

Rick Baird Awarded RICHARD COLEMAN AQUATIC RESOURCES

AWARD from FLMS



Rick Baird, winner of the Richard Coleman Aquatic Resources Award

Rick Baird was awarded the RICHARD COLEMAN AQUATIC RESOURCES AWARD at the 22nd annual Florida Lakes Management Society Conference, June 2011. The RICHARD COLEMAN AQUATIC RESOURCES AWARD is given to a professional who has worked to restore, protect and/or advance our understanding of Florida's aquatic resources.

Rick Baird started at the Orange County Pollution Control Department (OCPCD) in June 1973 as a paid intern, while a junior at Florida Technological University. During that summer he worked in the microbiology laboratory performing membrane filtrations for total and fecal coliform bacteria on the 400 lake and stream stations that existed back then.

In 1977 he rejoined OCPCD as a laboratory technologist and remained with the department through the mid 1980's when its name changed to the Orange County Environmental Protection Department (EPD). Rick positioned himself to be a part of the department's increased role in environmental protection. Rick had the opportunity to help write a new conservation ordinance to coincide with the Warren-Henderson Act of 1984, Florida's first rule to protect wetlands. He was part of a group that developed the county's first noise ordinance as well as the septic tank ordinance.

In the mid to late 1990's, Rick became the Outreach Program Manager and then the Environmentally Sensitive Lands lead person. In 1999-2000 he handled the acquisition of what are now Savage/Christmas Creek and the Pine Lily Preserve. Under his leadership the EPD preserved thousands of acres of Orange County's natural environment.

Before retiring, Rick was promoted to the Laboratory Administrator job, managing multi-million dollar lake water quality improvement projects. He served as president of the Florida Lake Management Society and the Central Florida Association of Environmental Professionals.