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Florida's waterways must be a priority

In Print: Tuesday, September 8, 2009

Clean waterways must be a priority

Few things unite Floridians like water. We swim in it, fish in it, paddle over it, and rely on it for our very survival. Florida's environment, economy and public health all intersect in our waterways. Our coastlines and rivers are what bring us here, or keep us here. We must make keeping the waters of Florida clean and healthy, for people and for wildlife, a priority.

Recently the Gulf Restoration Network released a report titled "Clean Up Your Act! A Review of How the Clean Water Act Is Incorporated into Gulf States Water Regulations." The report can be viewed at www.healthygulf.org.

This report is a scorecard grading how states in the Gulf of Mexico region are implementing the spirit and letter of the Clean Water Act and meeting the guidelines set out by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Florida's grade, a D+, was disappointing and unacceptable. Our report urges the state to take specific and concrete steps to better protect Florida's waters, making them fishable and swimmable, and to better implement the Clean Water Act in Florida.

In our region we see rivers like the Weeki Wachee suffering from nutrient pollution. Reducing nutrient pollution, whether through better regulations and enforcement, or through local fertilizer ordinances, is essential to the survival of our springs, rivers, and coastlines. United, we can stand up for Florida's waters and our future. Take a minute this week and e-mail Florida Gov. Charlie Crist with a quick simple message: You must do a better job protecting Florida's waters. You can e-mail the governor at Charlie.Crist@myflorida.com

Our environment, our economy and our legacy to future generations all are connected through how we act as stewards of the natural resources entrusted to us. Florida must step up and do a better job protecting our waters, for people and for wildlife. Anything less is unacceptable.

Joe Murphy, Ridge Manor

Florida program director

Gulf Restoration Network

Turnitin is not fair to students

When officials in my school district in Pennsylvania were contemplating using the turnitin.com software, I strongly opposed them.

My belief that this software should not be used in any school has not changed over the years.


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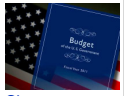
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One of the ways that Turnitin discovers possible plagiarism is to take students' original work and add those papers to the data sources against which other works are checked. Although this might be a useful tool, we have to consider the broader implications of this approach. Essentially, teachers in Pasco are submitting their students' papers to a profit-making organization. That company then sells a product (plagiarism detection) without any compensation paid to those who submitted their work.

I would have far less concern about Turnitin if the students were paid for their contributions to the corporation, but as things stand now, the students are forced into helping create a product for a company's benefit. They do this without pay and without being able to refuse participation. The 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution specifically prohibits involuntary servitude. Why are we asking our students to work for others without pay?

Stopping plagiarism is a good thing. Using software products such as Turnitin is not. We can do much better.

Marc Seligman, Ed.D., Land O' Lakes

>>share your views

The *Pasco Times* welcomes letters from readers for publication. Because of space limitations, letters should be of reasonable length (250-300 words maximum as a rule). Letters may be edited for clarity, taste and length. All letters must be signed and must contain the writer's address and telephone number. Addresses and telephone numbers will not be printed. Send your letter to Pasco Times, 11321 U.S. 19, Port Richey, FL 34668, or by fax to (727) 869-6233 or go to www.tampabay.com/letters/. Fill out the form to supply us with your personal information, the subject line, and type your letter in the space provided. You can also cut and paste a letter that you have prepared elsewhere in your computer. When you are done, hit the button that says "Submit My Letter."

[Last modified: Sep 07, 2009 04:02 PM]

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Anonymous wrote:

Mr Murphy,
All Floridians must take action to help reduce non-point source pollution and protect our waterways...it is not something our Governor can do for us.

Sep 8th, 2009 11:38 am

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