

BEACON REPORTER

Florida Association of Environmental Professionals



Florida Association of
Environmental Professionals

Fall 2026

FAEP BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Gina Chiello —
President & TCC-FAEP

Elva Peppers —
Past President

Joshua Hirten —
Vice President & CFAEP

Kelley Samuels —
Treasurer

Jen Savaro —
Secretary & SFAEP

Bruce Hasbrouck —
Parliamentarian

Matt Marino — TAAEP

Amy Guilfoyle — NEFAEP

Dillon Draughn — NWFAEP

Arielle Poulos — SWFAEP

Julia Lomonico — TBAEP

Susan Martin — At Large Member

Laila Racevskis — At Large Member

Niki Desjardin — At Large Member

Don Medellin — At Large Member

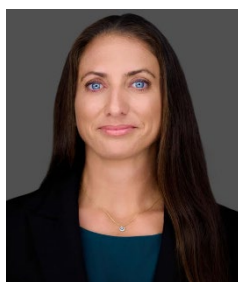
Tim Perry — At Large Member

Jane Gregory — At Large Member

Courtney Arena —
NAEP Representative

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

GINA CHIELLO



Dear FAEP Members and Friends

As I write this, I'm on a plane headed to Maine, hoping to catch a glimpse of fall. Back in Florida, summer is still hanging on, but FAEP continues to bring members together. The past few months have offered opportunities to connect with colleagues, welcome new faces, reconnect with members, and prepare for another year of professional development and engagement across our state. So, as we say goodbye to summer and welcome fall, here's a look at what's happening across FAEP.

A Summer Gathering on Marco Island

The Environmental Permitting Summer School Conference held July 21–24 in Marco Island, once again brought together a diverse group of professionals committed to Florida's environmental future. More than 1,000 attendees participated, including attorneys, consultants, engineers, state and local government officials, developers, landowners, and other environmental professionals.

"... FAEP is excited to continue working toward bringing back the Space Coast Chapter."

With more than 900 members (yes, that's right – over 900 members you all!), FAEP was proud to have a strong presence at this premier event. This year, we shared a booth with the National Association of Environmental Professionals (NAEP), giving us an excellent opportunity to connect with current members, introduce FAEP to new faces, and share what makes our organization such a valuable resource for environmental professionals across Florida.

Con't



The conversations were energetic, the engagement was strong, and we came home with a very long list of potential new members!

[Photo of FAEP Board and members at the EPSS booth, 2026]

New Season – New Growth

Although she's no stranger to FAEP, we're super excited to welcome **Debbie Medellin as FAEP's first Conference Coordinator!**

If you attended the 2026 FAEP Conference in Stuart, you probably already know Debbie! She played an integral role in planning and executing the conference alongside Niki Desjardin and the entire Conference Planning Committee.

Debbie's attention to detail, time management, and organizational skills make her a tremendous addition to the FAEP team. In her new role, she will support local host chapter Conference Committees and FAEP in planning, coordinating, and executing future Annual Conferences and Training Symposiums.

Most importantly, this position will help provide continuity from year to year by maintaining consistent conference processes, timelines, and standards while serving as a central resource for conference logistics, communications, and coordination.

Welcome to the FAEP team, Debbie!

From Cattle to Coast: Looking Ahead to 2027

Of course, as soon as one conference wraps up, FAEP is already looking ahead to the next!

Mark your calendars for the **2027 FAEP Annual Conference & Training Symposium**, hosted by the Southwest Chapter. The conference, themed **"From Cattle to Coast,"** will take place **April 20–23, 2027**, at the Caloosa Sound Convention Center in Historic Downtown Fort Myers.

The **Call for Abstracts** is now open, with submissions due **October 16**. This is a great opportunity to showcase your work, share your expertise, and connect with environmental professionals from across the state.

[Call for Abstracts](#)

Con't

Sponsorship opportunities are also available for organizations interested in supporting the conference and connecting with attendees.

[Sponsorship Opportunities](#)

We hope to see you in Fort Myers!

Bringing Back the Space Coast Chapter

Fall also brings new opportunities to reconnect — and FAEP is excited to continue working toward bringing back the **Space Coast Chapter**.

Over the past few years, the Treasure Coast Chapter (TCC-FAEP) and Central Florida Association of Environmental Professionals (CFAEP) have been teaming up to rebuild interest in a dedicated Space Coast Chapter. Several years ago, Space Coast was its own FAEP chapter, largely serving professionals in Brevard and Indian River Counties. Over time, those areas became part of CFAEP and TCC-FAEP.

The interest in bringing the chapter back, however, has remained strong.

On August 26, environmental professionals gathered at Captain Hiram's in Sebastian for a special event featuring **Nick Sanzone, Tourism Director for the Sebastian River Area Chamber of Commerce**, who presented on *"Ecotourism and the Indian River Lagoon."*

Events like this are a great reminder that FAEP is about more than professional development — it's about bringing people together around the environmental issues and places that make Florida unique.

A New Way to Connect: Glue Up is Live!

If you haven't already heard, FAEP officially launched its new membership platform, **Glue Up**, on June 1.

Members should have received an email inviting them to activate their new account through the **FAEP Membership Profile**. It is important that you set up your account using the same email address where you receive FAEP communications so that you can continue receiving your membership benefits.

Once you're in, take a few minutes to:

- Create your new password.
- Update your member profile.
- Explore the new member portal.

Once your profile is activated, you'll be able to renew your membership, register for events, access exclusive member resources, connect with fellow professionals, and keep your information current.

Members can also access important FAEP documents, including the bylaws, budget, meeting minutes, *The Beacon Reporter*, and membership information.

[Activate your FAEP Membership Profile](#)

Con't

And don't forget to stay connected with FAEP online:

[FAEP on LinkedIn](#) and [FAEP on Facebook](#)

Heading Into Fall Together

As we trade summer calendars for fall schedules, FAEP is looking forward to another season of connection, professional development, and collaboration.

Whether you're volunteering on a committee, attending an event, mentoring a young professional, sharing your expertise, or simply staying connected, you are an important part of FAEP.

Thank you for helping strengthen Florida's environmental profession — and for continuing to make FAEP a place where environmental professionals can connect, learn, and grow.

Warm Regards,



Gina Chiello

FAEP President 2025-2026

Environmental Professionals Radio



Environmental Professional's Radio will be bringing to you anything and everything related to being an environmental professional. Including but not limited to the following topics:

- Sponsor and partner updates
- Career advice and insights
- NEPA and other Policy Updates
- Women in STEM
- Special interest
- and More!

New episodes come out weekly on Fridays!



ORANGE COUNTY
FLORIDA



PROUDLY PRESENT



Orange County

FLORIDA CLIMATE WEEK 2026

All Events
Free!

**OCT
5-11**

ACTIVITIES
ALL WEEK

BIRDS OF PREY CENTER

Climate Art Gallery *all week long*

Climate Themed Children's Story Time *Sat., Oct. 10*

Climate Talk for Adults *Sun., Oct. 11*

1101 Audubon Way, Maitland, FL 32751

**OCT
8**

6 PM-7:30 PM

ROLLINS COLLEGE

Panel Discussion — From Heat to Hurricanes: Building a
More Resilient Orange County www.bit.ly/cfaep-p1

SunTrust Auditorium, 1000 Holt Ave, Winter Park, FL 32789

**OCT
9-11**

10 AM - 3 PM
EACH DAY

LAKE APOPKA WILDLIFE DRIVE

Wildlife Bingo

Wildlife spotting from the comfort of your car!
Drive the trail and mark the wildlife you spot on your bingo
card. Event funded via a grant from the VoLo Foundation.

2850 Lust Road, Apopka, FL 32703

**OCT
10**

10 AM-2 PM

BACK TO NATURE WILDLIFE REFUGE

Owloween

A fun-for-all-ages event featuring:

- Wild encounters with creatures of the night
- Trick-or-treating
- Food and craft vendors
- Costume contest and raffle
- Climate change scavenger hunt

10525 Clapp Simms Duda Road, Orlando, FL 32832



WWW.FLORIDACLIMATEWEEK.ORG

Free Webinar Replays

We are now making our past webinar recordings available on our website free to signed-in members (under Events).

Another reason to become an FAEP member!

August – Joint Chapter Event between Central Florida and Treasure Coast Chapters

Nick Sanzone, Tourism Director for the Sebastian River Area Chamber of Commerce, led a discussion on how connecting people with science, conservation, and community can make environmental science more relevant, relatable, and actionable.

We look forward to working with Nick to organize quarterly events across Brevard and Indian River counties. We welcome your ideas on potential topics as well as meeting locations. ■



The Southwest Chapter

The Southwest Chapter has been busy providing meaningful events for our members and the public as well as preparing for an unforgettable annual conference for all FAEP members next spring.

We held two socials at local breweries where members and professionals considering membership joined in to meet and decompress from their work weeks. These were great opportunities to meet and get to know other local environmental professionals. One of the breweries, the Swamp Cat Brew Company in Fort Myers, became a sponsor to our upcoming Fishing Tournament which will support mangrove and oyster restoration efforts in our coastal areas.

Our chapter also hosted a Wet Walk at Six Mile Cypress Slough, a Lee County park preserve. Twelve members and guests trekked through an ephemeral marsh and cypress dome to reach the main attraction, known as the Grandfather Tree. Everyone enjoyed being immersed—quite literally—in nature.

We are actively planning next year's conference, themed "From Cattle to Coast." If you're interested in helping plan or sponsor the event, please let us know so we can make it our best conference yet! ■





The Academy of Board-Certified Environmental Professionals (ABCEP) is the certifying body for NAEP and the lead organization certifying environmental professionals; maintaining exemplary standards of ethics and technical practice; and supporting individuals, our profession, and the public relying upon our services. It is a board-certified recognition. Beyond the acknowledgement by your peers, earning and maintaining the Certified Environmental Professional (CEP) designation is beneficial as a key differentiator when bidding on projects. It also opens new doors personally and professionally.

ABCEP would like to enhance the CEP (and CEP-IT) by growing our numbers and raising the awareness and value of the credential. If interested, you can find more details about the CEP and the application process on our website <https://www.abcep.org>. If you email the office (office@abcep.org), our Administrator will follow up to see if you have additional questions about the application process and offer to assign a mentor to help guide you through it.

The initial CEP application fee is typically \$200. ABCEP is offering a 10% discount through the end of 2020 reducing the initial CEP application fee to \$180. This is a great time to submit your application! We also have a CEP-IT application for those that don't quite meet the CEP requirements.

Making the decision to pursue a certification can feel like a daunting task, but in this climate, having the designation after your name can prove that crucial differentiator. Please share this with anyone in your office that might be interested. ■

*Find out more about
FAEP Member's Benefits
at our website:
WWW.FAEP-FL.ORG*

INTERESTED IN ADVERTISING?

The Florida Beacon is sent to over 3000 environmental professionals. **A one-year sponsorship also places your logo on our website!**

SIZE	ONE ISSUE	ONE YEAR
Biz Card	\$35	\$100
1/4 Page	\$100	\$375
1/2 Page	\$175	\$650
Full Page	\$250	\$900

NEFAEP Social Events Connect Environmental Professionals

From scalloping to baseball, NEFAEP brings colleagues together.

FAEP and NEFAEP provide many ways to maintain a professional edge, strengthen our communities, and support the environmental profession. The greatest benefit, however, may be the simplest: the opportunity to learn from one another and enjoy one another's company. NEFAEP social events turn that idea into something members can see, hear, and share.

Con't

A day on the water can create the kind of connection that is difficult to schedule into a meeting agenda. On August 22, NEFAEP members gathered in Steinhatchee for the annual scalloping social. With sunny weather in the mid-80s, a pleasant breeze, and excellent water clarity, the group enjoyed a safe and responsible day on the water before returning to the house for the real work: shucking. The afternoon continued around a shared meal of paella, fajitas, and Eesa Ali's Trinidad-style corn soup. Conversation, laughter, and a spectacular overnight location made the event much more than an outing; it became a shared memory.



photo credit: Eesa Ali

NEFAEP carried that same spirit to the ballpark on September 12, when more than 20 members and sponsors gathered for a Jacksonville Jumbo Shrimp game. The evening offered easy conversation, new introductions, a victory by the Mighty Jumbo Shrimp, and an incredible fireworks finale. Marijke Maxwell's organization helped create a welcoming event for the FAEP community, and the night demonstrated that professional relationships often grow strongest when people have time to relax together.



photo credit: Ethan Vroonland



That is the invitation at the heart of NEFAEP: join us to learn, volunteer, meet colleagues, engage with our communities, and have a genuinely good time. Whether you are new to the profession, an experienced practitioner, a student, or a valued sponsor, there is room for you. If you're in Northeast Florida and haven't joined NEFAEP yet, what are you waiting for? Come have fun with us at our next social event! ■



2027 FAEP ANNUAL CONFERENCE

FROM CATTLE TO COAST

Save the Date

April 20 - 22, 2027

The Caloosa Sound Convention Center
Historic Downtown Fort Myers
1375 Monroe Street
Fort Myers, Florida 33901

Florida Association of Environmental Professionals

SW FAEP

2027 FAEP Annual Conference Sponsorship Opportunities				
	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Specialty
Sponsorship price	\$3,000	\$2,000	\$1,000	\$500
Complimentary registration	3	2	1	0
6 foot individually skirted table top display space for exhibit	2	1	1	0
Choice of location for exhibitor table in sponsor space	✓			
Company logo on Conference signage	✓	✓		
Access to attendees list 2027	✓	✓		
Acknowledgement in all publicity materials	✓	✓	✓	
Recognition on slides shown during breaks	✓	✓	✓	
Recognition on Conference signage	✓	✓	✓	
Acknowledgement at breaks, socials, and field trips	✓	✓	✓	✓

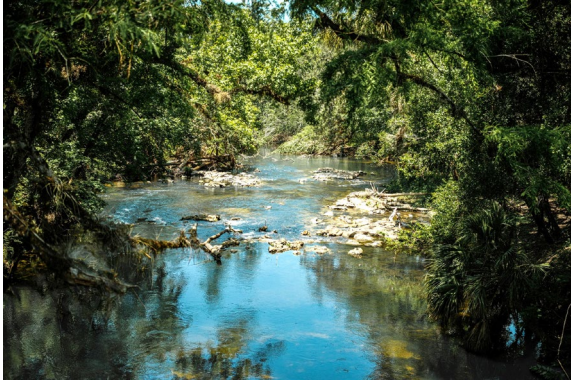
CALL FOR SPONSORS

CALL FOR PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS

Brought to you from the Southwest Chapter, the 2027 FAEP Annual Conference will be held at the Caloosa Sound Convention Center in Historic Downtown Fort Myers on April 20-22, 2027.

If you are interested in joining a planning committee, or have any other questions, feel free to email:

FAEPconference2027@gmail.com



Contact Us

FAEP

4601 N Alexander St
Plant City, FL 33565
(813) 402-8400
info@faep-fl.org
www.faep-fl.org

If you would like to submit an article to the Florida Beacon, contact the Administrator, Andee Richards, at info@faep-fl.org.