

Administrator's Update for 6/19/2009

By Roger Baltz

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service has performed their annual review of Scrub-jay territories in Charlotte County. The review has resulted in 2,100 lots being removed from the list and 4,200 new lots being added. These annual reviews are necessary as it has been documented that scrub jays can and will move outside of known zones. These newly identified properties would now be subject to USFWS review before any permits can be issued.

We have created a data base system from the information provided by USFWS that identifies properties that have documented locations where Scrub-jays are found. It can be accessed via the County website, CharlotteCountyFL.com. The County advises property owners who are preparing to apply for building permits to check the data base to access the possible impact on their projects. Charlotte County is home to various federal and state protected wildlife species. Performing environmental due diligence is important to safe guard your financial investment, while protecting our natural resources.

Our Commissioners have approved a new tiered impact fee structure. Scheduled to go into effect 90 days after approval, fees will fluctuate in relation to the project's distance from the urban service area. The tiered fees are meant to encourage growth within the areas that are already supported with roads and utilities and discourage development in areas without existing infrastructure.

Our Solid Waste staff who are trained in hazardous chemical handling assisted in Charlotte County Public Schools' science program. Our employees have inspected science labs and will assist school personnel in providing the proper storage and housekeeping for their lab chemicals. This cooperation helps promote chemical safety and also protects the County's landfill by ensuring the proper handling and disposal of lab chemicals.

We have provided a Notice to Proceed issued to the awarded contractor Pine Hills Landscaping for comprehensive landscape maintenance of the beautification assets in the right-of-way on **Manasota and Sandpiper Keys**. Development of the streetscaping project was funded by the MSTU, as is its' upkeep by way of annual contract. The project features ornamental palms, canopy and flowering trees, evergreen and flowering shrubs and color rotation beds irrigated by a low volume drip and bubbler irrigation system.

Charlotte County has been informed that the SmartCharlotte2050 Comprehensive Plan was recognized by the Florida Planning Zoning Association as this years "Outstanding Long Range Study" Award winner. The Committee ranked the study with a perfect score. Growth Management staff members will receive the award at the FPZA's Annual Conference.

Last week at the Charlotte Sports Park the Charlotte Stone Crabs games saw an estimated attendance of 2400. Games will continue through September. The Comcast International Baseball Tournament was also held from June 5-7. A total of 18 teams from Charlotte, Sarasota, and Lee County competed in this second year tournament with an estimated 800 people attending the games.

County green initiatives have continued forward with the implementation of a public recycling program in our parks. Visitors can now dispose of their recyclable waste in specially marked containers. By diverting as much waste as possible to be recycled, we extend the life of our landfill, which is a cost savings over the long term.

Our Utilities staff is looking into grant opportunities and possible use of tax increment funds for a capital improvement project for Charlotte Harbor Community Redevelopment Area (CRA). If funding can be obtained, the project would provide a reclaimed water line from the Mary Lou Park facility to the Charlotte County Historical Center on Bayshore Road. This reclaimed water line would allow for non-potable water to be used within the Gateway Harbor Walk Project that is a top priority of the CRA as well as for private property owners.