A look at the quality of the water that enters our local waterways

Water Facts:

After looking at where the water that ends up in our local waterways comes from, let’s look at the quality (just how clean or dirty) the water is from each source.

State water experts and scientists test water quality by measuring parts per billion (or PPB) of total phosphorus levels. Cleaner water will have a lower parts per billion (PPB) and dirtier water will have a higher parts per billion (PPB).

According to scientists with the South Florida Water Management District, 21% of the water that entered our waterways came from Lake Okeechobee discharges over the past five years and that water measured 138 parts per billion (PPB).

The other 79% of water that wound up in our local waterways during that same period came from stormwater run-off across Martin and St. Lucie Counties. The local run-off that goes directly into our river and lagoon in Stuart, Jensen Beach, Palm City and Sewall’s Point was 3 to 4 times dirtier than water discharged from Lake Okeechobee.

Our coastal basin near the inlet is not actually measured but was “estimated” as slightly cleaner.

Water Quality into our River and Lagoon:

- Lake O discharges = 21% 138 (PPB)
- Ten Mile Creek = 10% 224 (PPB)
- C-24 local basin = 13% 321 (PPB)
- C-23 local basin = 12% 432 (PPB)
- C-44 local basin = 13% 312 (PPB)
- Coastal Basin = 31% 113 (PPB)

(Stuart, Palm City, Jensen Beach, Sewall’s Point, etc.)

* estimated (not measured)

These numbers include the harmful discharges in the summer of 2013 through 2015.

To learn more about the quality of water that winds up in our local waters, please go to http://bit.ly/LakeOQuality and read more water facts from Stuart Van Horn, P.E.

Who we are:

We’re American farmers – 2,500 strong. For nearly 100 years, U.S. Sugar has been farming in Florida. Our farms are located in and around Clewiston approximately 60 miles southwest of Stuart. A lot of our 2,500 hardworking employees own the company and many of them live in Martin County.

What we do:

We are American farmers who grow sugarcane, sweet corn and citrus. We are scientists and biologists who manage water quality on our farms. We are your neighbors who care about our local waterways, because many of us live right here.

Learn more about U.S. Sugar at www.ussugar.com