

THE SLUDGE REPORT www.thesludgereport.org

WHO WE ARE: We are a coalition of Homeowners, Homeowner Associations, septic industry professionals, support organizations such as Coalition for Property Rights, Home Builders Association, Orlando Regional Realtors Association, and others allied with our position – that sound science and property rights, and financial justification warrant action or inaction as evidenced by proof of need and reliable predictions of effectiveness.

WHAT WE HAVE DONE SO FAR:

- Engaged our legislators regarding the 2009 Dept. of Health Rule mandating Performance Based Septic systems in the Wekiva Study Area (WSA), and the Springs Protection Bill SB274 which introduced the same mandates as the DOH rule. Both were defeated.
- Engaged our legislators over 2010's SB550 and over funding of the Dept. of Health's Phase II Study that would test septic system alternatives as well as the suitability and cost-effectiveness of PBTS. SB550 was effectively re-written so that it contained no mandates other than normal maintenance provisions of inspection and periodic pump outs. Grants will be available for low income residents. SB 550 passed containing provisions regarding water quality and water resource development that may be interpreted or implemented in such a way that septic system costs, and municipal water and sewer rates will climb exponentially. We and our associate groups will be monitoring this closely, as will our legislators.
- State Budget included a special line item funding the Phase II study. Proviso language prohibits rule-making until the study is complete. Gov. Crist did not veto the funding for this study.

WHAT'S LOOMING ON THE HORIZON: The EPA was sued by Earth Justice representing four Florida Environmental Groups: Florida Wildlife Federation, Conservancy of Southwest Florida, Sierra Club, St. John's Riverkeeper, and the Environmental Confederation of Southwest Florida. Earth Justice claimed Florida was in violation of the "Clean Water Act." Rather than involve itself in a lawsuit, the EPA settled with Earth Justice, and is now embarking on setting numeric nutrient standards for Florida's waters of all kinds, including ditches. The standards have been labeled as "unachievable" no matter how much of our money is thrown at the issue. The estimated cost to taxpayers is predicted to be in the billions of dollars. Our legislators can tell you that this is an issue of mind-boggling proportions, and the financial well-being and economic future of our state is at stake. The science behind EPA's proposed numeric standards is in question, as it is at the state level within the Dept. of Environmental Protection, where numeric nutrient standards have been pursued through their regional Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP) committees. This will be important to follow, and we will be doing just that.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- Go to the website: www.thesludgereport.org.
- Join us by providing or sending in your e-mail contact information.
- Donate to the Markham Woods Association Legal Fund. Substantial amounts of money have already been spent on your behalf and we need to make sure the financial burden of waging this effort does not fall on just a few shoulders. Go to www.markhamwoodsassociation.org to make a donation.
- Follow news in the sludge report, respond to e-mail alerts, and sent these on to your e-mail contacts, asking them to do the same. We count on the growing numbers of represented homeowners to make our voices heard. We need to do this statewide.
- As always, do find out where your local, state, and federal legislator or candidate stands or voted on the issues.
- Thank those legislators who have taken the time to understand the issues, and work on your behalf.

This is a grassroots effort, not financially supported by anyone but residents, and not representing anyone but residents. No one but our legal representative is paid for any of their time or expense. We are a non-political group, so we engage our legislators, but do not formally endorse any candidate or office holder.

Questions or comments to: email@thesludgereport.org

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