibit entertainment venues from allowing noise to be audible more than 150 feet beyond its property boundary.

Approved a \$10 million bond deal that will allow Martin Memorial Medical Center to lease medical equipment.

Approved the rezoning of a .643-acre residential lot at the northeast corner of U.S. 1 and Oleander Street in Hobe Sound to allow commercial uses.

Approved the rezoning of a 1.82-acre residential lot on the northeast corner of Dixie Highway and Silvia Avenue in Rio to allow commercial uses.

Approved the rezoning of the 492-acre Shadow Lake Groves property west of Florida's Turnpike and north of Martin Highway in Palm City Farms to allow industrial use.

Approved the rezoning of the 127-acre Shadow Lake Estates

property west of Florida's Turnpike and north of Martin Highway in Palm City Farms to allow 5-acre ranchettes.

Asked county officials to lay the ground work for leasing Building 30 at Witham Field to the Elliott Museum while the cultural institution builds new facilities on Hutchinson Island in 2009 and 2010.

Approved the rezoning of a .655-acre lot near the southwest corner of Kanner Highway and Salerno Road in South Stuart to allow the construction of an access road to a neighboring property.

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## **Palm Bay council to hear lagoon report**

07/17/2008

Florida Today

KIMBERLY C. MOORE â€¢ FLORIDA TODAY â€¢ July

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KIMBERLY C. MOORE - FLORIDA TODAY

**PALM BAY** It has rained almost every day in Palm Bay for the past two months, pushing fresh water into the Indian River Lagoon.

But a project the St. Johns River Water Management District is working on will stop the flow of 90 percent of that water into the lagoon and divert it instead to the St. Johns River as it was before the canals were dug during the past 70 years.

Fresh water is considered a pollutant to the lagoon, explained Hector Herrera, SJRWMD senior project manager.

Herrera is scheduled to give an update on the project to the Palm Bay City Council at Thursday nights meeting.

The district is moving forward with Phase I so we can start seeing benefits to the Indian River Lagoon, Herrera said.

Construction has already begun on Phase I of the project. Workers are building an outlet structure, which are gated culverts that will discharge stormwater into the St. Johns River.

Phase I also includes modifying the C-1 canal outlet structure, also known as the Melbourne-Tillman Canal, and creating a series of pump stations to move the water. Phase I will cost an estimated \$8 million, which comes from the state, the Florida Forever Program that buys undeveloped environmental lands, and the water management trust fund.

The water will be flushed into a reservoir, located at the western end of Malabar Road. Land has been bought from two ranching families: The Platts and Willard Palmer. The property already floods during the rainy season, Herrera said. Under this program, it will remain under water for a longer period. The land buy was not part of the \$8 million construction cost.

The project will also benefit Turkey Creek, which lies in northeast Palm Bay and is surrounded, in part, by a nature sanctuary.

The diversion of water will reduce excessive stormwater flows into Turkey Creek, the Friends of Turkey Creek Web site states. This will also reduce the amount of sediment and contaminants that are now clogging Turkey Creek and contributing to the degradation of the Indian River Lagoon.

Thursday council meeting starts at 7 in the city council chambers at City Hall, 120 Malabar Road.

Contact More at 409-1423 or kmoore@floridatoday.com.

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## Land use committee split on mining recommendations in Lee

07/17/2008

Naples Daily News

CHARLIE WHITEHEAD

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CHARLIE WHITEHEAD-Naples Daily News

When the committee studying land uses in southeast Lee County makes its report to county commissioners, there will be dueling recommendations.

Members of the Density Reduction/Groundwater Resource committee will prepare two recommendations, one a majority view that limits new mines mostly to the Alico Road corridor and another that allows significantly more.

When county commissioners created the 15-member committee eight months ago, the board had just declared a one-year moratorium on new mine applications. There was a deep divide with residents of southeast Lee and some environmental groups on one side and miners, large landowners and road builders on the other.

There still is.

When the dozen members present at Wednesdays all day DR/GR workshop attached their names to the various scenarios fashioned by committee consultant Dover Kohl and Associates, the split was obvious.

The scenario that restricts mining got nine votes of support and two against. The other extreme, which allows the most, received two votes of support and nine in opposition.

Those committee members on the minority were Florida Rock executive Scott McCaleb and Youngquist Brothers executive Richard Friday. There might have been a third, but committee member and consulting firm owner Dennis Gilkey, who represents landowners in the DR/GR, quit the committee early this week.

Committee member and hydrologist Kirk Martin didnt vote, saying either approach would work with the right conditions.

Committee members were less than surprised by their split.

I could have filled this in myself months ago, McCaleb said.

Friday, for his part, tried pulling toward the middle.

The word thats always in my mind here is balance, he said. If (Corkscrew resident) Kevin Hill gets 100 percent of what he wants, somebodys going to lose. If I got all I wanted. If (Steven Brown of the Conservancy of Southwest Florida) got all he wanted. Everybody is going to have to look to find a balance.

Members did discuss Gilkeys resignation. In a resignation letter to Commissioner Bob Janes, who appointed him, Gilkey said the proposed solutions arent feasible and are based on erroneous assumptions and reasoning. He said it appears the recommendations were pre-determined.

Friday has been critical, too.

I have my disappointments, but this is the process we have, he said.

Friday said he feels some members of the committee would prefer to have no mining at all, new or existing. He cited a scene from Independence Day, a popular movie in which the American president asks the alien invader how they can co-exist.

The answer? Die, said Friday. Theres some of that here.

Estero resident Don Eslick defended the process Gilkey criticized.

Basically he impugns the Dover Kohl report, which we have largely affirmed, he said. He makes accusations about the way the county structured the process to create bias. I for one want to express my disagreement.

Commissioners will hear the recommendation now two recommendations from the committee Aug. 1.

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## **Plans to remove marine industry protections from river land-use plan could get washed up**

07/17/2008

Miami Today

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By Risa Polansky-Miami Today

Plans to remove marine industry protections from the Miami River could get washed up, with local agencies shoring up support for the future of commerce on the waterway.

Miami commissioners voted in May to remove the word "port" from the river element of the city's comprehensive land-use plan, a move they say will encourage more mixed uses along the river, including marine business.

River players contend it threatens the existence of the marine industry by encouraging residential development.

Miami-Dade County's planning chief agrees.

In a letter to the Florida Department of Community Affairs — in the midst of reviewing the city's proposed comprehensive plan changes — Planning and Zoning Director Marc C. LaFerrier said proposed changes to the city's plan, "including the deletion of all references to the river as a 'port,' de-emphasizes the marine industry in favor of a more residential/commercial-oriented riverfront."

His comments follow a similar letter to the state department from the South Florida Regional Planning Council.

Removing the word "port" from the city's plan goes against the Strategic Regional Policy Plan for South Florida, the letter said.

The regional plan includes policies such as "Protect marine-related industries through innovative comprehensive planning and zoning regulations."

The South Florida group plays an advisory role in the state review process, while Miami-Dade County evaluates the city's comprehensive plan to ensure it's consistent with its own.

Florida Department of Community Affairs officials took note of the growing opposition this week.

Secretary Thomas Pelham informed a group of visiting Miami officials of "mounds of objectors" to the proposed plan amendments.

The state agency, which is responsible for reviewing land-planning policies of local governments, pressed the city to include strategies for maintaining a balance on the river. It is to issue its report on the proposed changes Friday.

In his comments, Mr. LaFerrier noted that the county's plan includes the objective to "maintain and promote marine activity on the Miami River and protect these activities from encroachment or displacement by incompatible land uses."

Because the city already allows residential and mixed-uses on certain areas along the river, Mr. LaFerrier said it's unclear why Miami would propose changes "unless it is the city's intent to convert industrial lands (no residential allowed) needed to maintain or enhance the maritime industry to residential land."

That's what opponents allege — that the city is opening the door

to more condos by eliminating explicit industry protection.

The move to alter the plan comes after three consecutive appellate court decisions overturning commission-approved land-use changes that would have allowed large-scale residential projects be developed along the river.

Follow the comprehensive plan or change it, the judges told the city.

Officials say the intent of the proposed changes is to encourage all types of development on the river.

But, Mr. LaFerrier wrote, deleting the term "port" from the comprehensive plan "alters the city's commitment to maintaining and enhancing the maritime activities along the river."

He mentioned also that the city in making its changes did not provide data or analysis to document the potential economic impact of de-emphasizing port protections.

"The city has not analyzed how much waterfront is necessary to maintain and/or enhance the maritime industry along the river," which he called an "economically valued industry."

