



Latino Environmental Education Network Newsletter

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Why an Environmental Education Network for Latino Populations?



Southwest Florida is a very desirable place to live. Much of its allure comes from the surrounding natural areas, sunny climate and coastal scenery. Even as we enjoy our environment it is under increasing pressure from population growth, land use changes, and declining water quality. With these pressures come challenges, and with these challenges come opportunities. As these pressures continue to increase the need for responsible actions by all individuals will be necessary to protect and conserve our natural environment.

We recognize that Latino citizens represent a growing percentage of the population in Southwest Florida, and they have not been reached by traditional education and outreach programs. Several factors may have contribute to this issue including; language barriers, lack of knowledge about program opportunities, and educators not knowing how to effectively target Latino groups.

The goal of the Southwest Florida Latino Environmental Education Network is to collaborate with Latino businesses and media to expand the education and outreach being delivered to Latino populations regarding sustainable living along Florida's coast.

The Network is comprised of representatives from the University of Florida Extension Service in Lee and Collier Counties and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. Because network members have different areas of expertise we will be addressing a wide range of sustainable living issues; including landscape and lawn care practices, energy use, and recreational fishing practices as well as general information about our local environment.

Our first task is to produce a quarterly newsletter that alerts media and businesses about resources for information. The newsletter will provides our new audience with tips and techniques they can use to live more sustainably, and educate our readers about the Southwest Florida environment. The newsletters will be in Spanish and English to reach a wide range of local citizens.

We hope you enjoy the first issue of the Latino Environmental Education Network newsletter.

Did you know?

- Latinos make up 27% of Collier County and 17% of Lee County's population.
- Immigrant Latinos come from countries in the Caribbean, Central and South America
- The mission of the Latino Environmental Education Network is to target environmental education efforts to an audience that has not been reached by traditional programs.

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Greetings From Commissioner Ray Judah

Actively supporting and promoting responsible stewardship of our natural resources requires a community engaged in governmental affairs.

Protection of our quality of life including a healthy environment and economic opportunity and prosperity requires people of all ages and ethnicity to work together in using their ingenuity and resourcefulness to provide meaningful solutions to challenges we encounter as a community.

The Hispanic community has always demonstrated a strong work ethic, and I look forward to strengthening our resolve in providing a balance with economic growth and responsible protection of our precious environment.



Southwest Florida Sea Grant agents hope to increase outreach and education to Latino audiences, focusing on sustainable recreational fishing. *By Bryan Fluech and Joy Hazell*

The mission of the Florida Sea Grant College Program is to enhance the practical use and conservation of coastal and marine resources to create a sustainable economy and environment. Agents in Southwest Florida are actively working on issues pertaining to fisheries, ecosystem health, coastal hazards, sustainable coastal communities, and marine education.

Recreational fishing is a multi-billion dollar industry and Southwest Florida is considered to have some of the best sport fishing in the nation. Increased desire for memorable fishing opportunities has increased pressure on the fish species that live in our coastal waters. Fishing is also a popular past time for many families. It provides an opportunity for them to spend time together, enjoy the outdoors and provide a nutritional meal. Agents are successfully working with recreational anglers to educate them about catch and release techniques, fisheries management, and habitat protection. However, we are missing an important and growing audience.

We are interested in reaching out to Latino audiences and educating them on sustainable fishing practices to ensure Florida's fisheries remain healthy and productive for current and future generations. It is important for all anglers to follow these practices to protect our coastal environment.

Some examples of education and information Sea Grant agents can provide:

- Fishing Regulations: Fish species, size and seasons that you can and cannot legally keep
- Catch and Release Techniques: Types of tackle and tools to help released fish survive
- Seafood Safety/ fish consumption: Benefits and risks of eating the fish you catch
- Species identification: Know the types of fish you catch
- Marine debris: Impacts of trash in the marine environment



Sea Grant agents have information and tools to make fishing experiences safe, enjoyable and sustainable. As part of the environmental education network we want to connect with audiences who fish, but may not have all the information they need to make good choices about fishing techniques, what is safe to eat and what is legal to keep.

Who is a part of the Latino Environmental Education Network?

The **University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS)** is a federal, state, and county partnership dedicated to developing knowledge in agriculture, human and natural resources, and the life sciences and extending that knowledge to citizens and decision makers to sustain and enhance the quality of life in Florida.

At the county level there are numerous UF/IFAS Extension Agents who bring expertise and experience to bear in their counties and regions to develop educational programs that fit the needs of residents, visitors, businesses and governments. Examples of extension programs include Marine Science (Sea Grant), Agriculture, Natural Resources, Sustainability, 4-H Youth Development, Family Consumer Sciences, Florida Yards and Neighborhoods and Horticulture.

More Information: <http://solutionsforyourlife.com/>

Each month the newsletter will highlight a different member of the Latino Environmental Education Network.



What is Sustainability? *By Martha Avila*

Sustainability is a concept which recognizes the interconnectedness of the environment, the economy, and society. Sustainability is derived from the verb to SUSTAIN meaning: to hold up; to support; to provide for; to maintain; to keep up; to prolong; to support the life of. ABILITY means: capacity, skill, competence, aptitude. Sustainability is the idea of meeting human needs while maintaining the quality of the natural environment.



There is a NEED to target sustainability right now in the face of Climate Change and the depletion of oil resources. Global warming is the vehicle for climate change and will affect all persons on our planet. Florida is vulnerable to the impacts of global warming, including coastal flooding, forest fires, increased drought and stronger tropical storms. Negative impacts of climate change and depleting oil resources is going to be felt by those most dependent on petroleum and who don't have alternative energy technologies. Climate change offers us real opportunities to place our societies on a more sustainable path. This is the opportunity for all of us, LATINOS INCLUDED, to preserve the future of our planet and our children's future.

The sustainability program in Lee County focuses on promoting the development of alternative, renewable energies and energy efficiency. Energy is the essential requirement for economic and social development. Alternative renewable energies and energy efficiency plays an important role in this search for solutions to global warming. Biomass, solar, wind, hydropower, ocean energy, geothermal and hydrogen could control the scenario of this new challenge.



A vital part of this energy and environmental transition is the combination of citizen education and governmental support. The sustainability program aims to inform people, that we have the power to minimize our impact on the planet. Informing and educating all people shows us that the solutions are in our hands.

The biggest challenge in promoting sustainability is educating the citizens in the United States, to be an active part in taking care of our planet. Every body has to do their part. We have a challenge: "ONE PLANET TO SAVE".

Project Greenscape is a partnership program promoting sustainable landscaping through strategic, science-based education. *By Alberto Chavez*

In June 2007, the Project Greenscape Coordinator began work at the Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve in Naples, Florida. The first program phase includes training for lawn and landscape professionals. This training provides knowledge and skills needed to properly apply fertilizer, pesticides and water and to choose the right plant for the right place. These crucial practices conserve water resources which also protects the human and economic health of our communities.

Core curriculum incorporates The Green Industries Best Management Practices (BMP) for Protection of Water Resources in Florida developed by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the University of Florida and the Green Industries in 2002. With added information, including a local resource guide, more than 400 landscapers have received training through Project Greenscape.

One of the Project's next steps is to increase outreach to neighborhood associations and homeowners through the Florida Yards and Neighborhoods program.

Partners

Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve
 City of Naples, Florida
 Florida Department of Environmental Protection
 Collier County Stormwater Management Department
 University of Florida Collier County Extension Office
 Collier County Soil & Water Conservation, Mobile Irrigation Lab
 South Florida Water Management District
 National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration



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Did you know?

If every American home replaced just one light bulb with a compact fluorescent light bulb, we would save enough energy to light more than 3 million homes for a year, more than \$600 million in annual energy costs, and prevent greenhouse gases equivalent to the emissions of more than 800,000 cars.

Did you know?

Wildlife need plants that provide food and shelter. By choosing wildlife friendly plants you can have a bird or butterfly show in your backyard.



Did you know?

It can take up to 500 years for fishing line to break down in the environment. Please retrieve your line and recycle it in bins like the one in this photo or cut it up into small pieces and put it in the trash.



Gulf Fritillary (*Agraulis vanillae*) on Sea Oxeye Daisy (*Borrchia arborescens*)

Coming Next Time

The Southwest Florida Latin Environmental Education Network Spring Newsletter will focus on specific actions individuals can take to support sustainability.