

Laura Litzan

From: Nancy Richie <nancyjrichie@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, May 24, 2019 10:08 AM
To: City Council; David Harden
Subject: Collier Soil and Water Conservation District -- informational article and budget request
Attachments: WholsYourCollierSoil&WaterConservationDistrict_052419.pdf

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Good morning City of Marco Island City Council,

As it is budget season, the Collier Soil & Water Conservation District Board is providing the attached information article as we are seeking \$20,000 from each the City of Naples, the City of Marco Island and Collier County Government, to fund the Collier Urban Mobile Irrigation Lab program.

The attached article describes this water conservation and quality educational program and its value for our residents, community and environment.

This information has been provided to Mr. Jeff Poteet, Utilities Manager and Mr. Daniel Smith, Community Affairs Director, as well as the City's Beautification Advisory Committee. It also will be provided to both the Waterways Advisory Committee and the Beaches and Coastal Resources Advisory Committee.

We hope you can support this request and collaboratively fund the Urban Mobile Irrigation Lab program.

Thank you,

Nancy J. Richie, Chair
Seat 2
Collier Soil & Water Conservation District

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Regards,

Nancy

Nancy J. Richie, consultant/owner
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Who Is Your Collier Soil and Water Conservation District?

The Collier Soil and Water Conservation District (Collier SWCD) strives to support and coordinate with state and local partners in the education of residents about water conservation and quality issues. Education is a key piece for the solution that protects water quality and ensures environmental conservation and protection for southwest Florida.

There are 58 Soil and Water Conservation Districts in Florida. The Districts are conducted under Chapter 582, Florida Statutes, and partners include Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS), University of Florida Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF-IFAS), counties, and cities.

The Collier SWCD has five elected Supervisors that serve four-year terms. The Collier SWCD staff consists of two employees and they work with the NRCS District Conservationist. Collier SWCD activities include:

- Cooperative programs, such as Project Greenscapes, where staff are instructors for the lawn and landscape contractors certification classes at Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve.
- Conservation projects, including accepting land donations for conservation and mitigation projects. Collier SWD currently owns 28 parcels of land in Collier County that will be held for conservation purposes, never to be developed.
- Education programs for students. The staff participates annually in the state wide Envirothon competition and has informational kiosks at community events.
- Agricultural Mobile Irrigation Labs that are funded by FDACS for at least 144 inspections of irrigation systems for growers. The inspections are nonregulatory but provide recommendations for uniformity and efficiency of the irrigation systems which increases water conservation and quality and leads to cost savings for the land owners. The inspection report provided to the growers can be used for grant applications and permit requirements.
- Urban Mobile Irrigation Labs were created to help educate residents on water conservation and to help improve their irrigation systems, so they can apply more equally and efficiently to reduce runoff and waste, and save money. Education and the protection our water resources and the environment is the ultimate goal.

With the ongoing water quality crisis in southwest Florida, local fertilizer ordinances are in place but not fully understood by the public or enforced. Residents' questions and concerns regarding water quality, the environment and what they can do to help are increasing and should be the highest priority of all officials. It is critical that opportunities to educate the residents are available; everyone in the community has the responsibility to ensure water conservation is priority and water quality is protected.

The Collier SWCD Urban Mobile Irrigation Lab has operated since 2002. At no cost to the homeowner, expert staff will inspect the irrigation system, run times and watering frequencies, rain sensor, landscape species and placement, soil types and conditions, explain the local fertilizer ordinances and pesticide use. A written report with recommendations is provided to the homeowner, and if followed, will improve water use which in turn equates to saving dollars, conserving water, improving plant health, improving water quality and protecting the environment.

This program provides invaluable outreach to residents with a one-on-one consultation. It is an informative, friendly, and productive process to assist residents with water conservation and quality. It is not surprising that the Urban Mobile Irrigation Lab program has found residents won't make changes unless they understand the issues. And once they have experienced the program, they tell neighbors, friends, clubs about how easy and beneficial the program is for them and the local waters.

Funding is required for the Urban Mobile Irrigation Lab to continue. The Collier SWCD Board has reached out to Collier County Government, City of Naples and City of Marco Island and Bonita Springs Utilities to collaboratively fund the program that educates their residents on water conservation, water quality, and environmental protections including their Fertilizer, Irrigation and Stormwater Ordinances. Collier SWCD is asking each entity for \$20,000, a minimal amount for a priority for residents and the environment in Collier County.

Please contact your elected officials and government staff to support the funding of the Urban Mobile Irrigation Lab program.

Every yard and everyone plays a part in conserving water and protecting the water quality and environment in Collier County.

All are welcome to attend the Collier SWCD Board meetings which are the third Thursday every month, 9AM at the Collier County Fairground / UF-IFAS Building, 14700 Immokalee Road, Naples. You can also visit our website at www.collierswcd.org or contact us at collierswcd@gmail.com or 239-997-7731 for questions and additional information.

Respectfully,

Nancy J. Richie, Chairperson
Seat 2
Collier Soil & Water Conservation District