



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 9, 2007
CONTACT: Dee Ann Miller, (850) 245-2112 or (850) 519-2898

**FLORIDA RECOGNIZES WEEK OF SEPTEMBER 9-15 AS
WATER REUSE WEEK**

-DEP aggressively pushing 'reuse' as essential to Florida's water future-

TALLAHASSEE - Highlighting the fact that water reuse is essential to ensuring safe, clean and sustainable water resources, Florida Governor Charlie Crist and Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Secretary Michael W. Sole recognize September 9-15, 2007, as Water Reuse Week. A national leader, Florida currently reuses 240 billion gallons of reclaimed water each year statewide, but DEP Secretary Sole cautions that the state's exponential growth requires an even more aggressive stance on reuse.

"Reuse is a key part and the largest part of Florida's water future. We lead the nation; reusing 660 million gallons of reclaimed water each day to conserve freshwater supplies and replenish our rivers, streams, lakes and the aquifers; but we have more work to do with local partners," said DEP Secretary Sole. "The Legislature has recognized that as our state continues to grow, the Department needs to continue to be a resource to local partners to ensure we have efficient water management that preserves our natural ecosystems and balances sustainable local drinking water supplies."

Water reuse is the beneficial use of reclaimed water, highly treated wastewater, for landscape and golf course irrigation; agricultural irrigation; industrial uses; toilet flushing; fire protection; decorative water features; and ground water recharge. Among the many "net results" of reuse are that it augments Florida's water resources and allows other sources of fresh water to be conserved or saved.

Florida has risen to be the national leader in water reuse, which has become a critical component of water management. Florida's permitted reuse capacity exceeds 1.3 billion gallons per day, more than 52 percent of Florida's total permitted capacity for all domestic wastewater treatment facilities.

The DEP, together with the state's five water management districts, Florida Department of Health, Florida Public Service Commission, and other state agencies, recently implemented an award-winning Water Reuse Program. In 2006, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency honored Florida's Water Reuse Program with the prestigious Water Efficiency Leader Award in recognition of the water conservation achievements of the program. Florida currently uses

reclaimed water to irrigate 201,465 residential lawns, 462 golf courses, 572 parks and 251 schools.

The Water Protection and Sustainability Program was established in 2005 to help water suppliers fund alternative water supply projects. About 66 percent of the projects funded in the first two years of the program involved reuse of reclaimed water. An additional 19 percent of the alternative water supply projects were for brackish groundwater projects. During the first two years of the program, the water management districts helped fund 238 projects.

In addition, DEP provides funding for reuse projects through the State Revolving Fund loan program and the Disadvantaged Small Community Grant Program. DEP established the State Revolving Fund in 1999 to provide low interest loans to plan, design and build wastewater and stormwater systems. Created in 2000, the Disadvantaged Small Community Grant Program provides grants to plan, design and build wastewater management facilities. During the last fiscal year, Florida invested more than \$198 million in reuse projects through the State Revolving Fund loan program and the Disadvantaged Small Community Grant Program, funding 37 projects statewide.

To learn more about Florida's reuse program, visit www.dep.state.fl.us/water/reuse.

To learn more about the State Revolving Fund Loan Program and water facilities funding, visit www.dep.state.fl.us/water/wff/index.htm.