

January 2020

SAVING FLORIDA'S NATURAL SPRINGS

Florida's water quality will remain top of mind during the Florida Legislative Session in 2020 thanks to Senate Bill 712, an initiative to address pollution affecting Florida's natural springs.

State Senator Debbie Mayfield, R-Indialantic, submitted the bill which incorporates recommendations by Governor Ron DeSantis to include more comprehensive regulations to ensure septic tanks are designed, installed, operated and maintained properly to prevent nitrogen and phosphorus nutrient pollution.

The bill would tighten restrictions on sewage spills and biosolid applications as directed by the Blue-Green Algae Task Force. It bans sewer plants from dumping sewage into the Indian River Lagoon without first providing waste treatment to remove excess nitrogen and phosphorus.

To be effective, oversight and regulation of septic tank inspections would transfer from the Florida Department of Health to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

If it passes, the bill would make the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services perform onsite verification of best management practices for farms at least every two years and authorizes DACS to coordinate with top academic institutions to best management practices and agricultural nutrient reduction projects on farms.

Naples Area Board of REALTORS®

Water Quality Advisory



As the voice of REALTORS® in the Naples area, NABOR® has and will always advocate for action to reduce or eliminate any man-made or environmental threats to home ownership, property values, and the living standards in Florida.

CLASS IN SESSION: NEW WATER SCHOOL AT FGCU

Slated to open in the Fall of 2021, Florida Gulf Coast University broke ground in November on its Water School, a 117,000 square foot research and academic building on its campus in Estero, Florida. The program actually began in the Spring of 2019 with undergraduate studies, and continued local water research work at its four research centers, including Vester Field Station, the only Florida university-based research station located directly on Florida's inland waterway.

The school's research work – which addresses everything from algae blooms to Everglades restoration – is making significant strides in finding solutions to the state's water quality issues. In fact, NABOR®'s 2019 Leadership Class collaborated with the school this past fall by participating in RINK2REEF, a project that provided an opportunity for the class to build and place 16 oyster habitats in a Naples canal to encourage filter-feeding aquatic organisms to remove pollutants and excessive nutrients from the water.

The school's expansion is a response to a top critical issue affecting all residents, including potential homebuyers and future businesses. The expansion will allow the school to increase its capacity to resolve current and future water problems, and help the state illustrate its commitment to provide solutions that protect and improve our vital ecosystems.

The school currently brings together research and education. It will add faculty to help it look at water issues from a variety of approaches. The expansion will also allow it to collaborate with even more researchers nationally and internationally.



Architectural rendering of the future home of FGCU's Water School

According to Helen Noble, Community Engagement for the school's Vester Field Station, "Having the school under one roof will encourage interdisciplinary interaction. This type of engagement provides an added level of insight and ideas from several vantage points including engineering, business, health and hospitality.

"People are attracted to areas where real research and action is taking place," added Noble. "Our waters are an important research platform on the state and national level, and the Water School provides an opportunity for us to perform and initiate more innovative research that can have significant impacts in global water quality."

FSW OFFERS WATER CERTIFICATION CLASSES FOR LOCAL WORKFORCE

Interest in, and openings for jobs in the field of water quality, are on the rise, and Florida Southwestern State College is responding in 2020 with new classes to help local residents who want to obtain special water operator licenses. Starting in January, the college will offer a waste water course and a drinking water course.

The courses can be taken independently, and are not part of the school's regular degree-seeking student curriculum. A high school diploma (or GED) is required. The waste water course provides students with the practical skills necessary to safely operate and maintain various wastewater treatment systems and appurtenances. The drinking level course provides students with the operational skills necessary to safely operate and maintain advanced drinking water treatment facilities. Students will also visit treatment sites, and gain the knowledge necessary to pass state licensure exams. Classes will be held at the school's Corporate Training Center in Bonita Springs.



Naples Area Board of REALTORS®

NABOR® MEMBER RECOGNIZED

We are very proud of NABOR® President-elect and Water Quality Task Force member Corey McCloskey, who was recently recognized as an RISmedia REAL ESTATE NEWSMAKER for her work to educate REALTORS® and the public on how water quality and real estate are interwoven.



Corey McCloskey volunteers with several organizations, including Calusa Waterkeeper, to teach the public about the importance of protecting Florida's water habitats.

RESOURCES

[Calusa WaterKeeper](#)

[Captains for Clean Water](#)

celebratecleanwater.com

[Collier County Watershed Management Plan](#)

[Daily Red Tide Reports](#)

[FGCU Water School](#)

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