

Develop a Water Education Task Team

Education is the primary tool used to engage citizens in positive behavior and teach on-going stewardship of our natural resources. Environmental Management has always played a lead role in the education of citizens, and has developed extensive program offerings related to all of the various aspects of our division.

Water issues are particularly suited to education and outreach programs. As each individual has an impact on water quality and quantity through their actions.

Current Situation

Environmental Management offers a variety of educational programming in each of the various activities of the division. In each activity, subject matter experts provide outreach and education according to their particular strengths and resources. The educational offerings have never been reviewed for division-wide consistency, or for thematic programming.

Project

To operate an integrated educational program within Volusia County's Environmental Management Division to increase the public's awareness of water resources and to promote stewardship of the natural systems of the county using a variety of learning experiences and delivery methods.

This project has been underway since early 2014 and includes:

- Creation of a curriculum catalog identifying all water educational offerings and any gaps in programming (completed with existing staff),
- Expanding distance learning opportunities through the use of engaging multi-media presentations (\$10,000), and
- Developing a volunteer naturalist program to extend the reach of our professional educators to double the number of residents we reach with educational programs (existing staff).

Staff has integrated a water quality or quantity element to each and every educational offering to promote awareness of the role water plays in all aspects of our community.

Community Impact and Benefits

This project will:

- Engage citizens and visitors in the critical role water plays in our community
- Strengthen the impact of the capital projects by demonstrating the importance of water quality improvement projects
- Change behavior which leads to improved water quality through the cumulative effect of individual decisions.

Create a Media Campaign for Fertilizer Restrictions

Current Situation

Volusia County adopted a county-wide fertilizer ordinance to reduce the amount of nutrient pollution in our surface waters and springs. The ordinance regulates the application of nitrogen and phosphorous, and bans the application of certain fertilizers during the summer rainy season. The successful implementation of the ordinance will rely significantly on educating homeowners, fertilizer applicators, and retailers about the ordinance restrictions and responsible use of nutrients in the landscape.

Project

To develop and implement a county-wide media campaign aimed at reducing the level of nutrient pollution caused by fertilizer and other sources. The project will include:

- Creating and maintaining a website listing certified and trained fertilizer applicators (\$26,385 annually)
- Creating a fertilizer education program for retailers, including site visits and creation of materials for display at retail locations (\$26,385 annually)
- Creating an educational program for institutional applicators and home owners including (\$149,650 annually):
 - creating a series of multi-media campaign messages that utilize print, radio, Internet, and social media,
 - retaining a professional marketing company to create memorable ads and public service announcements (copy and artwork design) for use in print, digital, and radio outlets, and to track and report data analytics; and
 - retaining a Volusia County media campaign coordinator to create web page and social media content, develop a homeowner guide, recruit corporate sponsors, conduct media buys and create a strategic plan to perpetuate the campaign.

Community Impact and Benefits

This project will:

- Reach 165,000 residents through multi-media and traditional print advertising.
- Develop partnerships with municipalities, local businesses, neighboring counties, education and research institutions, environmental groups, and other NGO's.
- Reduce the amount of nitrogen and phosphorus entering Volusia County's water bodies.

Partner with Community Organizations to Create Project H₂O

Current Situation

Volusia County has a multitude of highly involved universities and Non-governmental Organizations (NGO's) who are working independently on water quality projects. Coordinating these individual projects, and matching needs with resources will better address issues of water quality, quantity, and habitat. Collaborating on research, education, restoration, and funding will ensure the most effective use of limited resources to facilitate meaningful change.

Project

To facilitate and participate in an integrated water quality consortium of governments, universities and other research organization and NGO's within Volusia County. The project has been labeled Project H₂O, Promoting **healthy habitat** through community **outreach**. The project has been underway since mid 2014 and currently consists of the following project partners: Volusia County, University of Florida IFAS, University of Central Florida, Stetson University, Bethune-Cookman University, Daytona State College, The Marine Discovery Center, League of Women Voters, Audubon of Volusia, Blue Spring Alliance, and the Marine Resources Council.

Project H₂O is structured around collaborative partnerships to accomplish meaningful:

- Research,
- Education,
- Citizen Science, and
- Restoration.

Staff will establish program parameters and partners, and will continue to recruit additional project partners, and identify specific projects that will result in furthering the state of knowledge, and contributing to meaningful water quality improvements.

Community Impact and Benefits

This project will:

- Engage universities and NGO's in the critical role water plays in our community.
- Match research, restoration, and education needs with available resources.
- Ensure competitiveness on grant applications by demonstrating a regional commitment to water quality.
- Change behavior which leads to improved water quality through the cumulative effect of individual decisions.