

GOVERNOR SCOTT'S BUDGET RECOMMENDS \$1.2 BILLION TO PROTECT AND RESTORE FLORIDA'S ENVIRONMENT

~Funding for Everglades, springs and land conservation~

TALLAHASSEE – Today, Florida Department of Environmental Protection Secretary Herschel T. Vinyard, Jr. applauds Governor Rick Scott's environmental priorities within his Florida Families First FY2013/2014 budget. The \$1.2 billion budget will include support for restoration projects in the Everglades, springs water quality improvements and the purchase of conservation land. The budget places a priority on projects that protect and renew our waterbodies in line with the Department's emphasis on getting the water right.

"By requesting more than a billion dollars to continue our pursuit of robust environmental protection, Governor Scott clearly understands that the future of Florida depends on its natural resources," said Secretary Vinyard. "This funding will restore water quality in the Everglades, rejuvenate our springs and provide a clean environment for all Floridians."

Proposed budget items include:

- \$60 million to fund the Governor's Everglades Water Quality Plan and continuing funding for the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan. Governor Scott has doubled the amount of money spent on Everglades Restoration in FY2012/2013. Scott's leadership turned this historic undertaking into a reality. The plan builds upon a \$1.8 billion investment in Everglades water quality improvements. The budget includes design, engineering and construction of flood control projects to enhance water quality and ensure a reliable water supply for southern Floridians and the numerous species that thrive in the area.
- \$269.5 million for restoring waterways and water supply. This will ensure the future supply by improving on the water quality regulations for springs, lakes, rivers and estuaries. The FY2013/2014 budget commits an increase of \$6.5 million for springs restoration. Additionally, the budget will support the practical application of the water quality criteria by endorsing wastewater treatment facility construction, drinking water facility construction, and water quality planning. Under Governor Scott's leadership, the department doubled the amount of money spent in the previous three fiscal years on the state's springs and developed more water quality criteria last year than in any year in the last decade.
- \$75 million for Florida Forever. The budget recommends \$50 million in budget authority from the proceeds of the sale of surplus state lands. Governor Scott identified an additional \$25 million from General Revenue for the purchase of conservation lands needed for springs protection, military buffering or water resource protection. This investment helps ensure Floridians can enjoy our natural treasures.

- **\$25 million for beach erosion control.** This new commitment will help restore and maintain Florida's sandy beaches that provide a warm welcome to millions of visitors each year. The local governments responsible for the state's most valuable and recognizable natural resource will benefit from state assistance for beach and dune restoration, beach nourishment, inlet sand bypassing and regional sediment management.
- **\$19 million for state park improvements.** This money will provide an opportunity to enhance the amenities throughout Florida's vast state park system. Governor Scott proposed an increase of \$6 million to the FY2012/2013 budget to continue Florida's tradition of the nation's best park systems.

For additional details on the Governor's recommended Florida Families First FY2013/2014 budget, visit www.floridafamiliesfirst.com.

Florida Department of Environmental Protection

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection is the state's principal environmental agency, created to protect, conserve and manage Florida's environment and natural resources. The Department enforces federal and state environmental laws, protects Florida's air and water quality, cleans up pollution, regulates solid waste management, promotes pollution prevention and acquires environmentally-sensitive lands for preservation. The agency also maintains a statewide system of parks, trails and aquatic preserves. To view the Department's website log on to www.dep.state.fl.us.

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A Times Editorial

Flawed model puts aquifer at risk

In Print: Tuesday, January 29, 2013

The first step in protecting the state's environment is getting the science right. Yet Florida uses a flawed model for assessing how groundwater pumping affects the surrounding landscape. It's irresponsible, and state water managers need to correct it.

Tampa Bay Times staff writer Craig Pittman reported Monday that state water officials base all their permitting decisions on computer models that rely on a false assumption. The models assume the underground area known as the aquifer flows at a steady rate through layers of sand and gravel. In reality, the land beneath is composed of karst, a more porous limestone that is full of holes, both big and small. The difference means that water can travel at a much faster rate than the computer models imply, according to current and former state water officials. The net effect is that pollution can be carried much more quickly into the drinking water supply, and state officials have an inaccurate picture of what pumping may do to regions across the state.

An experiment by a team of scientists in 2010 illustrates the depth of the problem. The team dropped fluorescent dye into wells and sinkholes at Silver Springs. Under the state's model, the dye would move toward the springs in cycles ranging from two to 100 years. But the dye dropped by the team rocketed through the aquifer, crossing half the 100-year distance in only six months. The models are so off-base, said David Still, the former director of the Suwannee River Water Management District, that "they shouldn't be used to make decisions."

Yet the regional water management districts rely on the models in deciding how much pumping to allow and assessing the impact on nearby springs, lakes and wetlands. The state also uses the models as part of its effort to track nitrate pollution that comes from septic tanks and upland runoff. Officials say they can "tweak" the models to take into account any obvious signs of environmental degradation. But that is no substitute for a model that accurately measures the flow rates in Florida's distinct water basins.

The water districts should work with Florida's Department of Environmental Protection to update the Florida models. The process may involve some time and expense, and any final model may be imperfect to some degree given the nature of measuring hollow areas in the ground. But these models must be more precise to provide better protection of both the aquifer and surface water.

[Last modified: Jan 28, 2013 05:08 PM]

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Adena Springs Ranch officials await word on downsized water permit application

By MELORA GRATTAN

A decision will likely be made in the next few months regarding the fate of a consumptive use permit for a cattle ranch in Marion County that has rustled up opposition from folks worried about environmental impacts due to overpumping and nutrient loading in the watershed.

In the midst of strong public sentiment against its original request for up to 13.2 million gallons a day of groundwater with an 87-center-pivot irrigation system for crops, officials with Adena Spring Ranch submitted a scaled back plan to water managers last month.

The new plan calls for an annual average of 5.3 mgd and a 34-center-pivot system.

The amended application met an extended deadline from the St. Johns River Water Management District to answer questions and requests for more information that included results of aquifer performance tests and a computer analysis of the potential impact of the permit on groundwater levels.

District staff will decide if the permit application is complete by Jan. 13. If deemed so, the application will be forwarded to their governing board for consideration by March 12.

If the application is found to be still lacking, the ranch will have to submit more information by Jan. 13, according to the district's fact sheet on-line.

"We are confident that the district will declare it complete and move for-

ward with processing it and recommend approval to the board," said Honey Rand, spokesperson for Adena Springs Ranch.

"The initial permit request was not going to have a negative impact at the old rate (of water withdrawal), so at the reduced rate, there are no measurable impacts," she said.

Rand added that the project—the brainchild of ranch owner Frank Stornache—will create jobs.

Plus, she said that all the environmental issues are addressed in the permit application, including a comprehen-

sive nutrient management plan.

At the request of the water district, Adena conducted a test to evaluate the potential impact of the proposed water use given the potential for connection between the surficial and Upper Floridan aquifers due to potential karst features by using the district's North-Central Florida Regional Groundwater Model.

The results of the test predict an estimated maximum impact to pumping

ADENA

Continued on Page 14

DEP: Shake-up within Water Resource Division will result in increased efficiencies

By PRAKASH GANDHI

State environmental officials are defending a shake-up in a major division within the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, saying the reorganization will lead to greater efficiency.

The changes at the department's Division of Water Resource Management eliminated the Bureau of Beaches and Coastal Systems and shifted its programs—along with former mining and environmental resource permitting bureaus—to the deputy division director level.

The bureau previously administered coastal development rules along with more than \$582 million in beach renour-

ishment and restoration projects.

The reorganization was criticized by some environmental groups, including the Florida Shore & Beach Preservation Association, whose members include coastal cities and counties.

Officials with the association, which works with local, state and federal agencies to promote effective beach management, could not be reached for comment.

But in a statement, the association described the reorganization as "regrettable," especially when the statewide program to support healthy beaches and their relationship to tourism is critical

SHAKE-UP

Continued on Page 16

capacity of the hypothetical surficial aquifer well of 0.44 percent, and a maximum predicted impact to pumping capacity of the hypothetical Upper Floridan Aquifer well of 0.81 percent.

"This conservative, maximum predicted impact to pumping capacity will result in negligible impact to legal uses of water in existence at the time Adena's application was submitted, and is well below the 10 percent or greater threshold," according to the permit application submitted by Andreyer Engineering Inc.

One of the main concerns from opponents of the permit is the impact of additional groundwater pumping to the flow in the region's watershed, especially Silver Springs, which some experts say is already at critically low levels.

"The flow in Silver Springs is down over 30 percent over the last decade and 50 percent in the last two years compared to previous levels," said Robert L. Knight, PhD, director of the Howard T. Odum

Florida Springs Institute in Gainesville. "The 5.3 mgd probably won't be every day, but the flows are already down beyond a tolerable level."

The SJRWMD recently announced a Springs Protection Initiative to help boost protection of these resources with tools such as minimum flows and levels and projects to reduce nutrient loading.

With respect to Silver Springs, the district attributed its low flows to rainfall short-ages, submerged vegetation slowing flow into the Silver River and factors such as attached algae growth. It also said the spring needed significant reductions in nitrate loading.

"There is science and there is opinion. What the district is doing (with the springs initiative) is based on science," Rand said. "If the predictions are wrong, the district has the authority to make changes."

The Adena permit application attributed the spring's reduced flows to increased amounts of submerged vegetation, as well as the rerouting of the spring vent system, which changed hydraulic conductivity.

It concluded that the proposed withdrawal would have a "de minimis impact on Silver Springs discharge," and an "immeasurable effect" on the level and plant life in Silver River.

Knight disagrees with these permit numbers and predictions. "I disagree that the district that I disagree that the reductions are due to natural causes such as rainfall and vegetation," he said. "It is clearly due to pumping and activity outside the watershed beyond levels that rainfall can restore."

"We have analyzed it given rainfall amounts and—correcting it for that—are still getting significant reductions in flows," he said. "I think the district needs to admit they are over-pumping to begin with."

"There is a drawdown issue from pumping in the entire northern region, Knight said, citing geologic data for the state that the Jacksonville area is 60 feet down and Orlando is between 30 and 40 feet down. Knight also said that some of the nitrogen from the cattle operation will make its way into the groundwater regardless of the best nutrient management plans and practices, creating additional harm that will exacerbate existing nutrient issues and problems with flow.

"There needs to be a great reduction of nutrients in the springshed," he said. "The nutrients and flows are synergistic and explain a lot of problems in the springs." The grazing system is designed for 17,250 finishing cattle with about 8,400 grazed under the 34-center-pivot irrigation systems. The pivots are irrigated and rotationally grazed to maximize cattle weight gain. About 8,400 additional finishing cattle will be grazed on about 7,550 acres of unirrigated pasture and 850 acres of wooded pastures that provide heat relief.

All pastures will maintain a balance between the manure nutrients and the plants' nutrient uptake capacity. Application rates of manure are based on those uptake levels and will be below amounts established as impairing groundwater or surface resources, according to the Nutrient Management Plan summary.

The plan was prepared by Del Botelho, PhD, PE, with Soil and Water Engineering Technology Inc. in Gainesville and Royal Consulting Services Inc. in Longwood.

NOTES

Some of the general practices planned for waste storage, collection and transfer facilities include limiting confined livestock areas to reduce the accumulation of waste. The only CLAs requiring a waste loading/corral facilities and a staging corral that is close to the processing plant. These facilities include features such as berms and retention ponds, and the management of some biosolids.

The amount of nitrogen and phosphorus making its way to surface and groundwater resources is minimized with practices such as utilizing a diet with the lowest possible phosphorus content, said the plan. This MNP is part of the Conservation Plan and used with elements such as crop rotation, residue management, pest management and conservation buffer practices.

The amended application also examined possible alternatives to using groundwater that were raised after the initial application. Most of these alternatives were deemed not feasible for either economic or environmental reasons.

For instance, the possibility of using reclaimed water from Ocala would cost an estimated \$26.2 million versus \$1.7 million for the construction of a 14-mile reuse main, a storage pond, pump station, distribution line and backup wells.

The application also discarded infrastructure to withdraw water from the Ocklawaha River due to a price tag of \$43.3 million and the disposal of wastewater from a treatment facility and impact to wetlands. A plan to combine withdrawing water from the river and the Upper Floridan Aquifer was also rejected.

Knight expects the district to approve the permit, but he said staff should at least establish a safety yield for aquifer withdrawals to establish what can be removed before triggering the MFLs so that water can't keep being pulled from the springs.

"The public has spoken loud and clear—with thousands of comments—that it isn't in their best interest," Knight said. "It is time the district learned to say no. Groundwater is not essential for farming. We are going to be buying back this water from the farmers and the taxpayers will be faced with the bill."

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Diane Salz <salz.govconsultant@gmail.com>
Polk could lose seat on SWFWMD board
January 8, 2013 10:21 AM

Polk Could Lose Seat on Swiftmud Board

Legislator proposes cutting water management board size from 13 to 9.

By [Tom Palmer](#)

THE LEDGER

Published: Friday, January 4, 2013 at 11:46 p.m.

BARTOW | A Sarasota legislator has proposed eliminating one of Polk County's two seats on the Southwest Florida Water Management District governing board.

State Rep. Ray Pilon, R-Sarasota, has circulated draft language — no bill has been filed — that proposes to reduce the board's size to nine members, the same as the state's other four water management districts.

"It's pretty simple," Pilon said Friday, explaining it's hard to argue that the Swiftmud board's makeup should be any different from those of the other districts.

Polk legislators had secured passage of a bill seven years ago that expanded Swiftmud's board from 11 to 13 members and included a provision that Polk's representation on the board would increase from one member to two.

Pilon said the size of the board is a relic of the "water wars" in the Tampa Bay area decades ago, adding that the larger the board, the harder it is for the governor to fill vacancies.

"Times have changed," he said

Under Pilon's draft bill, Polk County wouldn't be the only loser.

Hillsborough and Pinellas counties would lose one of their two guaranteed seats as well as a third seat that Hillsborough has held for many years, even though it's supposed to be shared between Hillsborough and Pinellas counties.

The bill also would change the makeup of the appointments among the other 13 counties in the Brooksville-based district.

Pilon said those changes make more sense, too, because they group counties with similar interests.

County Commission Chairman Melony Bell brought up the issue during Friday's agenda study

session, saying she's concerned about Polk's loss of influence.

But State Rep. Neil Combee, R-Lakeland, a former county commissioner and Swiftmud board member, said the legislation didn't concern him, adding it wasn't a surprise.

"Ray had mentioned this a year ago," Combee said. "Nine would be fine with me as long as Polk remains on the level with Hillsborough, Pinellas and Pasco counties."

Paul Senft, a Haines City businessman who chairs Swiftmud's governing board, was appointed to the board after the second Polk seat was added.

George Mann of Polk City is the other Polk representative on the board.

Senft said he had heard about Pilon's proposal, but said the real question is how the politics of the issue will play out.

He predicted Hillsborough officials likely would lobby to maintain the status quo, adding he doesn't know yet what position Gov. Rick Scott's office will take on the issue.

Since taking office, Scott has been involved in shaking up the water management districts.

Those shakeups have ranged from mandating tax cuts, which resulted in less funding for local water projects and staff layoffs, to attempts to standardize water permitting statewide.

Polk's effort to gain a second seat on the Swiftmud board, which took years to achieve, was an attempt to give this large inland county an equal footing with coastal counties in deciding water policy.

Polk officials argued that Polk merited equal representation because it contains the headwaters of the Peace, Alafia and Withlacocchee rivers, all of which flow to coastal areas within the 16-county water management district. Millions of gallons of water from the Peace and Alafia rivers are diverted to reservoirs to supply water to coastal utilities.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Jan. 23, 2012
CONTACT: DEP Press Office, 850.245.2112, DEPNews@dep.state.fl.us

SILVER SPRINGS TO BECOME STATE PARK FOLLOWING FLORIDA CABINET APPROVAL

~Palace Entertainment lease terminated; property will become a state park Oct. 1~

Making Silver Springs Attraction a state park allows the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to continue its water quality work in the springs basin.

TALLAHASSEE – The Florida Cabinet, sitting as the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund, today approved the modification of a lease agreement between Palace Entertainment and the state of Florida, allowing the property to become part of Florida's state park system on Oct. 1.

Palace Entertainment's lease to manage the Silver Springs Attraction ran until Dec. 31, 2029. Through negotiations with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the state has secured \$4 million in work by Palace Entertainment in order to restore the property to its natural condition, as originally intended by the Board of Trustees. Palace Entertainment will continue to manage the property until Sept. 30 and during that time the Silver Springs Attraction will be open.

"We are pleased that the Governor and Cabinet have decided to approve this agreement so that the Department can return the property closer to its natural state, involve the community in recreation opportunity decisions and continue our efforts of improving water quality in Silver Springs, one of Florida's most iconic treasures," said DEP Secretary Herschel T. Vinyard, Jr.

The Department will begin implementing the Interim Facilities and Operations Plan that was presented to the public Jan. 14 by the Florida Park Service. The long term unit management plan, which is required by Florida Statutes, is anticipated to be completed by September 2014.

"Florida's 171 state parks, trails and historic sites are pleased to welcome the Silver Springs property into our family of resource-based recreation areas and historic and cultural sites," said Donald Forgione, DEP's Florida Park Service Director. "We look forward to working with Palace Entertainment during the transition and to opening the gates on Oct. 1 as a state park."

Turning the property into a state park is another step the Department has taken to restore Silver Springs. Also Wednesday, the Department's Division of Environmental Assessment and Restoration held the first meeting to finalize a basin management action plan for Silver Springs -- the first such restoration plan to reduce nitrates affecting the springs. Department research and monitoring led to designating Silver Springs and the

Upper Silver River as impaired for nitrate, a form of nitrogen that causes excessive algae growth in the spring system.

Last November, the Department finalized the total maximum daily load or, in this case, the maximum acceptable concentration of nitrate, at 0.35 milligrams per liter. This is the same restoration target that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has adopted for springs — based on the Department's data — and that has been upheld in both state and federal courts. Meeting the restoration target will protect aquatic life and bring the system back into balance.

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection expanded its efforts to restore Silver Springs last July, committing more than \$1 million to water quality improvement projects.

The Department, Marion County and the St. Johns River Water Management District have identified the first project to benefit from this funding, committing \$300,000, \$300,000 and \$100,000, respectively, toward the project. The project will eliminate a wastewater discharge from the Silver Springs Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant, which is within 1.5 miles of the main boil of Silver Springs. It will redirect wastewater to the Silver Springs Shores Wastewater Treatment Plant, which provides higher level treatment and is 10 miles from the head spring.

In a subsequent phase of the project, a series of small "package" wastewater treatment plants also will be connected to the central facility, which will provide better treatment and reduce pollution. Implementation of these actions collectively will eliminate more than two tons of nitrogen currently going into the Silver Springs system every year.

About the Florida Department of Environmental Protection

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection is the state's principal environmental agency, created to protect, conserve and manage Florida's environment and natural resources. The Department enforces federal and state environmental laws, protects Florida's air and water quality, cleans up pollution, regulates solid waste management, promotes pollution prevention and acquires environmentally-sensitive lands for preservation. The agency also maintains a statewide system of parks, trails and aquatic preserves. To view the Department's website log on to www.dep.state.fl.us.

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Diane Salz <salz.govconsultant@gmail.com>
Fwd: Scott's views on water and energy...
January 7, 2013 8:52 PM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Diane Salz** <salz.govconsultant@gmail.com>
Date: Mon, Jan 7, 2013 at 8:51 PM
Subject: Scott's views on water and energy...
To: Diane Salz <salz.govconsultant@gmail.com>

Gov. Rick Scott says he is asking DEP to look at Florida's springs and he said he wants to ensure that the flow of natural gas to the state is not interrupted.

Scott met with *The Florida Current* staff on Friday and was asked to lay out his legislative agenda on a variety of issues.

Asked about his goals and programs for leaving waterways for future generations, Scott talked about his **Everglades** restoration plan that won federal approval in 2012.

"It's going to focus on improving the flow of water and quality of water going to the Everglades," he said.

He also said, "What I have asked, what DEP (the **Florida Department of Environmental Protection**) is doing, is why do we have some of our springs that are way down?"

"I have asked, I want to make sure our water management districts are very focused on their jobs, their core missions -- not doing a mission other than that," he said.

Victoria Tschinkel, a former **Department of Environmental Regulation** secretary in the 1980s and founding member of the **Florida Conservation Coalition**, said Scott's comments reflect a "general understanding and anecdotal examples of problems."

"However, these problems are prevalent all over the state," she said. "We need a single, focused, well-financed program that connects the responsibilities of state agencies -- from DEP to agriculture to transportation -- working with local governments and water management districts if these problems are to be solved."

On energy issues, the **Department of Economic Opportunity** last week issued a report on the state's business climate that included a call for a statewide energy strategy "to ensure reliable and cost-effective sources of energy to sustain economic development while helping protect the environment."

Asked whether he agrees that an energy strategy is needed, Scott replied that the state is benefiting now from local natural gas prices.

"I think what we have to do from an energy policy standpoint is keep the flow of natural gas into the state from being disrupted. That is very important," he said.

Scott also said he was "very cautious" about offshore oil drilling after the 2010 Gulf oil spill.

Kevin Doyle, executive director of the **Consumer Energy Alliance-Florida**, said Florida should be concerned about federal regulations that could possibly restrict natural gas extraction by hydraulic fracturing, or "fracking." The **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency** is studying the effects of fracking on drinking water.

"If any one of those agencies (studying fracking) start to impose regulations that are over-excessive, that can disrupt the supply chain," Doyle said. His group supports affordable and reliable energy including increased oil production.

Susan Glickman, an advisor to the **Southern Alliance for Clean Energy**, said the state needs to develop energy supply diversity with renewable energy, conservation and increased efficiency.

"We are in this kind of transition stage that quite frankly requires leadership," she said. "Because of the influence of political (campaign) contributions at all levels, we just haven't seen much leadership in recent years."

Scott also said he will request funding for the **Florida Forever** land acquisition program in his 2013-14 state budget request but he did not say how much he will seek.

Diane Salz <salz.govconsultant@gmail.com>
Adena Springs...
January 18, 2013 10:34 AM

Water district has more questions for Adena Springs Ranch

By [Fred Hiers](#)

Staff writer

Published: Tuesday, January 15, 2013 at 5:26 p.m.

OCALA - Florida water regulators want more information from Adena Springs Ranch as they continue to review the farm's request to draw an annual average of 5.3 million gallons of water per day in the Fort McCoy area.

One Adena official describes the regulators' aggressive data gathering as "unprecedented," and said the tactic should cause other agriculture businesses to be concerned.

The St. Johns River Water Management District's request for additional information about the 25,000-acre plus project is only the latest in a back-and-forth volley that began in December 2011.

Environmentalists have opposed the project, expressing concern about the effect such a large water withdrawal would have on the aquifer and nearby Silver Springs.

Lawyer John Thomas, who represents some project opponents, said the latest request from the water district stems from Adena officials dragging their feet in giving regulators the information they wanted.

Thomas said the applicants play "a cat-and-mouse game" whose goal is "to submit as little information as possible."

The ranch is being developed by former Canadian-based car parts billionaire Frank Stronach. He owns about 30,000 acres in Marion County and more than 30,000 acres in Levy County. His goal is to build the cattle ranch in addition to a meat processing plant on some of that land in northeast Marion.

St. Johns' latest request focuses on specifics of potential water withdrawal and how the farm would dispose of animal waste from about 17,000 cows. The ranch has until May 11 to respond.

The ranch's average water use is proposed at 5.3 million gallons per day (mgd). But St. Johns wants to know more about potential daily peak usage, citing the ranch's application for a potential maximum daily irrigation use of 21.57 mgd.

The water district wants to know if the ranch plans to use all of its proposed 34 irrigation areas at the same time and, if so, what the impact would be on the groundwater, area springs and neighbors.

In its 16-page request for more information, the water district also focused on how the ranch would treat the waste from so many cattle.

Among several waste nutrient questions, the water agency said the ranch's "Nutrient Management Plan" didn't demonstrate that the ranch's water use wouldn't contribute to water pollution. It wants an explanation of how area springs would be protected.

The water agency also wants to know how much cattle waste would be generated in the ranch's irrigated areas and how it would be disposed of. It also seeks assurances that the waste would not seep into groundwater from those irrigated areas.

The water agency further asks how much unwanted nitrogen and phosphorus would be generated from the waste. Those two pollutant nutrients can make their way into groundwater and pollute springs.

The issue of unwanted nutrients from waste is apparently a potential concern among Adena Springs officials themselves, according to internal emails.

One email, obtained by the Star-Banner through Florida's public records laws, involved consultant Daniel Colvin.

Colvin is an Adena consultant and also director of research programs at University of Florida's Plant Science Research and Education Unit.

He wrote to Adena spokeswoman Honey Rand that he had concerns about reducing the irrigation areas from 87 to 34 and how it would impact pasture/forest ratios and nutrient impact.

Adena lawyer Edward de la Parte emailed in response that although the Florida Department of Environmental Protection was planning to set nutrient standards for Silver Springs, those standards would not apply to Adena as long as the ranch followed Florida's agricultural "Best Management Practices."

He advised that Adena officials during an Aug. 22 public meeting discuss the lower number of irrigation areas, but not discuss details about nutrient plans.

Thomas said the internal emails reflected an attitude by Adena officials presenting Adena in the best possible light and how Florida farms were immune to many state water and pollution standards.

Thomas obtained the emails because UF is a public entity. The Star-Banner subsequently sought and received the same emails.

Rand said St. Johns' requests are extensive. "There has never been this level of scrutiny. This level ... has been unprecedented."

"We're very disappointed that the (water) district did not find our application complete," she said.

"The next step is a face-to-face meeting to make sure everyone is on the same page," she said. "This level of surprise (for more information) warrants a face-to-face meeting."

"If this is an indication of what is to come from the water management district, anybody with an agricultural permit (application) out there should pay attention and be very concerned," Rand said.

Contact Fred Hiers at 867-4157 or fred.hiers@starbanner.com.

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Senate Committee hears about Kings Bay cleanup while...

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Senate Committee hears about Kings Bay cleanup while environmentalists protest in Tampa
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A Senate committee on Thursday heard about a volunteer effort to remove algae from Kings Bay while some environmental groups used a federal hearing in Tampa to criticize the state on water quality.

Meanwhile, three water management districts have submitted proposed springs restoration projects totaling more than \$43 million. A **Florida Department of Environmental Protection** spokeswoman said a list of possible projects is being developed should funding become available.

Springs across Florida have become choked with weeds and algae, fueled by nitrogen in groundwater. Nitrogen sources include sewage treatment plants, septic tanks, fertilizer, livestock operations and dirty stormwater runoff.

The **Senate Committee on Environmental Preservation and Conservation** on Thursday watched a seven-minute video on the "One Rake at a Time Program" led by the **Kings Bay Rotary Club**.

As part of the program, volunteers have raked up lymbya algae from the bay and replanted native plants on the sandy bottom.

A *Tampa Bay Times* [article](#) in December quoted sources saying that the raking effort was treating the Bay's symptoms and not the cause: nitrogen pollution. But **Rotary Club President-elect Art Jones** told the committee that algae is growing back slower and people are becoming aware of the need to reduce fertilizer use and protect the springs.

"The white sand is all (still) there," Jones said. "It's beautiful to bring it back."

Citrus County Commission Chairman Joe Meek said the county had removed 500 septic tanks from near Kings Bay with an 85-percent grant from DEP. He said the county is studying possible restrictions on fertilizer use.

Crystal River Mayor Jim Farley said the city had enacted an ordinance prohibiting fast-release fertilizers.

Lawn service professionals and business groups have supported legislation in recent years to prohibit local fertilizer ordinances, but Farley told the committee that local governments need "flexibility" to deal with water quality issues.

"I think people in Citrus County particularly in Crystal River have a greater awareness about the environmental issues involving fertilizer and would be more willing voluntarily to go along with that," Farley said.

Asked outside the meeting whether legislation or new regulations are needed, Jones said the Rotary Club is not political and asks people to take voluntary steps to protect the bay.

"I don't know if they need to pass a law," Jones said. "Sometimes when they pass a law, people get hostile."

Outside a federal hearing in Tampa, environmental groups that support federal water quality rules criticized proposed state rules that they have sought in court to block.

"The DEP rules are ineffective, convoluted and never result in enforcement," **Florida Wildlife Federation President Manley Fuller** said. "Meanwhile, pollution of Florida's waterways continues to worsen."

DEP Press Secretary Patrick Gillespie responded that the **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency** approved Florida's proposed rules because the federal agency recognizes the state as a national leader in cleaning up waterways.

The new list of springs restoration projects includes \$30.3 million in the **St. Johns River Water Management District**, \$10.5 million in the **Suwannee River Water Management District** and nearly \$2.3 million in the **Northwest Florida Water Management District**.

"We do not know how much funding will be available at this time," department spokeswoman **Dee Ann Miller** said. "Funding allocation will be determined through the normal legislative budget process."

DEP Secretary Herschel T. Vinyard Jr. told environmental groups last summer in a letter that the department had more than doubled funding for springs restoration, a statement that was met with skepticism from environmental groups.

No projects on the new list were in the **Southwest Florida Water Management District**. The Kings Bay video said \$5 million in donations was being sought to remove algae and restore the bay.