

March 2019

## GOVERNOR REVAMPS SWFL WATER BOARD

Floridians seeking action on projects surrounding water quality improvements might have been surprised when, on his third day in office, Governor Ron DeSantis called for the resignations of all nine board members leading the SWFL Water Management District.

Perhaps it was the pleas from scientists and environmentalists to DeSantis that board members were too closely aligned with special interest groups and had failed to protect the public from exposure to toxic algae that helped the Governor take immediate action.

The Governor's first new appointment to the board was Sanibel City Councilor Chauncey Goss, who also serves on the boards of Captains for Clean Water and the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation.

In February, the Governor added the appointments of Marco Island City Councilor Charlette Roman, Everglades Foundation Member Charlie Martinez, Islamorada City Councilor and chemist who worked for the EPA Cheryl Meads, and former Sewall Point Mayor Jacqui Thurlow-Lippisch to the board of the South Florida Water Management District.

A few board positions remain, but we feel confident the right people of action will be appointed by the Governor soon.

Naples Area Board of REALTORS®

# Water Quality Advisory



As the voice of REALTORS® in the Naples area, NABOR® has and will always advocate for action to reduce or eliminate any manmade or environmental threats to homeownership, property values and the living standards in Florida.

## REBUILDING FLORIDA'S AQUATIC ECOSYSTEMS

### How Artificial Mini Reefs Are Profoundly Improving Aquacultures Across Florida

Images of thick algae blooms in canals and dead fish blanketing shorelines on nightly national news programs during the second half of 2018 wrecked havoc on Florida tourism and created a serious topical obstacle for Southwest Florida REALTORS®. State officials responded with a host of solutions and emergency actions, much of which created great political campaign fodder and sparked enormous public outrage at a water management system that broke public trust and failed to protect the people and resources it was tasked to protect.

Above the noise and confusion, several NABOR® members saw the water quality issue as a real professional threat. In response, their leadership and creation of the Water Quality Advisory Task Force is helping fellow members and the public understand the truths and dispelling the myths.

"Even though it's not optimal right now, water quality is still a real important issue for REALTORS®," said Task Force member Adam Vellano.

### Come Together: A Force for Actionable Results

The February 28th NABOR® Business Meeting introduced members to three men who have become allies in the water quality movement. Florida native Jason Pim is an advocate for boating and Calusa WaterKeeper. He has seen progressive destruction of Florida's aquaculture and provides first-hand reporting to help bridge marine science research and Florida lifestyles. David Wolff, another Florida native (and former REALTOR®), is a USF-



(l-r) Captain Daniel Andrews, NABOR Water Quality Task Force Member Corey McCloskey, Water Quality Advocate Jason Pim and Artificial Mini Reef Designer David Wolff

trained marine biologist turned entrepreneur who developed and sold over 800 mini reefs across America. Captain Daniel Andrews is Executive Director of Captains for Clean Water, which united an industry of fishermen. Last year they led the charge and

helped turn the tables on a corrupt water management system.

“We have a fraction of the sea life we did just 10 years ago,” said Captain Andrews.

One solution the Task Force endorses to improve and regenerate aquatic habitats is the artificial mini reef system by Ocean Habitats, Inc. For \$250, they will install a safe polypropelene structure under residential docks. Within 60 days, the structure will be teeming with new sea life. The artificial reef grows 300 fish each year and can clean 30,000 gallons of water per day! See *amazing promotion in sidebar*.

## NEW LEGISLATIVE ACTION

When the Legislative Session begins on March 5th, Governor DeSantis, along with many Florida legislators on both sides of the aisle will seek approval of a proposed **\$625 million** package for Everglades restoration and other water-related issues including:

- \$360 million for Everglades Restoration projects, including funding for projects that aim to reduce discharges from lake Okeechobee.
- \$100 million for water projects that reduce nutrient pollution, including septic-to-sewer conversions and stormwater treatment improvements.
- \$50 million for Florida springs restoration projects.
- \$50 million for projects to reduce total maximum daily loads.
- \$25 million for projects to combat algal blooms.
- \$10 million for short-term treatment projects and technologies.
- \$10.8 million for water quality monitors that create an information portal for people to report blooms and provide funding for a blue-green algae task force established by the governor’s office.
- \$4 million for red tide research and creation of a center to research the blooms led by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

## CAPTAINS TO PROVIDE REEF HABITAT BOGO

NABOR® REALTOR® members that purchase a mini reef habitat through Ocean Habitats and become a supporting member of both Captains for Clean Water & Calusa WaterKeeper will receive a second mini reef for FREE! (Limit one per member. While supplies last.)

A great closing gift for new waterfront homeowners, this promotion will help Naples rebuild its natural aquacultures and reduce future algae bloom threats. Much like a mangrove, the artificial mini reefs are designed to encourage filter-feeders to attach and keep small fish from predators.

Your support will help Ocean Habitats continue a water quality project to document the reefs impact in local canals, with volunteers collecting water and tests being performed by Ocean Habitats staff and student interns from local schools and universities.

## RESOURCES

[Collier County Watershed Management Plan](#)

[Florida Department of Environmental Protection](#)

[Collier County WaterKeeper](#)

[Daily Red Tide Reports](#)

- BOGO DEAL -

[BUY: Ocean Habitats, Inc.](#)

[JOIN: Captains for Clean Water](#)

[JOIN: Calusa WaterKeeper](#)