

We urge you to keep the rainy season urban fertilizer ban in place because it is a fiscally conservative, low-cost, effective way to reduce nutrient loading to our impaired springs and waterways. It was a smart move when passed and still is today, as it is for over 118 Florida counties and communities.

The current ban has been in effect for two years without time to show positive results. Changing the dates now would create more, not less, confusion. Compliant products are available at local stores. The county notifies property owners, and stores are provided with signage. Studies show that residents comply once notified.

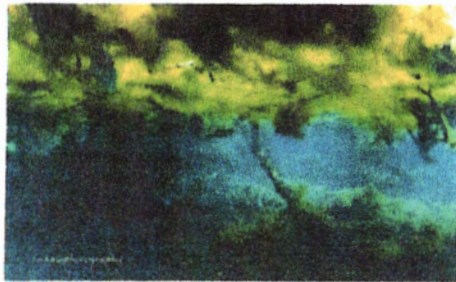
The ban addresses torrential summer rainstorms that wash away fertilizer and promote harmful algal blooms, seagrass die-offs, and manatee mortality. Rainfall in Hernando County over the past 50 years is about double from June–September than the rest of the year. The highest County rainfall over the past three years was the June–September 2024 “Wet Season.” Dr. Unruh, IFAS’s state turf specialist, recommended expanding the winter season and dropping the summer ban.

However, he is not a springs expert and none of the areas he studied included watersheds for [Outstanding Florida Springs](#) such as our first-magnitude spring at Weeki Wachee. Improving springs water quality is a local priority to protect our tourism economy and quality of life. The [Florida Fertilizer Consumer Task Force concluded](#) long ago that a watershed-by-watershed approach is best. Hernando County can reduce summertime nutrient loading and improve springs water quality by restricting urban fertilizer use containing N and P.

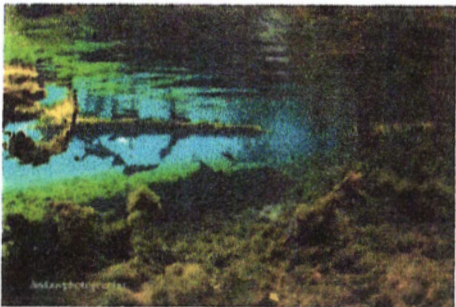
The ban is a cost-effective way to meet FL-DEP’s Basin Management Action Plans (BMAPs). There are four Hernando areas in the High Range for nitrate and nitrite. A 2011 chart shows the rapid increase in nitrates coincided with the growth of Spring Hill that continues county-wide today. More roofs and lawns = more nutrients.

Urban Turf Fertilizer now accounts for 240,059 pounds of nitrogen per year into the Weeki Wachee Spring Group. The state mandates an overall reduction of 213,644 pounds per year. The county will spend \$3 million on septic-to-sewer projects to remove 4600 pounds of nutrients, less than a quarter of what the rainy season ban achieves at no expense. Removing the 4-month ban would increase urban lawn nutrient loading by 33,264 pounds per year for a total of 50,831 pounds per year instead of 28,403 pounds per year with the ban. Taxpayers get it. There is broad support and no good reason for removing it. Keep the ordinance as is. It’s a no brainer.

6 attachments



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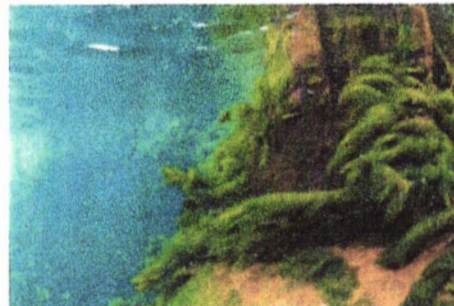
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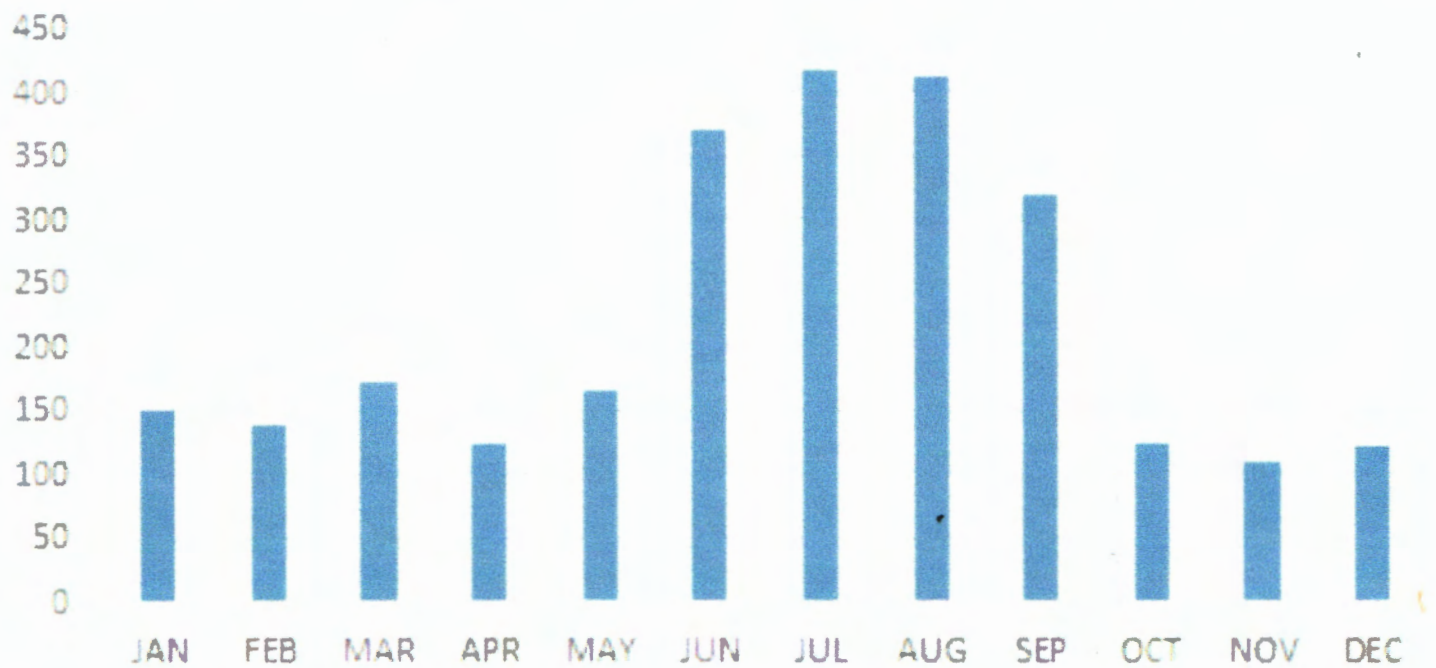


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Total Monthly Rainfall by Month for Hernando County, Florida from 1975-2024 (inches)



Source: Howard Diamond, PhD., Director, Atmospheric Sciences and Modeling Division at National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Resources Laboratory.