



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
The Acreage Frequently Asked Questions
July 31, 2009

What does the Florida Department of Environmental Protection do?

- The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is the lead agency in Florida for environmental management. The Agency's mission is to protect, conserve and manage Florida's environment and natural resources. There are six DEP regulatory district offices throughout the State. The DEP Southeast District Office is located in West Palm Beach, and serves Okeechobee, St. Lucie, Martin, Palm Beach, Broward and Miami-Dade counties.

What is DEP's role?

- While Department of Health (DOH) has the lead in public health issues, DEP is responsible for environmental issues. DEP will be conducting a preliminary environmental assessment to determine if contamination is present in groundwater or soil in The Acreage. Understanding the community's concerns regarding possible drinking water contamination, DEP will be sampling drinking water wells.

Where and when will DEP's water sampling take place?

- DEP will begin sampling drinking water wells on August 4. DEP representatives will request permission to sample at residences selected to achieve wide, evenly distributed coverage. Samples will be collected from about 50 wells at homes, schools, and child care facilities throughout a 10 square mile area during that week.

What will these samples be tested for?

- This is a preliminary assessment to determine if there are contaminants in the groundwater that exceed regulatory standards. Based on these findings soil samples will also be collected if necessary. The samples taken in The Acreage will be analyzed for a wide array of contaminants that are associated with industrial and agricultural chemicals used now and in the past. Some substances that will be analyzed, such as metals, may be naturally occurring. DEP is not aware of any point source of pollution of the groundwater in the community, but this assessment will provide more information.

When will the results be available?

- The preliminary assessment report will be available in 6 to 8 weeks. After the samples are collected, they will be sent to the DEP Laboratory in Tallahassee for analysis. The laboratory results will be evaluated by technical staff and a report of their findings will be prepared. This report will then be made available to the public and posted on DEP's website.

Will DEP be coordinating with the Department of Health with this sampling?

- Yes, the agencies are working together. However, DEP's investigation is designed to cover a large part of The Acreage and not focused on specific areas of concern that are under review by the Department of Health. This environmental assessment is separate from the Department of Health's epidemiological study that is in the early stages of analysis.

Why isn't DEP more closely scrutinizing nearby Pratt & Whitney facility?

- The Pratt & Whitney facility is currently in compliance with all DEP hazardous waste regulations. The facility has a hazardous waste permit that includes operational requirements for a hazardous waste storage area and requirements for the continuation of corrective actions regarding past contamination. In addition, there are numerous groundwater monitoring wells at this facility to ensure that the contamination does not spread beyond its current location.

What can residents do to learn more about contamination sites?

- On July 22, DEP Secretary Michael Sole announced the launch of the Contamination Locator Map (CLM). A tool in providing a more open and transparent system of protection, CLM includes locational information for various waste sites in Florida. Search results in the vicinity of the specified location are depicted on a map with site name, address, facility identification number, site type and cleanup status (active or pending). By using the facility identification number, users may view actual documents associated with the site by clicking on the direct link to search the DEP's Web-based document management system known as OCULUS™. Both CLM and OCULUS™ can be found on DEP's home page at www.dep.state.fl.us, located under the Public Access Tools button.

Who can residents contact for more information?

- For additional questions about environmental issues, residents can contact DEP's Southeast District Office Outreach Coordinator, Cristina Llorens, at (561) 681-6605 or Cristina.Llorens@dep.state.fl.us.