

The Clean Water Act

September 1, 2008

Ludicrous bottled water is one of the reason to support efforts to get the municipality water systems upgraded, updated, newly installed, because good water from the tap needs to be our number one priorities across the United States to keep people off the bottle. We have learned from Food and Water Watch, Polaris Institute and Corporate Accountability and many other organizations that our United States water infrastructure has some very serious problems that make the general public not trust their water well enough to consume it. Therefore bottled water has become even more used. If our federal government continues down the path of underfunding the Clean Water Act our health will be negatively impacted. It is time to make our public elected officials, in Washington D.C., do the right thing and make federal dollars pay for our right to good clean water. Since the Clean Water Act's inception in 1972, the federal dollars to pay for infrastructure has decreased 75%.

Ask your congressional leaders to allocate more money to our water protection by increasing funding to the Clean Water Act. High Springs, Florida should be commended for their part in being a part of a healthful future by continuing with a new sewer/septic system for it's residents and businesses. read below...

One suggestion: For residents of the area...pick up some of the karst rock they will be digging up and placing along the sides of the road. They did this during phase 1 and I managed to bring home enough to make garden beds and stone walls in our home. It's whole lot nicer and useful than dumping it in some random sinkhole!

Merrillee Malwitz-Jipson
board member OSFR

City

High Springs OK's giant expansion of city sewer system

By Ronald Dupont Jr.
Herald Editor

HIGH SPRINGS – The High Springs City Commission never seemed so happy to spend almost \$9 million.

In what could be described as a festive mood, the city learned that Phase 2 and Phase 3 of the city's sewer system was going to cost far less than originally proposed, dropping from well over \$10 million to less than \$9 million.

Linda Young has written an opinion piece in the *Gainesville Sun*. Continue reading to see this informative piece. Click [HERE](#) to see the original which appeared in the *Sun* on August 24, 2008.

The rush to flush Florida's water

By LINDA L. YOUNG
Special to The Sun

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While it has slowed down recently, Florida's growth has boomed in recent years. Unfortunately, this growth has created a lot of problems since it has outpaced our ability or willingness to address its impacts. Schools, roads, water supplies are all strained. And nowhere is this crisis more apparent than in Florida's sewage treatment infrastructure.

A recent report issued by Clean Water Network of Florida (www.cleanwaternetwerk-fl.org) provides evidence of serious infrastructure disfunction in many communities along the Gulf Coast of the state. Some of the most common problems we found

were: aging sewage systems with mechanical and capacity problems; frequent, chronic spills and leakage of pathogen and nutrient-laden untreated or poorly treated sewage wastewater into the environment; use of poorly treated wastewater in spray irrigation systems; groundwater pollution caused by inadequately treated sewage from injection wells and rapid infiltration basins; increased permitting of leak-prone septic tank systems.

To add to the problems, lax enforcement by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) has enabled a situation where it is cheaper for municipalities and private treatment plant operators to simply pay the fines rather than repair and upgrade these facilities.

Data clearly show that our sewage wastewater infrastructure is not keeping pace with our growth and tourism. Given the fact that Florida's \$4 billion to \$5 billion a year water-related tourism is based upon having clean water in our bays, rivers and beach waters, this situation should be of concern to everyone.

While funding for infrastructure is always limited, there are creative ways to pay for needed upgrades. The city of Sanibel for instance wanted to remove septic tanks and improve its treatment facility. After educating the public on the benefits, a vote was taken that resulted in the community agreeing to tax itself to help pay for sewage system improvements. More funding came from tap fees and monthly service fees, and now the city is 90% finished with its upgrades.

Another obvious need is better compliance with our laws. FDEP enforcement of wastewater violations should be swift and certain, with stiff fines that discourage sloppiness. Moratoriums on new hookups should kick in when there are

chronic problems, and when a facility is at capacity.

If we are to make any real progress, the state must set higher goals for wastewater treatment. Legislators should start by requiring all sewage treatment facilities to be at least Advanced Waste Treatment. Nutrient and microbe-laden secondary treatment should become a thing of the past. Our lawmakers should also ban all new surface water discharges, and phase out existing ones.

Spills should have better tracking and public notice, especially if they are a source of beach contamination. During the last legislative session, State Sen. Mike Bennett made a noble attempt to do this (SB 1634), but unfortunately his bill died in committee. We hope he will try again next year, and get better support.

Safe and effective wastewater disposal is not out of our reach. But it can only be accomplished if citizens demand it, and if there is the political will among decision makers to take action. The alternative is for things to only get worse. Raw or poorly treated sewage wastewater will continue to pour out of leaky pipes, overflowing treatment ponds, and poorly designed sprayfields, in a steady and increasing flow to the Gulf of Mexico, making it Florida's toilet. I don't think anyone wants that to be our legacy to future generations.

Citizens who want more information about sewage treatment and disposal in their communities can contact Clean Water Network of Florida at 850-222-8701 or cwnfl@earthlink.net .

Clean Water Network of Florida has more than 200 group members and thousands of individuals who work together to protect Florida's springs, wetlands, rivers, estuaries and coastal waters.

Linda L. Young is director of the Clean Water Network of Florida.

Water Infrastructure opinion piece from Linda Young

www.cleanwaternet.org

read...<http://www.gainesville.com/article/20080824/OPINION03/152083/0/opinion>