

Big mission awaits state's new Blue Green Algae Task Force

Can the team fix Florida's fouled waters?

By JIM TURNER
News Service of Florida

TALLAHASSEE – Reducing harmful nutrients in state waters, through moves such as more monitoring and staffing, is an expected short-term goal of a new task force set up by Gov. Ron DeSantis to look at toxic algae fouling Florida waterways.

But with a brief timeline for the five-member Blue Green Algae Task Force to reach its initial findings, don't expect proposals for massive state rule changes related to farming practices or moving away from septic systems.

Task force member Michael Parsons, a professor of marine science at Florida Gulf Coast University and director of the Coastal Watershed Institute and Vester Field Station, said rather than re-

place regulations, as some environmental groups contend is needed, a more realistic approach would focus on "fine-tuning" existing rules.

"In any field, if you make the rules too strong, too stringent, too unfair, they won't be followed," Parsons said. "I think there is a compromise between allowing people the flexibility to work within certain frameworks as well as getting the needed results or the intended results within that framework. You can't force people to do things, but on the other hand, we do have goals we need to meet, so there has to be a compromise between the two."

The task force, which held its first meeting Wednesday in Tallahassee, was created in January through an executive order by DeSantis in response to outbreaks of toxic algae and red tide across the state last year. The problems particularly drew attention in Southeast and Southwest Florida, as al-

gae plagued water bodies such as the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee rivers and red tide caused fish kills.

The panel Wednesday mostly received an overview about state roles in addressing algal issues, the regulatory structures for water quality and wastewater and agricultural best-management practices involving nutrients such as fertilizers.

Audubon Florida Executive Director Julie Wraithmell said environmentalists are expecting action from the task force, which will meet every three to four weeks through August.

"The causes of our blue-green algae problems are well understood," Wraithmell said. "At this point, we need folks who are going to scour the science, look at our regulatory structure, and draft a bold prescription for how to get us out of the problems we are facing right now?"

St. Johns Riverkeeper Lisa Ri-

naman cautioned that an unintended result of prioritizing one part of the state is that others may lag in protection.

"We can't buy our way out of Florida's algae crisis," Rinaman said. "We need to not only have projects but enhanced regulatory protections and education."

The focus of the task force is Lake Okeechobee and waters on both sides of the lake, but the state is also looking at possible algae impacts as far north as the St. Johns River.

Florida Land Counsel Executive Director Ernie Barnett said it's important to treat water before it reaches Lake Okeechobee.

Thomas Frazer, Florida's chief science officer, said the state is already doing a lot, but more could be done.

"If we need to do more monitoring, for example to evaluate the effectiveness of various projects,

See **ALGAE, 4B**

Protest at immigrant detention center

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Clutching signs and umbrellas against a drenching downpour, scores of people protested Sunday outside a South Florida facility that has become the nation's biggest location for detaining immigrant children.

A coalition of religious groups and immigrant advocates said they want the Homestead detention center closed.

Protesters held signs that read "Homes Instead!" and "Stop Separating Families" as they beat drums and sang civil rights-era protest songs.

"Shut it down! Shut it down!" protesters shouted.

Lucy Duncan, an official with the American Friends Service Committee, asked protesters for a

See **PROTEST, 4B**

Celebrating 100 years of women's right to vote

By SKYLER SWISHER

TALLAHASSEE – Florida is gearing up for the 100th anniversary of women securing the right to vote.

Gov. Ron DeSantis signed a bill Friday that will create a commission to develop educational programs and other activities to mark next year's centennial of the ratification of the 19th Amendment, which guaranteed women the right to vote.

Sen. Lauren Book, who sponsored the bill creating the commission, said she thinks too many are unaware of the sacrifices and struggles women endured.

"I hope this allows young men and women to learn about the suffragists and the trials and tribulations they had to go through to earn the right to stand and be counted," said Book, D-Plantation.

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Lauren Book, Florida Sen. D-Plantation

1920. Florida did not take up the measure until 1969 when it ratified the 19th Amendment in a symbolic vote.

Women make up 30 percent of the Florida Legislature, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. While women have held high-

ranking posts such as Senate president and lieutenant governor, a woman has never been elected governor of Florida.

The Centennial Commission will include historians, a member of the Florida Women's Hall of Fame and others who will be appointed by the governor, speaker of the House and Senate president.

A website is being developed where people can apply to serve on the commission, according to Book's office. Applications can also be submitted to the governor's appointments office.

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PHOTOS BY JENNIFER LETT/SUN SENTINEL

A couple stays close under an umbrella during Boca Raton Father's Day Car Show.

RAIN CAN'T STOP THE SHOW

Locals spent most of the early afternoon under umbrellas during the Boca Raton Father's Day Car Show at Mizner Park in Boca Raton on Sunday.



Why did Trump pick Orlando?

Announcing 2020 campaign in city could be a key to winning Florida, experts say

By STEVEN LEMONGELLO

There are only a few key battleground states in the 2020 presidential campaign, and much of the focus so far has been on places such as Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Wisconsin, where President Donald Trump pulled shocking upsets over Hillary Clinton three

years ago.

But when Trump kicks off his 2020 reelection campaign on Tuesday, he won't be in any Rust Belt town or coal mining community – he will be right here in downtown Orlando, holding a rally at the 20,000-capacity Amway Center.

Trump's choice of that location

Inside:

■ The president's kickoff event will include an all-day "45 Fest." **4B**

may be surprising to those who look at an election map of Florida and see Orange County colored in solid Democratic blue. But experts say Florida is the true key to victory next November, and the red, GOP-leaning suburbs in Central Florida are im-

See **TRUMP, 4B**



CHICAGO TRIBUNE HISTORICAL PHOTO/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

The 19th amendment, giving women the right to vote, passed in 1920 and in August of that year, a Chicago suffrage group paraded through Chicago urging women to register to vote in their first election.



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