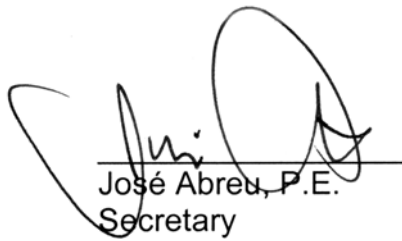


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José Abreu, P.E.
Secretary

WILDFLOWER PROGRAM

PURPOSE:

To protect, establish, and manage roadside wildflowers, and for the conservation and protection of Florida's natural resources and scenic beauty. To improve roadside safety. To maximize the economic, ecologic, and aesthetic benefits from the State's investment in the roadside wildflower program. To establish the responsibilities of Central and District office staff.

AUTHORITY:

- Title 23, Chapter 1, Part 752, U.S. Code, Landscape and Roadside Development
- Title 23, Chapter 3, Section 319, U.S. Code, Landscaping and Scenic Enhancement
- Article II, Section 7(a) Constitution of the State of Florida, Natural Resources and Scenic Beauty
- Section 334.044(5) and (26). Florida Statutes, Department; Powers and Duties
- Section 320.08058(28), Florida Statutes, Specialty License Plates
- Section 403.4131(10), Florida Statutes, Keep Florida Beautiful, Incorporated; Placement of Signs
- House Resolution No. 1377, May 29, 1985, declaring "...that the roadways of Florida be hereafter known as 'Paths of Sunshine' in recognition of their significance to the state."

SCOPE:

Central Environmental Management Office (CEMO), State Public Information Office (PIO), District Secretary, District Public Information Office, District Wildflower Coordinator.

BACKGROUND:

Five hundred years ago, Ponce de Leon named this place, “la Florida”, Land of Flowers, because of its natural abundance and diversity of native wildflowers. For the past 30 years, the Department has sustained the State’s only wildflower program. Today, Florida’s wildflowers provide significant economic, ecologic, historic, cultural, and aesthetic value. The popularity of wildflowers creates opportunities and challenges that are beyond the Department’s statutory authority. Other agencies and organizations are now committing resources that complement and enhance the Department’s program. This procedure is developed in response to increased interest and enthusiasm for roadside wildflowers, and the Department’s evolving role in a blossoming State program.

DEFINITIONS:

Wildflower: flowering plant species, with emphasis on herbaceous annuals and perennials.

Native Wildflower: flowering plant species native to Florida, with emphasis on herbaceous annuals and perennials.

1. PROGRAM COORDINATION

The Central Environmental Management Office (CEMO) will coordinate wildflower program activities throughout the Department. CEMO will fulfill all intergovernmental and interagency responsibilities, as well as responsibilities to nongovernmental organizations and individuals. CEMO will represent the Department on the Florida Wildflower Advisory Council, created by the Florida Legislature, to support research, education, and community grants that promote the use of native wildflower seed from Florida sources. CEMO will prepare an annual evaluation of the protection, establishment, and management of wildflowers on the state highway system. Each District shall designate a District Wildflower Coordinator with responsibility for answering public inquiries, and coordination with Department programs.

2. FLORIDA NATIVE WILDFLOWER SEED

The Department will, to the extent quality seed is available, purchase and plant native wildflower seed from Florida sources. Planting programs will, to the extent practicable, be developed based on the use of available native seeds.

3. ROADSIDE WILDFLOWER BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

CEMO will coordinate development of best management practices for design, construction, and management of the state highway system to identify and protect naturally occurring wildflower stands, and to promote natural regeneration and dispersal of native wildflowers.

4. WILDFLOWER SEED PURCHASE

CEMO will coordinate with Districts to determine projected demand for native wildflower seed from Florida sources. CEMO will coordinate with Florida producers to increase value, quality, and availability of desired wildflower seed.

5. ROADSIDE WILDFLOWER PLANTING

Where Federal-aid highway funds participate in any landscape project, at least one quarter of one percent of funds expended for such project must be used to plant native wildflower seeds or seedlings or both (*Title 23, Chapter 3, Section 319, U.S. Code, Landscaping and Scenic Enhancement*).

6. PUBLIC INFORMATION

The Department should anticipate public comments and questions about the protection, planting, establishment, and management of wildflowers within the right of way. Where appropriate, comments and questions should be forwarded to the contract administrator for response by contractor. CEMO will maintain a directory for publication on the Department Wildflower web page, www.dot.state.fl.us/emo, of District Wildflower Coordinators, as designated by each District. CEMO and PIO will develop a Department Wildflower web page, www.dot.state.fl.us/emo, and informative materials that respond to the popularity and success of the Department's wildflower program. This may include production and distribution of seed packets, posters, brochures, and other means of public information about wildflowers. Districts will photographically document the success of their wildflower program.

7. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Department may accept donations of certified wildflower seed, and will to the greatest extent practicable plant wildflower seed at locations recommended by individuals and local governments.

8. ELLA P. WOOD PATHS OF SUNSHINE AWARD

The Ella P. Wood Paths of Sunshine Awards Program was launched in 1985, by the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs, Inc.(FFGC). The FFGC award program recognizes Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) units of personnel, local

governments, and private contractors responsible for planting and/or management of roadside wildflowers and/or native plants on the State Highway System. Competition rules are available from the FFGC at: www.ffgc.org.

8.1 Nominations submitted by FFGC to CEMO, and any other nominations submitted by Department work units, will be forwarded to the appropriate FDOT District Secretary. The District Secretary will select any number of the nominated areas within the District that represent the most outstanding displays of wildflowers and/or native plants on District roadsides. The nominated work unit shall prepare documentation for the selected sections of highway managed by unit employees. District PIO should be available to assist with the preparation of documentation. Documentation for sections of highway managed by private contractors or local governments, should not be prepared by the District.

8.2 The District shall send documentation directly to the FFGC in accordance with the competition rules.

8.3 When CEMO is notified that finalists are FDOT employees, CEMO will notify finalists, PIO, and appropriate District Secretary, District Wildflower Coordinator, and District PIO.

8.4 CEMO will notify finalists, PIO and appropriate District Public Information Offices of the date, time, and location of the award ceremony.

8.5 At least one representative from each finalist work unit should attend the FFGC award ceremony

8.6 CEMO will represent the Central Office at the FFGC Awards Ceremony.

8.7 Documentation for each of the winners' entries will be maintained in the CEMO as a permanent record.

8.8 Awards received by the Department will be temporarily displayed at annual FFGC Awards Ceremony, and permanently displayed in the CEMO.

9. TRAINING

No training is necessary.

10. FORMS

None