

## NEWS FROM THE WATERSHED

### Meet Corine Burgess, new Natural Resource Specialist

Even though I have been working for the Highlands County Board of County Commissioners since December 2000, it is much to my delight that I introduce myself as the new Natural Resource Specialist. In my new position I will be writing a weekly article, "News from the Watershed" to let you know what is going on in the Natural Resources realm.

Prior to being hired in my new position, Jennifer Abby, who is now the Soil Conservationist for the Natural Resource Conservation Service, filled the position and she is a great help to me while I learn the ropes. I am very excited about my duties and look forward to working with landowners in an effort to assist them in using best management practices regarding conservation on their land through the leadership of Larry Sharpe, District Conservationist and my new boss! I am also looking forward to learning new skills and utilizing the knowledge that I already possess. I'm sure one of my favorite tasks will be visiting schools and educational facilities to teach children about the environment and how to use conservation techniques to protect it. I know that working with the Lakes Management crew, Clell Ford and Erin McCarta will be lots of fun and a learning experience for me. It would seem that a very exciting future awaits me.

I have worked for Highlands County for the past six years in the capacity of Administrative Secretary for the Assistant County Administrator, Public Works Coordinator for the Engineering Department and then Public Information Officer. Before that I was employed by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Florida Park Service. I started out as Park Ranger for Highlands Hammock State Park. I loved being a Park Ranger, but wanted to promote so I then moved up to DeLeon Springs to become an Assistant Park Manager. After years spent in the capacity of Assistant Park Manager, I ended up in Key West as the Park Manager of Fort Zachary Taylor State Historic Site. I spent 12 years with the Florida Park Service, which was a challenging career. In that time I learned much about the environment in the different parts of Florida as well as conservation practices for our precious natural and cultural resources.

My husband and I moved back to Sebring in December 2000 to be closer to our families. I had secured a position with the County before moving here. Now, six years later I am back in the Natural Resources field once again. I couldn't be happier. I have recently completed my Bachelors degree from Barry University and am excited to put my education to work. While in the Park Service, we moved five times in 12 years and we have no plans to move again. I consider Sebring my home and my husband and I plan to stay put.

I have been interested in the environment since childhood. My goal has always been to serve in some way to assist in protecting and conserving our natural resources. In addition, I would like to be a good example to my children and teach them how to be good conservationists. I believe this position is a good fit and I am confident that these goals will be achieved through this career choice.

I look forward to my new duties and answering any questions you may have. Please feel free to contact me at 863 402-6545.