

**Charles H. Bronson, Commissioner of Agriculture
Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services**

EPA ESTABLISHING FLORIDA NUMERIC NUTRIENT CRITERIA

On November 16th a federal court approved a consent decree between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and several environmental advocacy organizations to enforce the Clean Water Act that require the identification of numeric nutrient criteria (phosphorus and nitrogen) for Florida waters. The State of Florida has been using a narrative nutrient standard, "...in no case shall nutrient concentrations of body of water be altered so as to cause an imbalance in natural populations of flora or fauna."

A numeric nutrient criteria is a concentration of total nitrogen or total phosphorus in a measured volume of water.

The consent decree requires EPA to propose nutrient criteria for lakes and flowing rivers by January 14, 2010 with a final rule completed by October 15, 2010. EPA published a proposed nutrient criteria rule for lakes and

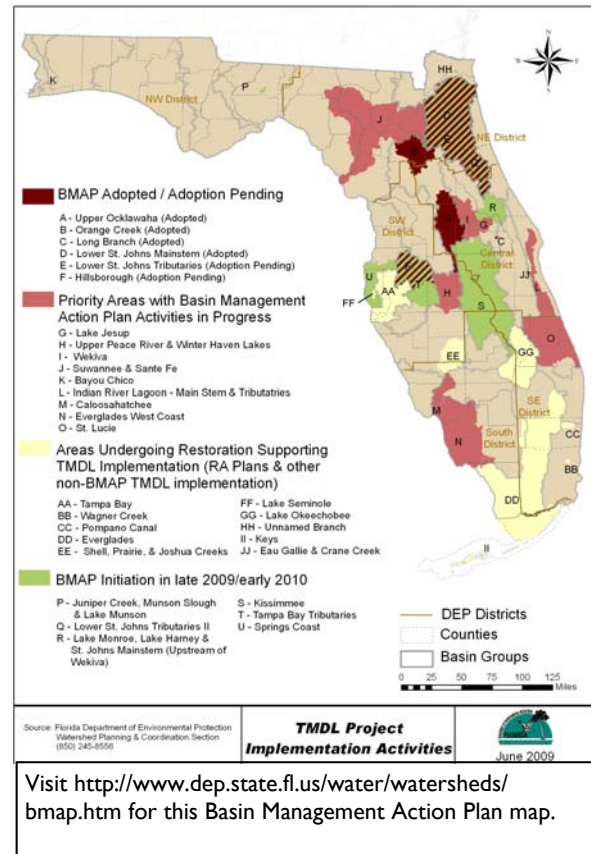
flowing waters on Jan. 26th. Proposed numeric nutrient criteria for coastal waters will be announced January 14, 2011 with a final rule published by October 15, 2011. The consent decree provides that the State of Florida and EPA may agree to standards prior to the listed dates.

Entities that possess a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit may be affected by the new criteria as well as existing and in-development Basin Management Action Plans and the Total Maximum Daily Loads associated with those plans.

Aquaculturists that hold an Aquaculture Certificate of Registration will not be affected by the new criteria unless they hold an NPDES permit.

For information about the development of numeric nutrient criteria, please visit <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/water/wqssp/nutrients/index.htm> or <http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/standards/rules/>

florida/ or contact Paul Zajicek, 850-488-4033 or zajicep@doacs.state.fl.us.



RECORD AND PROLONGED COLD TEMPERATURES TRIGGER DISASTER DECLARATION REQUEST

Governor Crist requested a statewide disaster declaration on Jan 15th following record cold temperatures and prolonged cold that arrived with the new year.

Tropical fish farmers reporting extensive crop losses in the Tampa and Miami area were joined by citrus and vegetable crop farmers. Tropical fish loss

estimates from farmers that are just beginning to evaluate their ponds ranged from 30% to 75%.

Farmers reported cold-killed fish and cold-stunned fish were rapidly consumed by wading birds, raccoons, and otters. Overall crop loss totals will increase as fish die from cold stress induced diseases.

Prolonged cold, Tampa area farms reported air temperature remained in the low- to mid-20s for nine days, and windy conditions defeated attempts to keep ponds warm by pumping groundwater or covering ponds with clear plastic.

USDA can respond to the disaster declaration request

through existing programs within two programs: Rural Development and Farm Service Agency.

Farmers should contact these state or county offices for information. Visit <http://www.usda.gov> to locate these offices or call Paul Zajicek, 850-488-4033.

FLORIDA AQUACULTURE

TEXAS ADOPTING APPROVED AQUATIC PLANT LIST

The Texas Wildlife and Parks Department contacted aquatic plant producers and sellers on November 16th requesting aquatic plant taxonomic information. The agency is complying with a new state law to develop and enforce an approved aquatic plant list by December 31, 2010.

The approved list will replace 11 species and the Salviniaceae Family (14 species) that are on their prohibited plants list.

The Division of Aquaculture partnered with Florida aquatic plant producers and sellers to identify 730 freshwater and marine aquatic plant species or varieties in trade. Several genera, notably *Anubias*, *Canna*, *Cryptocoryne*, *Echinodorus*, *Iris*, and *Nymphaea* have uncertain taxonomy or growers have long been producing varieties quite different from the wild-type plants. As an example over 1,800 *Nymphaea* (water lily) species and varieties have

been described. This plant information has been provided to Texas. A stakeholder meeting will be held in Texas in the coming months to review their compiled plant list.

For additional information, contact Dr. Earl Chilton, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, 4200 Smith School Road, Austin, TX 78744, telephone 512-389-4652, or email Earl.Chilton@twpd.state.tx.us.



More than 1,800 water lily varieties and species have been catalogued.

Signup for SURE begins January 2010. Producers must signup at their county Farm Service Agency Office

USDA CREATES PERMANENT DISASTER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments Program (SURE) provides benefits for 2008 through 2011 crop year farm revenue losses due to natural disasters.

A "farm" is eligible when either: 1) A portion of the farm is located in a county covered by a qualifying natural disaster declaration (USDA Secretarial Declarations only) or a contiguous

county; or, 2) the actual production is less than 50% of the normal production.

For producers to be eligible for SURE, they must have obtained a policy or plan of insurance for all crops through either the Federal Crop Insurance Act or FSA's Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP). There are limited exceptions to this rule.

Producers must suffer a 10 percent production loss to at least one crop of economic significance on their farm in order to be eligible for SURE. For a loss to be a qualifying loss, it must be caused by a natural disaster.

Signup for the 2008 SURE begins January 2010. Producers must signup at their county FSA office. Visit <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/> for information.



The island and channeled apple snails are aggressive plant consumers and can be difficult to identify.

PRODUCERS ASKED TO AVOID CHANNELED APPLE SNAILS

Florida aquaculturists selling, bartering or trading the non-native channeled apple snails, *Pomacea insularum* (island apple snail) or *P. canaliculata* (channeled apple snail), are requested to voluntarily stop doing so. Neither snail is regulated by a state agency but they are snails that aggressively consume plants.

Florida residents have purchased these snails and illegally stocked them in residential storm water ponds to

control aquatic vegetation. These snails are being found in new areas and they are very difficult to eradicate.

The Division of Aquaculture and UF-Tropical Aquaculture Laboratory have developed an apple snail identification fact sheet to assist producers in differentiating the channeled apple snails from the *P. bridgesii* (spike-topped apple snail) that is cultured by several farms and the native *P. paludosa* (Florida apple snail). For

copies of this new fact sheet, please contact Paul Zajicek at 850-488-4033 or email zajicep@doacs.state.fl.us.

Producers should contact Dr. Jeff Hill or Carlos Martinez and the UF-Tropical Aquaculture Laboratory in Ruskin at 813-671-5230 for assistance.

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS LAUNCH INVASIVE SPECIES CAMPAIGN

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District, and other federal and state agency partners launched a new public service campaign during mid-December to highlight the statewide problem of invasive species.

The Florida Outdoor Advertising Association donated billboard space throughout the state for the campaign. Billboards will be placed along the state's roadways and main highways.

Invasive species highlighted in the campaign include the Nile monitor, the Burmese python and the sailfin catfish. An invasive plant campaign is planned for early 2010.

The campaign includes a web site, www.dontletitloose.org, and a toll-free number (1-877-237-7872) to learn more about invasive species and the campaign.



REMINDER: PROCESSING SEAFOOD? YOU MUST HAVE A FOOD PERMIT

Florida aquaculturists that process (i.e., handle, store, prepare, head, eviscerate, shuck, freeze, change into different market forms, manufacture, preserve, pack, label, dockside unload, or distribute) alligators, fish, crabs, shrimp, or any other seafood item to be consumed as human food, except bivalve shellfish, must contact the Division of Food Safety to determine whether they must acquire a Food

Establishment Permit. Call the Bureau of Food and Meat Inspection at 850-245-5520 or visit <http://www.doacs.state.fl.us/fs/inspectn.html> for information.

Bivalve shellfish processors are certified and inspected through the Division of Aquaculture. Clam, oyster, scallop or mussel processors should contact Alan Pierce for information. Call 850-488-4033 or visit [http://](http://www.floridaaquaculture.com)

www.floridaaquaculture.com and click on "Shellfish Handling" for information.

The Division of Aquaculture has developed a hazard analysis for farms that harvest, chill-stun, and pack whole food fish on ice (no gill removal, gutting, or heading) that addresses certain food safety hazards. Potential buyers may request a Hazard Analysis to fulfill their regulatory requirements

relative to Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) plans. Contact Paul Zajicek, 850-488-4033 or zajicep@doacs.state.fl.us for a copy of the iced fish hazard analysis.

TWO YEARS PLUS UNTIL USDA ORGANIC LABEL AVAILABLE

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Organic Program develops, implements, and administers production, handling, and labeling standards for organic agricultural products. A 15-member National Organic Standards Board assists USDA in developing the standards.

The Board recommended national organic standards for aquaculture products that covers a broad spec-

trum of species and production systems. USDA will use these recommendations to complete a public rulemaking process to finalize the new regulations. The process will likely take two years or more – it is controversial and opponents to some of the recommendations will fight the rule.

Currently, a US company can legally market and label products as organic with any 'credible' program in the

world but cannot use or reference the USDA organic program or seal. Once USDA regulations have been promulgated then 'all' aquaculture products in the market will have to adhere to USDA standards and USDA accredited certifiers.

Visit <http://www.ams.usda.gov/> for more information.



Any farm, wild crop harvesting, or handling operation that wants to sell an agricultural product as organically produced must adhere to the national organic standards.

**CHARLES H. BRONSON, COMMISSIONER
OF AGRICULTURE
FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE AND CONSUMER
SERVICES**

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Mission

Regulating and supporting aquaculture production and growth for economic development while protecting the environment.

**OFFICE OF AGRICULTURAL LAW
ENFORCEMENT
TOLL-FREE: 800-342-5869**

The Division of Aquaculture's responsibilities include certifying all legitimate aquaculturists through an annual registration, implementing on-farm Aquaculture Best Management Practices to meet the State of Florida's environmental protection goals, managing 1.4 million acres of coastal waters for the harvest or culture of wholesome shellfish, implementing the National Shellfish Sanitation Program through periodic inspection of shellfish processing plants and product, and managing sovereignty submerged land leases for aquacultural purposes.

Information about Florida aquaculture or Division programs can be obtained from the following offices.

Apalachicola Shellfish Center: 850-653-8317
Cedar Key Field Lab: 352-543-5181
Palm Bay Field Lab: 321-984-4890
Panama City Field Lab: 850-236-2200
Punta Gorda Field Lab: 941-833-2552
Tallahassee Office: 850-488-4033 or 488-5471
Winter Haven Field Office: 863-297-3985

**FLORIDA DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE AND
CONSUMER SERVICES**

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