



# Wetland Enhancement Decision-Making Tools/Training for Landowners and Technical Service Providers in the Lake Okeechobee Basin

## USDA – CSREES – CRIS National Integrated Water Quality Grant

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### Project Goal: To Reduce Phosphorus Loads Entering Lake Okeechobee by Creating, Restoring and Enhancing Wetlands in the Watershed.

#### SUPPORTING OBJECTIVES:

- Landowners will learn about various cost-share programs that offer incentives for wetland creation, restoration and enhancement.
- Landowners will modify behaviors and attitudes about these programs.
- The number of landowners participating in these programs will increase as well as the surface acreage of wetlands.

#### DELIVERABLES:

- Quick reference decision-making chart for use by third party vendors and other educators. The matrix-formatted chart compared 16 cost-share programs against 21 program attributes.
- Web-site (<http://wer.ifas.ufl.edu>) highlighting an interactive dichotomous key to assist landowners in making decisions about the cost-share programs.
- "South Florida Wetlands" periodic newsletter.
- Wetlands Enhancement Resources and BMP Record Book.
- Three-fold, table-top display for use in educational activities.
- Three-fold, color brochure summarizing wetland cost-share programs.
- Three-fold, color brochure about wetlands as BMPs.
- Training opportunities for third party vendors and landowners.

#### EDUCATIONAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS TO DATE:

- 20 presentations made to audiences totaling over 6,000.
- 400 hard copies and 80 electronic copies each of 5 issues of the South Florida Wetlands newsletter distributed. Each issue of the newsletter is also displayed on the UF/Okeechobee County Extension web-site.
- 2 articles published in lay journals.
- 1500 Wetlands Enhancement Resources & BMP Record books distributed.
- 1,641 visits to web site.
- 3,000 brochures distributed.

#### RESULTS TO DATE:

- **2,240 surface acres of wetlands have been created, restored or enhanced since program began.**
- **Another 51 separate wetland projects are in some form of completion for 2006.**



#### IMPACTS:

Research to quantify phosphorus load reduction as a result of wetland creation, restoration or enhancement was interrupted by two consecutive, record hurricane seasons in Florida. These results and project impacts will be forthcoming.