



ALACHUA COUNTY Environmental Protection Advisory Committee

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**Chair – Neesha Anderson
Vice Chair – David Moritz
Secretary – Bettina Mosely
Liaison – Mark Brown**

May 24, 2023

Alachua County Advisory Boards Annual Workplan/Accomplishments Report FY2023-2024

Brief History of Committee:

The Alachua County Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) initially established the Environmental Protection Advisory Committee (EPAC) in 1984 to advise and assist the BoCC on environmental issues. EPAC is comprised of 11 Board-appointed citizens, plus one alternate, interested in developing effective environmental programs and policies and in promoting greater community involvement in local environmental issues and local governmental programs dealing with these issues. EPAC gathers information, makes recommendations to the Board, and endorses selected environmental policy initiatives.

Mission Statement:

EPAC provides an opportunity for citizen involvement on environmental issues and concerns affecting residents of Alachua County. It advises the BoCC on appropriate measures to safeguard air, land, and water resources and on responsible management of public lands and resources.

Major Accomplishments in FY2022-2023:

Water Resources

- EPAC discussed how Minimum Flows and Levels (MFLs) are developed and ideas for Prevention and Recovery Plans.
- Assisted in the application of tools to minimize residential use of water by providing feedback to Stacie Greco, Alachua County Water Resources Manager, on the County's involvement with the Lower Santa Fe and Ichetucknee River MFLs.

Water Quality

- Discussed proposed legislative bills on nutrient management and water quality.
- Supported the County's efforts to adopt Right to Clean and Healthy Water.
- Evaluated information provided about the Chemours Mine in Bradford County and discussed its potential impact on water quality.

Waste Management

- Guided the selection of Eco-loop projects in coordination with Gus Olmos, Alachua County Solid Waste and Resource Recovery Director.
- Analyzed information on Regenerative Robust Gasification and recommended that the BOCC re-evaluate the Eco-loop regulations with respect to incineration.

Sustainable Agriculture

- Developed better understanding of Regenerative Organic Agriculture, how grazing can be integrated into sustainable farming practices, and how to heal the Conservation/Farming divide.

Land Use and Land Conservation

- Evaluated proposal for the Lee property, and created new maps to illustrate better conservation options for the property.

Climate Change

- Implemented Community Conversation Forums on Climate Change.

Goals & Objectives for FY2023-2024:

In addition to providing continued review of Alachua County environmental codes and providing input on the environmental impacts of proposed development, EPAC will continue to work on the following goals and objectives. Please note that EPAC may or may not have either the time or the opportunity to accomplish each of these goals & objectives in the coming year, but by listing each area which might pose a potential threat to Alachua County's environment, we commit ourselves to remaining mindful of their importance so that we can act in a timely manner should an issue of concern arise.

1) Water Quality and Water Resources:

- Analyze proposed regulations related to water conservation plans, irrigation regulations, MFL's and other measures to protect Alachua County's water supply.
- Understand how the use of pervious pavers/concrete can be applied in Alachua County to improve water quality.

2) Land Use and Conservation:

- Determine how to engage Alachua County residents in the preservation of large connected natural areas, both public and private, through the Homegrown National Park program and backyard wildlife habitat.
- Monitor environmental impacts of proposed development and suggest policies which mitigate or minimize those environmental impacts.

3) Solid Waste:

- Continue guiding efforts to advance the zero waste goals of the County while contributing to community dialogue on emerging issues.
- Review and recommend project proposals for Eco Loop and waste reduction grants.
- Assess the Florence landfill situation and contribute to discussions about permit renewal.

4) Air Quality:

- Evaluate the feasibility of initiating or revitalizing an air quality program in Alachua County.

5) Dark Skies:

- Understand the impacts of light pollution on natural ecosystems and determine relevance to Alachua County.

6) Sustainable Agriculture:

- Contribute to discussion about the Newberry Meat Processing Facility and associated property.

7) Community Conversations:

- Recruit an intern to assist with developing and implementing at least one new Community Conversation.

Conclusion:

EPAC appreciates the opportunity to serve our county in a meaningful way and appreciates this commission's commitment to creating a county where all aspects of the environment are considered, not only the health of our citizens, natural resources, and wildlife, but also the current and future economic sustainability for all citizens. We look forward to continuing to assist the commission in safeguarding the valuable resources of our county, resources that make our county a desirable place to call home.

Signed,

David W. Moritz, Vice Chairperson

On behalf of Alachua County Environmental Protection Advisory Committee