

Watershed Awareness Watershed Protection

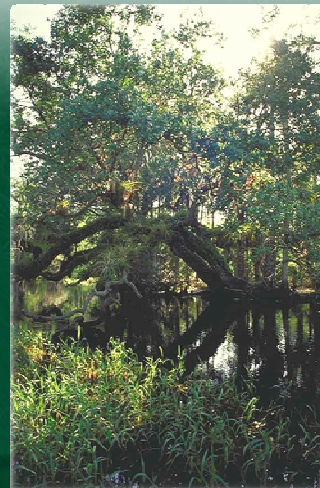
Making better choices
for a healthy watershed

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The Watershed Story

- ❖ A watershed offers defined boundaries
- ❖ Individuals can identify their location in the watershed
- ❖ A watershed can provide for a sense of ownership
- ❖ A multitude of educational materials are available about watersheds



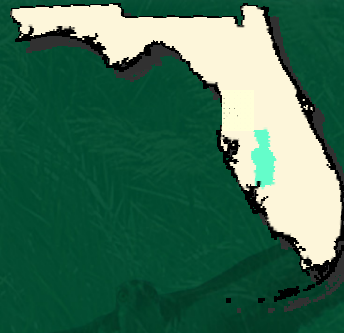
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Peace River Watershed

Fast Facts

- ❖ The watershed spans 2,350 square miles in four counties: Charlotte, DeSoto, Hardee and Polk
- ❖ The river is 105 miles long
- ❖ The river is a major source of fresh water for industry, agriculture and public supply

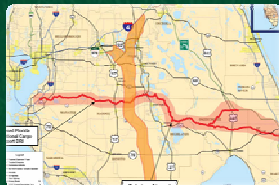


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Peace River Watershed

- ❖ Lake Hancock
- ❖ TMDLs
- ❖ Mini farms & ranches
- ❖ Loss of habitat
- ❖ Transportation



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Watershed Education Research



- ❖ Charlotte Harbor Environmental Center (CHEC) focus group discussions
- ❖ Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) Peace River watershed survey
- ❖ CHEC Peace River watershed program feedback

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CHEC Focus Group Discussions

Topics

- ❖ Level of watershed knowledge
- ❖ Most appropriate audiences & ways to reach them
- ❖ Agencies that have watershed responsibilities
- ❖ Barriers & benefits to change



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CHEC Focus Group Findings

- ❖ Knowledge of the watershed varied by focus groups
- ❖ Those aware of watersheds were more willing to take action
- ❖ Students, community leaders and government officials were identified as key audiences
- ❖ Newspapers, TV and the Internet were most popular ways of receiving information



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CHEC Focus Group Findings

- ❖ Nearly 100 organizations play a part in watershed information/protection
- ❖ Barriers to change included misinformation, apathy and animosity between northern and southern regions of the watershed
- ❖ Benefits identified included financial incentives, control of growth and more education



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SWFWMD Peace River Watershed Public Survey

Key Findings - Environment

Percent	Response
51	Very concerned about water resources
50	Feel environment has become less desirable
32	Identified industry and stormwater runoff as main sources of pollution

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SWFWMD Peace River Watershed Public Survey

Key Findings - Landscape

Percent	Response
85	Consider turf very important
44	Willing to reduce turf area
30	Familiar with Florida-Friendly Landscaping

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SWFWMD Peace River Watershed Public Survey

Key Findings - Motivation

Percent	Response
13	Landscape aesthetics important
20 - 31	Cost
22 - 24	Lower maintenance

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Peace River Watershed Education Program

Targeted Audiences

- ❖ Community leaders
- ❖ Government & organization staff
- ❖ Business
- ❖ Home owners



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Peace River Watershed Education Program

Education Approach

- ❖ Watershed workshops
- ❖ Targeted speaking engagements
- ❖ Material distribution
- ❖ Interaction with other organizations



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Watershed Workshop Discussions

Role of Government

- ❖ Number of government agencies overseeing watershed protection confusing
- ❖ Government agencies need to work more with local groups
- ❖ Need additional laws and enforcement
- ❖ Need more incentives to take action



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Watershed Workshop Discussions

Education

- ❖ Public needs to know more about their environment
- ❖ Need more outreach to communities
- ❖ Education is most important to reducing stormwater impacts
- ❖ Need for implementation of best management practices



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Watershed Presentation Discussions

Comments & Concerns

- ❖ Manage growth properly
- ❖ Restrict building in low-lying areas
- ❖ Provide for more education
- ❖ Mandate Florida-Friendly landscaping
- ❖ Implement landscape best management practices
- ❖ Preserve more natural lands
- ❖ Encourage more water conservation



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Watershed Program Feedback

- ❖ More awareness of the environment is needed
- ❖ People are starting to see their environmental quality of life deteriorating
- ❖ Some residents are becoming discontented with Florida
- ❖ There is an increase in those seeking more information



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The Need for Awareness

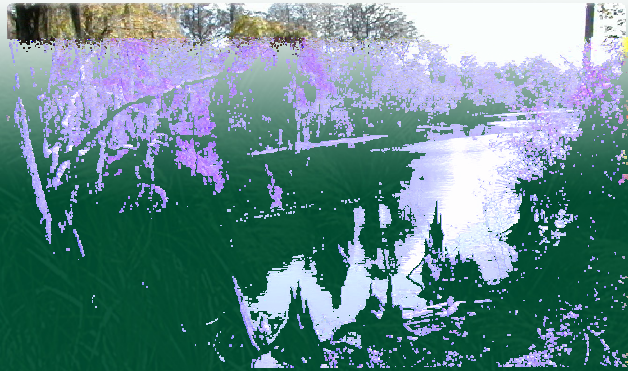
Conclusions

- ❖ Impracticable to “build” your way to reducing personal pollution
- ❖ Most people living away from water bodies are not aware of their impacts
- ❖ Limited knowledge of personal impacts on pollution overall
- ❖ Increasing interest in the environment
- ❖ Some people are seeking activities that may reduce their impacts
- ❖ Motivation to take action appears to be more related to water conservation



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Questions?

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