

Martin County Projects Update



Rivers Coalition Meeting January 29, 2015 at 11 a.m., City of Stuart Commission Chambers

(Update provided by Deborah Drum, Ecosystem Restoration & Management Division)

- Martin County has been participating in the Operations calls with the ACOE to provide input related to Lake Okeechobee operations. We also completed a press release detailing our accomplishments with water quality within the BMAP framework, and we have been sharing information via video with our "Your Environment" program. All of these are available for view on the "Speak Up for the St. Lucie" Facebook page. We would appreciate your "Like."
- The Ecosystem Division developed a Citizens Guide to Protecting our Waterways. The guide lists the top 10 things you can do to reduce water pollution. We can all be a part of the solution by following these simple tips.
- The Ecosystem Division has also completed development of a rack card to reflect the new Fertilizer Ordinance changes. This card should be printed in the next two weeks and will be available in the Administration Building and through the Florida Yards & Neighborhoods Program.
- The Ecosystem Division met on January 28, 2015 to begin discussions for setting dates and fine tuning the sampling plan for the Dry Season Microbial Source Tracking. The same 14 sites will be sampled as in the wet season.
- Martin County is under construction with the Bessey Creek Hybrid Wetland Treatment Technology project. Construction has progressed to approximately 40% complete and is scheduled to be done by March 2015.
- The Ecosystem Division has executed a St. Lucie River Issues Team grant for three new projects:
 - MC Golf Course Water Quality Improvement Project, (\$50,000)
 - Manatee Pocket Southwest Prong Baffle Box, (\$100,000)
 - All American Ditch Retrofit Project, (\$375,000)Ecosystem staff is currently working through the process of executing an EPA/FDEP Section 319 grant for All American Ditch Retrofit Project, \$1,125,000.
- Ecosystem Division has kicked off the design and permitting efforts for three projects. The MC Golf Course and SW Prong Baffle box project are expected to be designed and built this year. The All American Ditch project is expected to be designed this year and construction to occur in 2016.
- **County Coalition for Responsible Management of Lake Okeechobee • St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee Estuaries • Lake Worth Lagoon:** The 16 Counties 2015 Federal and State Legislative Priorities were approved at the Summit and include:

#1 Herbert Hoover Dike (HHD)

FEDERAL: Increase annual appropriation or rehabilitation of the HHD to accelerate project completion

#2 Kissimmee River Restoration

FEDERAL AND STATE: Continued appropriations to complete restoration

Other important priorities:

- **FEDERAL AND STATE: Funding necessary to complete St. Lucie C-44 reservoirs/STA complex and the entire Indian River Lagoon-South project including the C-23, C-24 and C-25 projects**
- **FEDERAL AND STATE: Funding necessary to complete the C-43 project**
- **FEDERAL: An updated Water Resources and Reform Development Act every two years to include authorization of crucial ecosystem restoration projects**
- **STATE: Protect local fertilizer ordinances**
- **STATE: Protect local wetland protection ordinances, oppose any preemption to regulations, particularly in water control districts created and operating pursuant to chapter 298, Florida State Statutes**
- **STATE: Support the recommendations of the Senate Select Committee on Indian River Lagoon and Lake Okeechobee Basin**

The Everglades Caucus, co-chaired by Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart and Congressman Alcee Hastings, wishes to host the County Coalition at their meeting in Washington, D.C. As a result, plans are underway for the 2nd Annual 16 County Lobby Day/Fly-In. The meeting is scheduled for February 25 in the morning (10 or 10:30 a.m.)



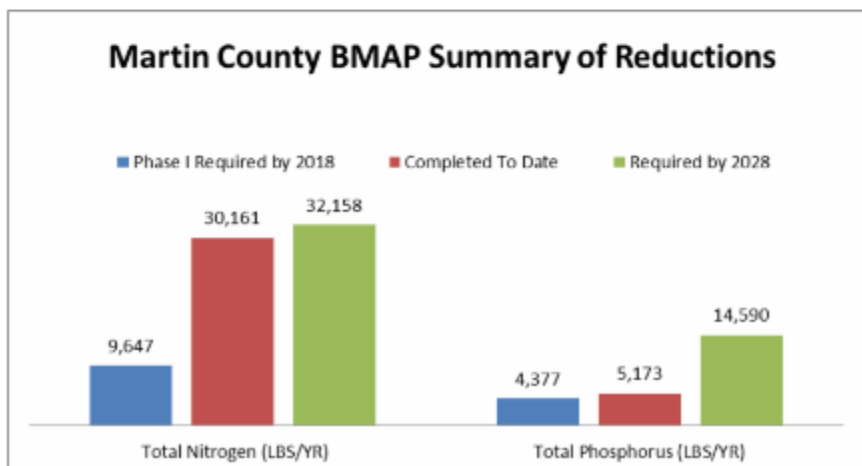
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For immediate release: January 15, 2015
Contact: Gabriella B. Ferraro, Administration, 772-463-2810

Early success of Martin County's water quality projects- exceeding State's requirements for reducing pollutants in our waterways

The numbers tell a profound story. The Martin County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) is pleased to announce its water projects have well exceeded the State's requirements for reducing the harmful pollutants in the St. Lucie Estuary in the first five years of implementing the St. Lucie Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP).

A BMAP is a "blueprint" for restoring impaired waterways by reducing pollutant loads. The St. Lucie BMAP was adopted in June 2013. The required reductions are spread out over a 15-year period and are implemented in three 5-year phases. The first phase ends in 2018. The BMAP is enforceable, and failing to meet the State requirements could result in penalties.



(Source: Martin County Ecosystem Management & Restoration Division)

In summary, by 2018, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection required Martin County, through its water quality projects, to reduce the harmful pollutants nitrogen and phosphorous in the St. Lucie Estuary by 30 percent. TO DATE, WE HAVE ACHIEVED A 94 PERCENT REDUCTION IN TOTAL NITROGEN AND 35 PERCENT REDUCTION IN TOTAL PHOSPHOROUS. Martin County was required to reduce phosphorous by 4,377 pounds of phosphorous per year by 2018, Martin County has EXCEEDED that by reducing phosphorous by 5,173 pounds per year. The State also required Martin County to reduce total nitrogen by 9,647 pounds per year by 2018; Martin County has EXCEEDED that by reducing nitrogen by 30,161 pounds per year. Fifty percent of these reductions are due to septic to sewer conversions at North River Shores, Seagate Harbor, and Rio.

Since 2000, Martin County has invested \$50 million in over 25 water quality projects. Martin County BOCC Chair and District 2 Commissioner Ed Fielding said, "Martin County has long-focused on water resource issues. We want to continue to remain in compliance, and that means continuing to invest in water quality treatment projects. We want to do our best to leverage Martin County's dollars to the extent possible by partnering with other governmental entities that share responsibilities and interest in improving water quality for the good of our environment, economy, and citizens. We all accomplish more by working together."

What and where are some of these successful water quality projects? They can be seen in all corners of Martin County, from trenches and swales in Jensen Beach, to stormwater treatment ponds in Port Salerno to floating wetlands in Palm City. A \$2.3 million water quality project in Coral Gardens in Stuart is treating 2,000 acres of watershed and has reduced nitrogen load by 1,376 pounds per year and phosphorous by 936 pounds per year. An approximate \$4 million multi-phase project in Rio is treating over 1,400 acres of watershed and has resulted in nitrogen reductions of 1,527 pounds per year and phosphorous reductions of 647 pounds per year.

Martin County staff has identified \$11 million in stormwater quality improvement projects through 2018. The Bessey Creek Hybrid Wetland Treatment Technology (HWTT) project is currently under construction which will utilize innovative water quality technologies to clean water before it reaches the St. Lucie River. A similar HWTT project will be under construction in the next few months in the Danforth Creek area. Martin County has secured over \$1 million in grant funding for their next priority project, and in the coming months, plans to break ground on a water quality project for All American Ditch in Palm City, identified as a pollution hot spot. The project consists of installing a pipe system that will send stormwater south to a 36-acre parcel of land where it will be stored and cleaned before it is discharged into St. Lucie River.

"We are pleased we are exceeding the requirements, but we have more work ahead. We have State-required BMAP goals to meet over the next 14 years, and with our state and federal partners, we are confident that we can improve water quality for the St. Lucie River and Indian River Lagoon meeting those goals." Commissioner Fielding said.

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GBF/ADM