

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



PRESS CONTACT

Rebekah Harp
Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council
239-338-2550 Ext. 217
rharp@swfrpc.org

Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council Approves Lower West Coast Watersheds Subcommittee First Stormwater Run-Off Resolution

FORT MYERS, FL – (September 18, 2008) – The Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council (SWFRPC) announced its approval of the first of three resolutions concerning stormwater run-off that was prepared by the Council’s Lower West Coast Watersheds Subcommittee. The Subcommittee, lead by Mayor Mick Denham of the City of Sanibel, submitted to the Council a resolution as part of its continuing efforts to address stormwater run-off in urban and suburban areas of the region. This work is an effort to address current water quality problems that are present in the bays, estuaries, and rivers in the region and in the Gulf of Mexico adjacent to the area beaches.

The resolution supported the treatment of stormwater from new development and previously-developed non-agricultural areas of the region in order to reduce pollutant sources including nitrogen and phosphorus, which cause excessive plant growth in water bodies and upsets the region’s valuable ecosystem. The resolution also recommended actions for sustainable stormwater treatment control for water quality and quantity and provided for public funding of the future stormwater management systems. In addition, the resolution provided for citizen education as it relates to the importance of stormwater treatment and methods for improving water quality in the region.

Southwest Florida is a region where the water quality of the bays, estuaries, rivers, lakes, wetlands, bayous and the Gulf of Mexico is critical to the region’s environmental, economic, and recreational prosperity and to the health, safety and welfare of the citizens of this region; and

The recent increased frequency and duration of red tide and blue green algae blooms, increased accumulation of red drift algae on local beaches and other algae and water related problems have heightened community concerns about water quality and cultural eutrophication of surrounding waters.

By approving the proposed resolution, the Regional Planning Council stated that there is a need to develop a stronger understanding of the connection between activities in yards, streets, and the built environment including its stormwater systems and natural water bodies among all those who live, work and recreate in the Southwest Florida Region.

The resolution is part of a multi-pronged effort by the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council to reduce nutrient leaching and runoff problems by actions including stormwater management, water conservation, septic systems, central sewage treatment, public education, restoration of surface and groundwater levels, and regional drainage of native habitats and ecosystems.