**January 8, 2013**

**RE: High School Student Literary Competition for 11th Annual Water Matters Day Event**

Dear Educator,

On Saturday, March 9, 2013, Broward County will be celebrating the 11th Annual *Broward Water Matters Day* event at Tree Tops Park in Davie. This is a community-wide event designed to provide Broward County residents with water conservation education, information about local water management, and a better understanding of their role in protecting the quality and quantity of our water resources. As in previous years, with the support of the School Board of Broward County we are holding a **Water Matters Day Literary Competition**.

We would like to invite your students to participate in the competition by writing an essay on the topic below. The 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners and their teachers will be presented with prizes and recognized by the Broward County Commission the event. We hope you will encourage your students to participate in this project as either an in-class or extra credit assignment.

This year’s theme is *“Conserve, Preserve and Protect”* which recognizes that our natural resources deserve attention and protection. This is the 11th year that Broward County has hosted Water Matters Day, the County’s largest environmental event. Over that time, we have provided residents with over 25,000 native trees and plants to promote the benefits of native landscaping and environmental stewardship.

With that in mind, we have chosen the following topic for this year’s literary contest:

Spring of 2013 marks the 500th anniversary of Juan Ponce de León's landing on Florida's east coast. He named the land “La Florida” because of the land’s bounty of spring flowers. He soon discovered Florida's unique ecosystems, waterways and coastlines. Celebrating this 500th year anniversary causes us to reflect on how these natural resources have been affected by human development.

The theme of this year’s event is “*Conserve, Preserve and Protect.”* Please discuss some of the changes to Florida’s natural resources that have resulted from Florida’s population growth and what actions have been undertaken to conserve, preserve, and protect these resources. Can you think of other actions that should be taken? What are they?

Essay entries should include the name of the student, teacher and school; be typed in a minimum 12 point font; and be limited to 3 pages. Research is encouraged and some information can be found at: <http://www.broward.org/naturalresources>.

Please have your students submit a copy of their essays to you. Please select the top three entries from your school and forward *only these* entries to Victor Suarez, Broward County Natural Resources Planning and Management Division, 115 S. Andrews Avenue, Room 329H, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301. Entries must be received by Monday, February 5, 2013. **Essays may also be scanned and sent electronically as an attachment. This is the preferred method.**

Please contact Victor Suarez at 954-519-1239, or by e-mail at vsuarez@broward.org if you have questions or require further information.

Thank you in advance for helping us promote the message that in Broward County ***Water Matters!***

Yours truly,



Dr. Jennifer Jurado, Director

Natural Resources Planning and Management Division