

**LEE COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS  
TO RECEIVE COMMUNITY STEWARD AWARD FROM 1000 FRIENDS OF FLORIDA**

Tallahassee, Fla. (June 4, 2009)... The Lee County Board of County Commissioners will receive 1000 Friends of Florida's 2009 Community Steward Award at the Commission's June 9 meeting at 9:30 a.m. at the Commission Chambers. "We are pleased to be honoring the Lee County Commission for its accomplishments in protecting the Density Reduction/Groundwater Resource area in southeastern Lee County," notes 1000 Friends President Charles Pattison, who will be presenting the award. "The Commission is to be commended for its proactive efforts to protect this important regional water source."

According to Lee County Commission Chairman Ray Judah, "The Lee County Board of County Commissioners is proud and grateful to receive such meaningful recognition from an organization as prestigious as 1000 Friends of Florida."

The Density Reduction/Groundwater Resource (DR/GR) area includes approximately 83,000 acres of protected wetlands, conservation areas and agricultural lands. The area also includes a layer of limestone that is essential for aquifer storage and is also in high demand for roads and building construction. The area was designated in 1990 to protect the county's shallow aquifers and to comply with state requirements that the county reduce its population capacity in this area. These lands provide an important buffer between developed urban lands to the north and Corkscrew Swamp and other environmental preserves to the southeast.

Recognizing the need to provide better guidance on the appropriate location for agricultural, mining, residential and conservation land uses, in 2003 the Lee County Smart Growth Committee recommended a review of policies for the area. In 2007, the Commission initiated a 14-point Action Plan on DR/GR planning matters including critical mining, traffic and land use issues, and commissioned Dover Kohl & Partners to develop a plan for the area. In 2008, the Commission approved recommendations to designate a small area for continued aggregate mining and designate the vast majority of the remaining area for preservation and reclamation. Steps taken to date include a one-year moratorium on mine applications in the county and approval of a new Chapter of the Land Development Code to govern permitting and regulation of mining in Lee County.

Don Eslick, Chairman of the Estero Council of Community Leaders, nominated Lee County for the award. He notes, "We applaud the Lee County Board for its ongoing efforts to develop a new plan for the DR/GR before the eight pending mine applications are considered." Eslick explains that the County's planning consultants reported last year that the existing mines in the DR/GR area provided 80 percent of the aggregate needs of all seven southwest Florida counties from Sarasota county to Collier county for the last 25 years, and the existing mines can continue to do so for another 20 years. As a result the Board has tentatively approved concentrating mining in the Alico Road corridor and developing plans to restore the land and flowways in the other areas of the DR/GR. "We look forward to working with the Board as they complete this process later this year," Eslick concludes.

1000 Friends' Community Steward Award is presented annually to individuals, organizations, local governments, agencies, and public/private partnerships that have

brought about positive and lasting change in the way their community manages growth. 1000 Friends of Florida is also presenting three other awards over the course of 2009. A statewide nonprofit organization, 1000 Friends was founded in 1986 to serve as Florida's growth management watchdog. It has been presenting awards for innovative growth management efforts since 1990. For more information on 1000 Friends, visit [www.1000friendsofflorida.org](http://www.1000friendsofflorida.org).