

# Alachua County Fertilizer Ordinance and Social Marketing Campaign



**Stacie Greco**

Water Resources Program Manager  
Alachua County Environmental Protection Dept.

**Dorian Morgan**

Director of Research & Social Marketing  
Uppercase, Inc.



# Alachua County Landscaping Strategies

- **Education-** Shifting Landscaping Paradigm
  - Social media marketing
  - Television commercials and billboards
  - Turf SWAP Rebate Program
- **Regulatory-** Reducing Irrigation and Fertilizer Use
  - Irrigation Efficiency Design Code
  - Irrigation Restrictions
  - Fertilizer Code
  - HOA FFL Code





# FDEP 319 Public Education Grant

- \$135,000 from 2018 – 2021
- Design, implement, and evaluate a social marketing behavior campaign to reduce landscape fertilizer use
- Calculate load reductions based on results of campaign



# Alachua County Fertilizer Code 2019 Amendments

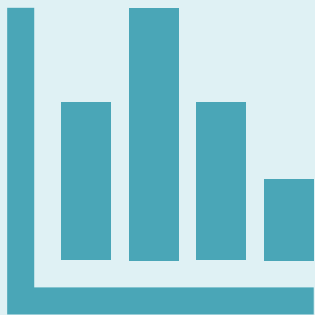
*(Chapter 77 Article 4)*

- Fertilizer with phosphorus is only allowed if a soil or tissue test verifies a need
- Fertilizer with nitrogen is only allowed March – June and must have at least 50% slow-release nitrogen



# What is Social Marketing?

Research-based marketing campaign developed to change behaviors to benefit the greater social or environmental good.



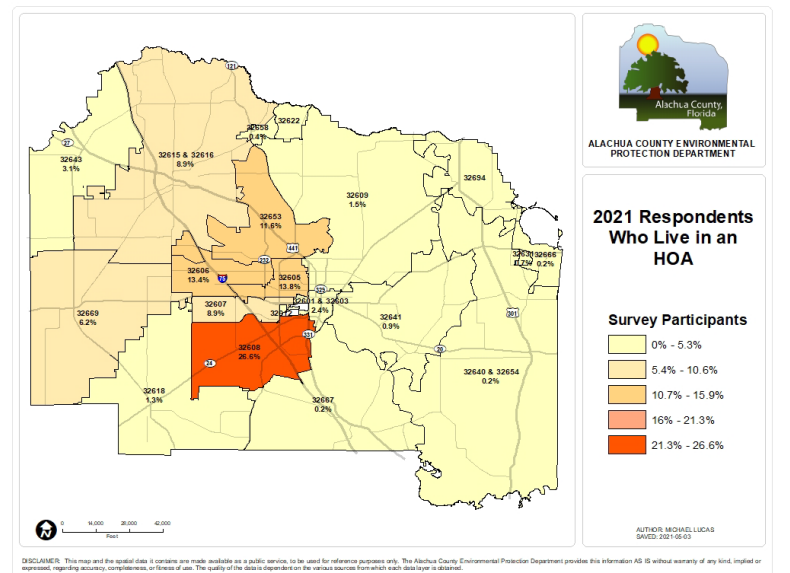
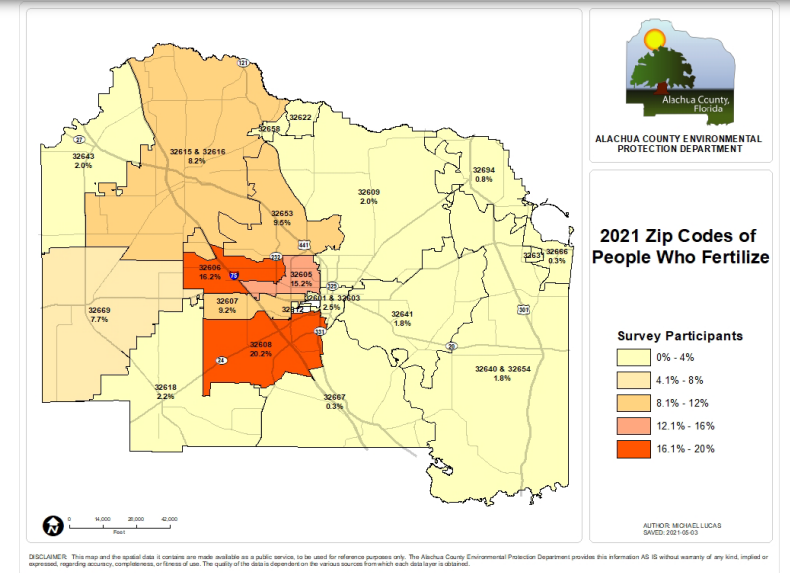


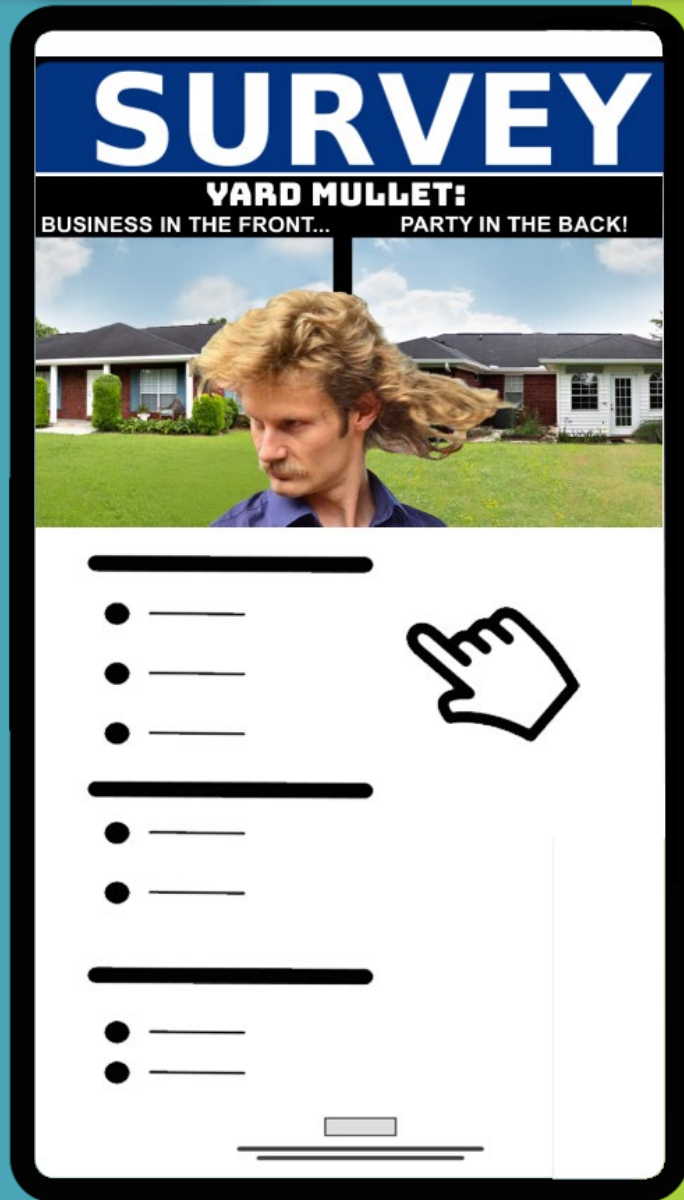


## Steps of Social Marketing ↗

### 1. Segment Target Audience(s)

- There is no “general public”
- 55% said they don’t use fertilizer – so why spend money on them?
  - Use fertilizer
    - Residents who hire a landscape company
    - DIY fertilizer users
    - Live in an HOA





# Steps of Social Marketing ↗

## 2. Select Specific Behavior

**Reduce Fertilizer Use? NO!**

- Most people think they are environmentally friendly as it is. They may not see room for improvement.
- **Fertilizer Users**
  - Skip the fertilizer this year!
    - Join the 55% that say they don't use fertilizer.
- **Live in an HOA**
  - Don't Use fertilizer in the backyard



# Steps of Social Marketing

## 3. Identify Barriers and Benefits

What would encourage you to reduce your fertilizer use?

- 69% Still Look Great
- **57% Harm the Environment**
- **52% Harms the Springs**
- 49% Harms My Pets
- 46% Harms My Children
- **37% Illegal/Banned**
- 22% If Mixed Grass Were More Socially Acceptable
- 21% If I Didn't Have an HOA

- **Knowledge was a barrier**
  - Around half of fertilizer users thought residential fertilizer could cause algal blooms in nearby waterbodies (53%).







# Steps of Social Marketing ↗

## 4. Develop Strategy Using Tools of Change

- **Norms**
  - Position desired behavior as the norm, not the exception.
  - Join the 55!



**ARE  
YOU  
ONE  
OF THE  
55?**

55% of residents surveyed said they don't use fertilizer at all. Thank you!

[MyYardOurWater.org](http://MyYardOurWater.org)





# Steps of Social Marketing

## 4. Develop Strategy Using Tools of Change

- **Incentives (highlight the benefits)**
  - Healthier springs
  - Healthier groundwater (drinking water)
  - Your yard can still look great!
  - Future generations



**My Yard Our Water**

Published by Dorian Morgan · February 26 ·

Fertilizer can wash off our yards and seep into our creeks, springs, rivers, and even the aquifer - our drinking water source. Join the 55% that say they don't use fertilizer and skip the fertilizer this year. [#myyardourwater](#) [#itsallconnected](#) [#jointhe55](#) [#fertilizerfree](#) [#springs](#)



ALACHUACOUNTY.US

**Skip the Fertilizer!**

[Learn More](#)





# Steps of Social Marketing ↗

## 4. Develop Strategy Using Tools of Change

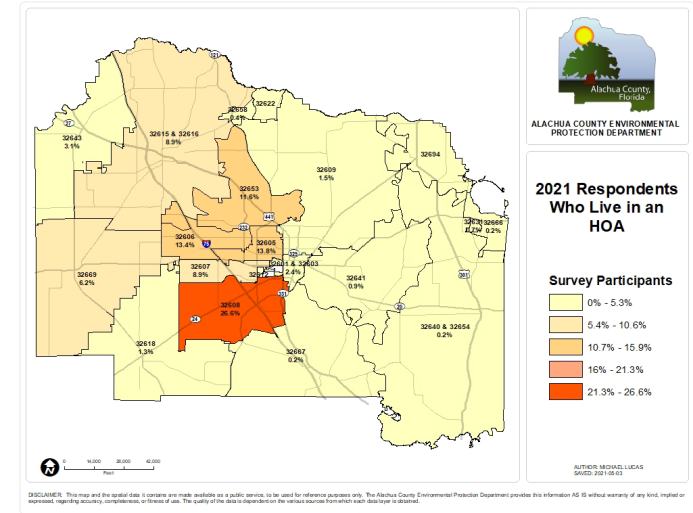
- Prompts (signage, T-shirts, stickers)





# Fertilizer Campaign- Social Media

“Over half of Alachua County residents (55%) say they don't use fertilizer at all. Thank you! For those that are still using fertilizer, would you pledge to skip the fertilizer at least in the backyard this year? Backyards are for belly laughs and rolling in the grass, not fertilizer. “







## Fertilizer Campaign- Social Media

“Fertilizer washes off our yards and can seep into our waterways and contribute to algae blooms which block sunlight and choke out aquatic plants and fish. Over half of Alachua County residents (55%) say they don't use fertilizer at all. Thank you!”







## Fertilizer Campaign- Social Media

“Okay, we know it doesn’t “really” work exactly like this, but fertilizer can push past grass roots and end up in the groundwater - our drinking water. And fertilizer can wash right off your yard as stormwater pollution into our lakes, river, creeks and springs. Especially if you fertilize before a rain! Just some of the reasons fertilizer is now banned from July through February in @AlachuaCounty”





# Steps of Social Marketing

## 4. Develop Strategy Using Tools of Change

- Communication
  - Gainesville Magazine and Gainesville Sun
  - Utility Mailer
  - Billboards
  - Website
  - Vehicle Wrap
  - Press releases





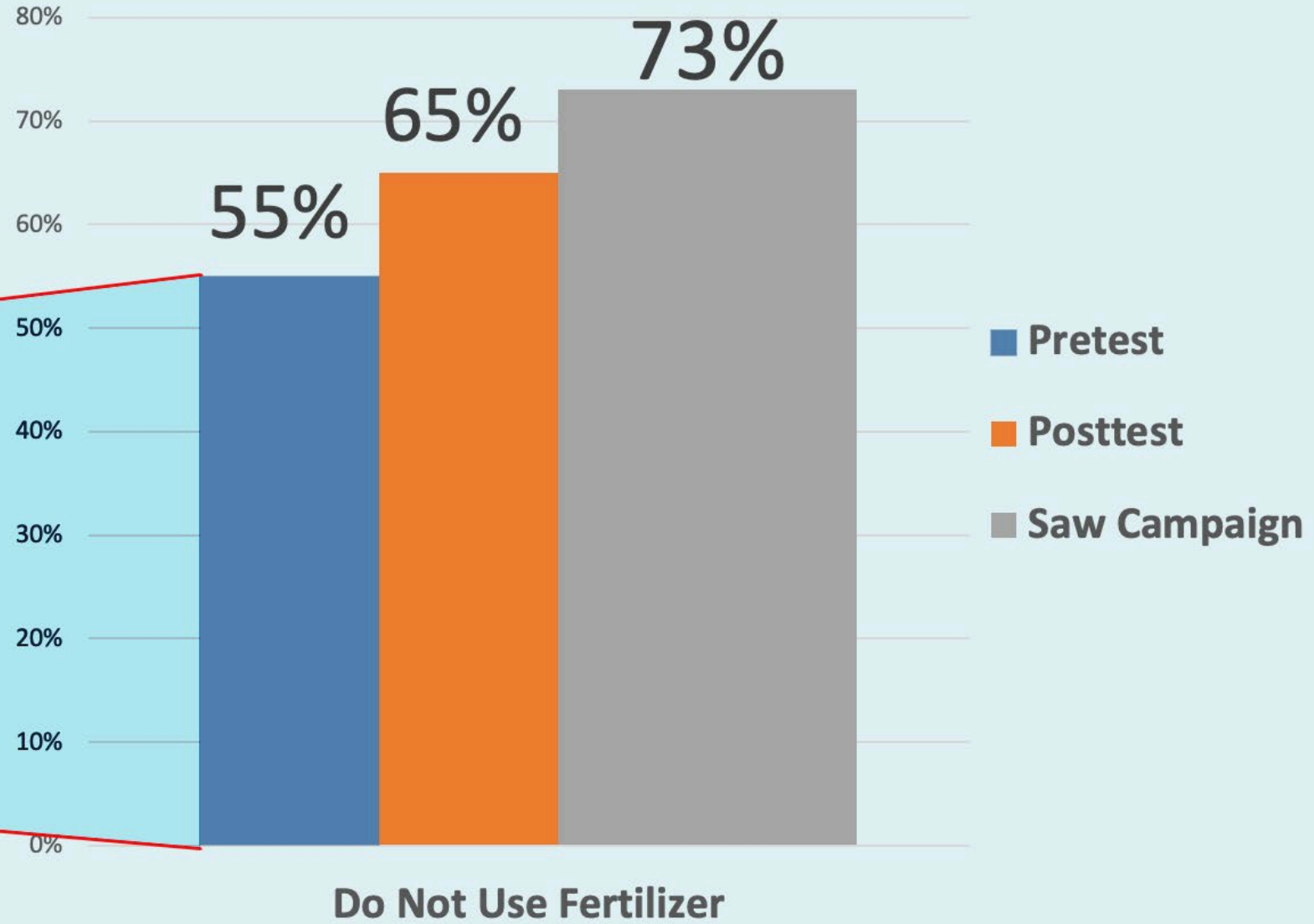
# Steps of Social Marketing

## 5. Evaluate the Strategy

- Pretest Survey 2018/2019 n= 1,118
- Posttest Survey 2020/2021 n= 2,297









# 40%

of respondents who use fertilizer said they decided to use less fertilizer as a result of seeing the campaign



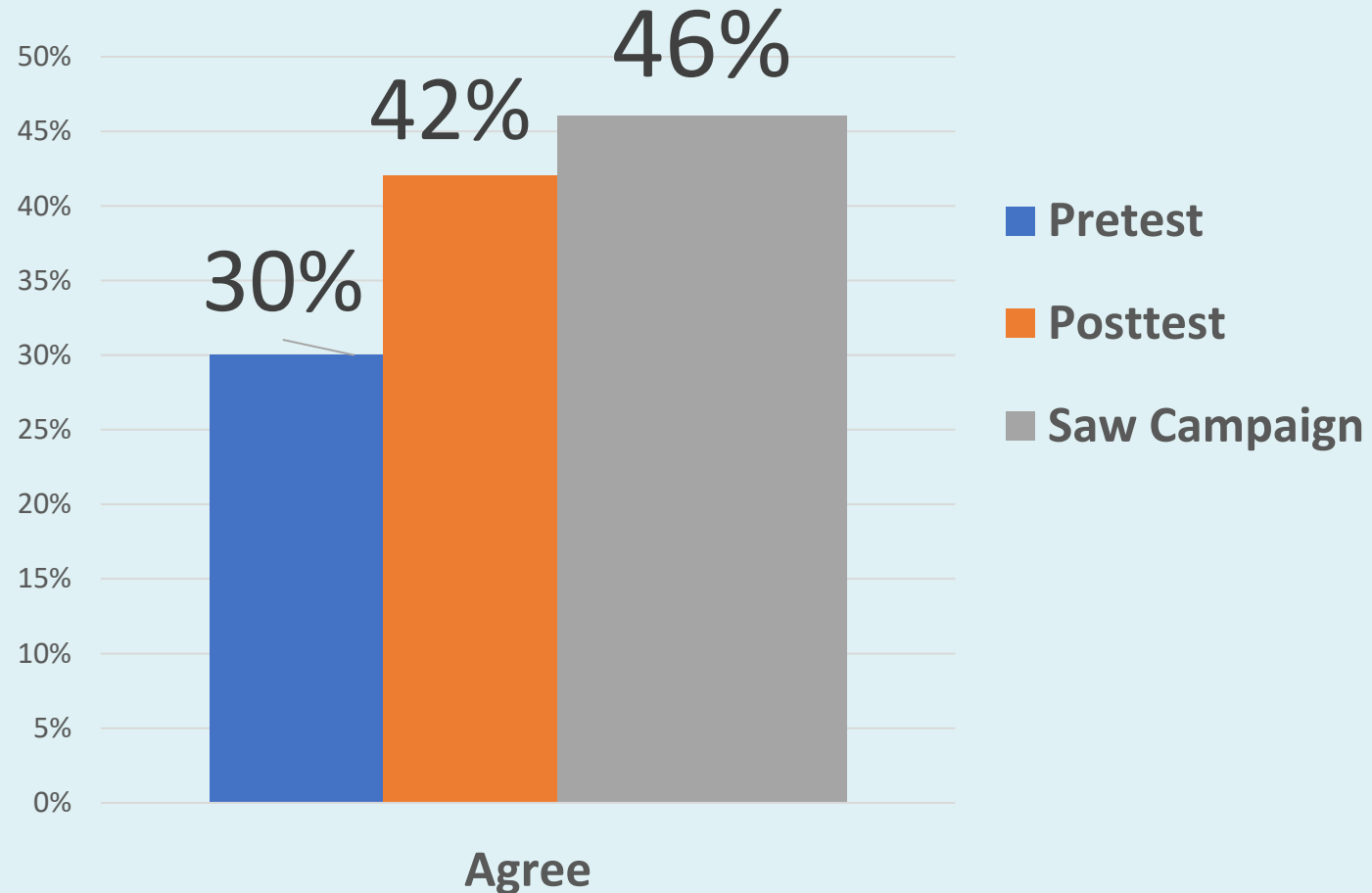




# 40%

increase between pre and post agreement: “Fertilizers from residential lawns” ... cause algae blooms.

### Fertilizers from Residential Yards Cause Algae Blooms





## Load Reduction Results

- Wood combined survey, spatial, and literature data with fertilizer label information to estimate nitrogen load reductions
  - Simple Model used for surface water
  - Nitrogen Source Inventory Loading Tool (NSILT) used for groundwater
- 20% reduction in annual nitrogen loading from ~70,000 acres of medium and low density residential land uses to reduce loading by:
  - 8,000 pounds for surface water and
  - 12,000 pounds for groundwater



## Load Reduction Results

- Removal costs ranged from \$1.35 - \$8.28 per pound.
- Engineering projects range from \$200 - \$500 per pound.





# Thank You!

## Funding includes:

- Gainesville Clean Water Partnership
  - Alachua County
  - City of Gainesville
  - FDOT
- Florida Department of Environmental Protection
- US Environmental Protection Agency
- St. Johns and Suwannee River Water Management Districts



# Questions?



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