

Meet a FLMS Member



Sergio Duarte

Sergio Duarte works with Orange County Environmental Protection Division and is responsible for stormwater and lake improvement projects.

How long have you been a FLMS member?

I have been a FLMS member for almost 11 years - since I moved to Orlando in 1997 to work with Aquatic Eco-systems Inc. I was made aware of the FLMS when I became the Lake Manager for the City of Maitland in 1999 and after I got in contact with the previous City of Maitland - lake managers that were involved in the organization of FLMS meetings.

How has FLMS affected your life, or why is FLMS important to you?

I participated in the organization of the Central Chapter of FLMS in 2001; and was the Chapter President in 2002. Since that time, I have been committed with the integration of local lakes management professionals.

I was so glad to have the support and advice of my colleagues from the FLMS during my seven years as the Lake Manager for the City of Maitland; because I was alone in the city dealing with decisions on environmental permits, aquatic plant control activities, lake restoration and stormwater retrofit projects.

Who do you work for and what do you do for your living?

I am a Sr. Environmental Specialist for the Orange County - Environmental Protection Division and responsible for the administration of stormwater and lake improvement projects for the Windermere Water & Navigation Control District, the Big Sand Lake and Jessamine Lake Taxing Districts. My daily work includes the technical and logistic support of the local advisory boards, the overseeing of contracts for lake pollution assessments & stormwater retrofits projects, wetland / shoreline restoration, navigational improvements of canals and lake patrol services.

Any hobbies in your off hours that you would like to mention?

My years of extensive scuba diving and camping trips are probably in the past; but I still like to travel in and out of the country. Visiting national parks, hiking in a cool mountain or snow shoeing are still my favorite activities.

What is the largest single problem facing lake managers today, other than financial issues?

Finding an understanding with the “human residents” that a lake needs wetland vegetation to balance nutrients, wetland forests as wildlife refuges, water fluctuations to oxidize the organic sediments, herbicides to control invasive plants, and a long term management plan to reduce pollutants loadings before the lake transforms into a swamp!

Is there anything else you would like to share with FLMS members?

I was born in Colombia (South America) where I received a B.S. in Biology from the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana in Bogota. I worked for 2 years in a Marine Research Institute (INVEMAR) in the Caribbean before moving to Auburn University; where I completed two M.S. on Fisheries / Allied Aquaculture and Economics. While working at Auburn University as Graduate Research Assistance I met my French -Canadian wife “Isabelle”; and settled in Central Florida after working for 3 years as a consultant in South America. I had done over the years: lakes and fisheries management projects, environmental studies, research/extension service work, aquaculture production & consulting, and laboratory work on water quality, genetics, fish diseases and pathogen diagnostics.

If you would like to recommend a FLMS member for the next “Meet A FLMS Member” column, please send their name and email address to sbrandt@sjrwmd.com.