INTRODUCTION

Yard wastes currently represent about 15% of the total municipal solid waste collected in Florida. They include fallen leaves, grass clippings, shrubbery trimmings, and tree limbs, which are all valuable plant material that can be used to improve soil property. These materials are often separated and processed at collection facilities into compost and mulch. However, there are concerns about the presence of herbicides, pesticides and heavy metals in yard trash that may cause regulatory concerns.

OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of this study is to determine the characteristics of yard trash and recommend proper management practices to handles it based on the results.

The specific objectives of this project are:

- Collect representative and typical yard trash samples throughout Florida;
- Characterize the wastes chemically and physically including the contents of selected 503 metals and selected organic contaminants;
- Evaluate the potential adverse impacts on water quality and most cost-effective ways of managing these wastes.

WORK ACCOMPLISHED

- Visited two compost and mulch processing facilities in Gainesville on 10/11/07 and 11/09/07. The visits provide us the opportunity to see the waste in the facility and help us with sampling plan.
- Met with FDEP officials in Tallahassee on 10/16/07 to discuss the direction of project. For this project, we will focus on processed yard trash, i.e., mulch and compost.
- Put together a sampling procedure and developed sampling method based on the study of Townsend et al. (2003).
- Reviewed the list of yard waste and recycling facilities in Florida
- Narrowed the list from 220 to 54 facilities and grouped them into six districts:
- Drafted a sampling schedule, which will be conducted from January to April of 2008.

WORK TO BE ACCOMPLISHED

- Collect 80-100 samples from 54 short-listed facilities across Florida
- Size-reduction of collected samples
- Extraction and analysis of samples
- Preparation of the report.