

Hillsborough River Watershed Alliance

Watershed News

January 23, 2009

If you have any environmental news items you would like included in this newsletter, please forward to HRWAFL@verizon.net.

In this edition...

- Are the 'Water Cops' Looking For You? Violations Continue Despite Prolonged Water Shortage
- Tampa Bay Estuary Program Water Conservation Notice
- Hillsborough County Pet Waste Study
- Tampa Bay Regional Water Supply and Drought Index January 2009
- EPA and Florida DEP Work Together to Restore Florida's Surface Waters

Are the 'Water Cops' Looking For You? Violations Continue Despite Prolonged Water Shortage

Tampa, FL - Through random patrols and in response to reported suspected violations, the City of Tampa wrote an average of six water use violation citations a day since the beginning of the month. Water Enforcement Officers patrol throughout Tampa's city limits 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. Violating Tampa's water use restrictions may result in fines ranging from \$100 to \$450 and a mandatory court appearance.

Tampa's outdoor water use restrictions, including limits on irrigation to one day per week, have been in effect since May 4, 2006, under Emergency Water Use Restriction Ordinance 2006-104. Additional restrictions placed by the Southwest Florida Water Management District, including the limiting of hours for micro-irrigation and hand watering, went into effect in October.

Regional water supplies remain below normal levels with Tampa's primary water source, the Hillsborough River, near historically low levels. Continued conservation of drinking water is needed to ensure adequate water supplies are available. Citizens are urged to use only minimal amounts of water necessary to sustain existing plant material and check for leaks both inside and outside

Information about restrictions inside Tampa city limits for landscape irrigation and other water uses including: irrigation system maintenance, chemical treatment, reclaimed water, car washing, pressure washing, recreational use, and fountains, as well as information on variances, can be found online at TampaGov.net/WaterRestrictions.

For customers residing within Tampa's reclaimed water service area now is the perfect time to get connected. Using reclaimed water helps conserve our drinking water supply and it does not have the same restrictions for irrigation. For more information about Tampa's reclaimed water, visit TampaGov.net/ReclaimedWater or call (813) 282-7827.

A recorded summary of Tampa's water restrictions is available by calling (813) 274-8032. Tips on how to decrease water consumption in your home or business and information on restrictions can be found at TampaGov.net/SaveWater.

Be notified automatically about restrictions changes, upcoming workshops, conservation events and other Water Department information by subscribing to the Tampa Water Department's free Customer Newsletter, The Pipeline, at TampaGov.net/Water or the Water Department Real Simple Syndication (RSS) feed available at TampaGov.net/appl_rss_feeds/

Tampa Water Department serves a 211-square mile area with a service population of approximately 645,000 people. The Tampa Water Department's mission is to provide superior drinking water and reclaimed water services to its customers.

Tampa Bay Estuary Program Water Conservation Notice

In an effort to promote increased water conservation during the ongoing drought, the Southwest Florida Water Management District will bring its water-conserving restroom to several area festivals and events.

The first event will be this weekend's Tampa Bay Black Heritage Festival, which is being held at Al Lopez Park in Tampa.

"The District encourages year-round water conservation," said Melissa Roe, project manager for the District. "But as the region continues to experience a three-year drought, the need to conserve has intensified. The water-conserving restroom station is a practical and effective tool that allows us to go out in the community and share information about what people can do to conserve water during these dry times."

The restroom trailer will also be at the following events:

- Florida State Fair, State Fairgrounds, Tampa, Feb. 5-16
- African American Heritage Celebration, Heritage Village, Largo, Feb. 28
- Master Gardener's Spring Festival, Marion County Extension Service Office, Ocala, March 14-15
- Venice Sharks Tooth Festival, Venice, April 17-19
- Islands Fest, Davis Islands, Tampa, April 18

- Green Thumb Festival, Walter Fuller Park, St. Petersburg, April 25-26
- Mayfaire by the Lake, Polk Museum of Art, Lakeland, May 9-10

Please contact: Robyn Felix at 1-800-423-1476, Ext. 4770 or Cell Phone: 813-781-9817 for more information.

The restroom trailer features the District's current water conservation campaign and Florida-friendly landscaping tips through displays and free materials. It also features six private air-conditioned half baths with water conservation features, running water, lights, mirrors and a bathroom attendant who will keep the stalls clean and stocked.

The main focus of the restroom station, which is a cleaner alternative to some bathrooms found at large events, is water conservation. The restroom trailer uses a water filtration and circulation system, similar to the systems used on airplanes, to reuse the water from the sink drains in the toilet tanks. In addition, the water used in the toilets is filtered and chemically treated then returned to the toilets' tanks. This filtration system allows the water conservation restroom trailer to use just 10 percent of the water needed for a standard restroom trailer.

The water conservation restroom station began as a pilot program in the Pinellas-Anclote River Basin. The project is now funded by all of the Basins within the District, including the Hillsborough River Basin, which includes portions of Hillsborough, Pasco and Polk counties.

For additional information on the drought, water restrictions or water conservation tips, visit the District's web site at WaterMatters.org/drought.

Hillsborough County Pet Waste Study

Through scientific research, pet waste has been shown to be a contributor to water pollution. In urban and highly populated suburban areas, pet waste can be a problem. In order to reduce pollution from this source, Hillsborough County plans to implement a pet waste education program. The program will encourage dog owners to pickup after their pets and dispose of the waste properly. The key to this effort is to develop a habit to ensure pet waste is eliminated as a source of water pollution.

In order to develop a successful pet waste education program, the County desires to receive input from the public on their views and existing habits with their pets. A series of focus groups will be taking place in February. In addition, a short opinion survey is available on the Internet. We ask that the public visit http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=0ScDTZD_2b2Ohkoe7O9KZTHg_3d_3d and fill out the survey.

Tampa Bay Regional Water Supply and Drought Index January 2009

CLEARWATER — Surface water availability declined to zero and long-term regional drinking water storage conditions continued to descend in the Tampa Bay region in December, as the

regions' rainfall totals were about 65% below normal for the month.

Surface water flow conditions are extremely low and C.W. Bill Young Regional Reservoir water began flowing into the regional water supply distribution system about six months ahead of average condition needs. Regional water facts for December:

- The region is well into the fall dry season when rainfall totals are normally low. The trend of individual monthly rainfall deficits continued throughout the region, averaging about 65% or 2 inches below the normal 3 inches. Rainfall deficits were spread equally throughout the region.
- Long-term rainfall deficits for the Hillsborough River basin increased about 1 inch to about 40 inches and the Alafia River watershed the deficit increased by about 1.5 inch to about 20 inches.
- River flows continue to decline, flow in the Hillsborough River was about 75% below normal; daily flow remains below the 5th percentile.
- Alafia River flow was about 75% below normal in December; daily flow remains below the 5th percentile.
- Regional water demand in December averaged about 229 million gallons per day (mgd), a 6% decrease from November demand.
- As of January 7, 2009, 1.88 billion gallons of water remained stored in the Regional Reservoir.

Cooler seasonal weather conditions, along with increased enforcement of water restrictions, reduced irrigation demand. Significant surface water flow deficits and long-term below normal rainfall are expected to plague conditions in the region through the spring dry season. To eliminate the current surface water flow deficit problems and provide flows for treatment, consistent and well above normal rainfall is needed throughout the normally drier winter months and spring dry season, which is not anticipated.

Following a Tampa Bay Water request, the Southwest Florida Water Management District entered in to a Level III Extreme Water Shortage for the tri-county area on October 28, 2008. Tampa Bay Water continues to request the cities of Tampa, St. Petersburg, New Port Richey and counties of Hillsborough, Pinellas and Pasco reduce demand and increase enforcement of water restrictions.

For more information contact Dave Bracciano or Alison Adams at 727-796-2355.

EPA and Florida DEP Work Together to Restore Florida's Surface Waters

WASHINGTON, DC - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) are taking actions to protect and restore both recreational uses and aquatic life in Florida waters. These actions include EPA issuing a formal determination under the Clean Water Act that "numeric" nutrient water quality criteria are necessary in Florida, and Florida accelerating its efforts to adopt numeric nutrient criteria into state regulations. Numeric nutrient criteria will significantly improve Florida's ability to address nutrient pollution in a timely and effective manner.

"EPA recognizes Florida as a national leader in managing nutrient pollution but more needs to be done," said Benjamin H. Grumbles, EPA's assistant administrator for water. "Therefore, we are taking the significant step today of requiring numeric nutrient standards for water quality. We look forward to working closely with the State to develop improved standards that will accelerate the protection and restoration of Florida's waters."

"The State of Florida recognizes that more needs to be done to address nutrient pollution in our rivers, streams, lakes and estuaries, and these actions will help our State and all of our stakeholders prevent and better manage sources of nitrogen and phosphorus from entering our waters," said DEP Secretary Michael W. Sole.

Excess nitrogen and phosphorus levels (nutrient pollution) in waterbodies can cause harm to aquatic ecosystems and threaten public health. Nutrient pollution can lead to water quality problems such as harmful algal blooms, low-oxygen "dead zones" in water bodies and declines in wildlife and wildlife habitat. These effects also disrupt recreational activities and pose threats to public health.

Water quality degradation from nutrient pollution is a significant environmental issue in Florida. Florida's 2008 Integrated Water Quality Assessment revealed that approximately 1,000 miles of rivers and streams, 350,000 acres of lakes, and 900 square miles of estuaries are impaired by nutrients. The actual number of miles and acres of waters impaired for nutrients is likely higher, as many waters that have yet to be assessed may also be impaired.

Local governments in Florida have worked to improve wastewater treatment and stormwater management. In addition, many in the agricultural community have implemented best management practices for nutrient control. It takes focused attention by all stakeholders in each watershed to address this challenging issue.

The federal determination is intended to build upon the substantial investments that Florida has made to date in nutrient data collection, analysis, and stakeholder involvement, and is fully consistent with the state and EPA's commitment to a stronger nutrient control program. The new numeric nutrient water quality standards will help Florida improve the efficiency and effectiveness of its water quality management tools, identify waters impaired because of nutrient pollution, establish total maximum daily loads and Basin Management Action Plans and derive National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit limits.

EPA's decision letter on these actions: <http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/standards/rules/#det>

DEP's 2008 Integrated Report:

http://www.dep.state.fl.us/water/docs/2008_Integrated_Report.pdf

DEP's Numeric Nutrient Criteria Development Plan:

<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/water/wqssp/nutrients>