

**Item 8.f.**  
**News Articles**

## Port Richey faces rate increases as a result of brown water outbreak

By Robert Napper, Times Correspondent

Wednesday, May 29, 2013 4:30am

PORT RICHEY — Residents are likely to see a higher-than-expected increase in their water bills as city leaders face the cost of combatting a recent brown water outbreak.

On Tuesday, the Port Richey City Council received the results of an engineer's study that found that the city's seven wells are suffering saltwater intrusion. City officials said the intrusion, which led to reports from residents of tea-colored water, is being caused by a mix of drought conditions, overpumping and the wells' proximity to the coast.

The engineering study recommended that in order to reduce intrusion the city should dial back its production of treated water to 450,000-gallons-day, around half of the city's daily needs. The result will be a spike in cost to buy water from New Port Richey, or possibly Pasco County, to make up the shortfall.

In a 4-1 vote, the City Council voted to allow City Manager Tom O'Neill to complete a rate study already in the works, factoring in any increases associated with the brown water problem, then bring an ordinance forward for public hearings to amend water and sewer rates.

The study currently recommends a 3.5 percent increase for users each year over the next five years, but officials said that is likely to increase to cover increased water purchases.

Council member Terry Rowe voted against moving forward, saying he needed more information before he felt uncomfortable saddling customers with the costs of dealing with the well woes — especially since the city sold residents in 2006 on spending \$3 million to dig the now-struggling wells with the promise of reducing rates.

"It sounds like a money pit we are heading into," Rowe said.

It's unclear what a full year of buying water from New Port Richey will cost, but it's already been an expensive undertaking.

O'Neill had already ordered that well production be cut back while the cause of the brown water was investigated. Before the outbreak, Port Richey had been buying 10 to 20 percent of its water from its neighbor, but since the brown water reports, purchases from New Port Richey increased to 33 percent, according to O'Neill.

Since the complaints began flooding in from residents in March and the cutbacks began, the city has gone over its budget of \$100,000 for the fiscal year ending in September by \$89,000. But water quality has dramatically improved, O'Neill said.

"I think we've made good strides there," he said.

The cost, however, had Rowe wondering whether the city should even stay in the water business, while Mayor Eloise Taylor lamented the need for a rate increase she called inevitable. Others defended the service a small town can provide its residents. "I never want to see us abandon the water department," said council member Nancy Britton.

Port Richey faces rate increases as a result of brown water outbreak 05/29/13

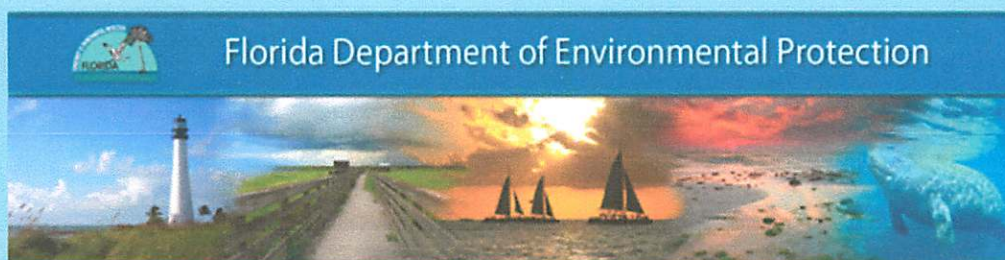
Diane Salz <dialz@yahoo.com>  
Fwd: FLORIDA CELEBRATES WATER REUSE WEEK MAY 19-25  
May 17, 2013 10:12 AM

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Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** "Florida Department of Environmental Protection" <[FloridaDEP@public.govdelivery.com](mailto:FloridaDEP@public.govdelivery.com)>  
**Date:** May 17, 2013, 7:04:56 AM MST  
**To:** [dialz@yahoo.com](mailto:dialz@yahoo.com)  
**Subject:** FLORIDA CELEBRATES WATER REUSE WEEK MAY 19-25  
**Reply-To:** [FloridaDEP@public.govdelivery.com](mailto:FloridaDEP@public.govdelivery.com)



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: May 17, 2013**

**CONTACT:** DEP Press Office, 850.245.2112, [DEPNews@dep.state.fl.us](mailto:DEPNews@dep.state.fl.us)

## **FLORIDA CELEBRATES WATER REUSE WEEK MAY 19-25**

~The Department encourages Floridians to help conserve the state's freshwater sources~

**TALLAHASSEE** – The Florida Department of Environmental Protection will observe May 19-25 as Water Reuse Week. Governor Rick Scott [proclaimed](#) next week Florida Water Reuse Week to highlight the importance of water reuse to the sustainability of Florida's water supply and overall ecosystem. Water reuse is essential to ensuring safe, clean and sustainable water resources.

Florida has flourished as a national frontrunner in reclaiming water, which has transformed into a critical element of water management. Florida began celebrating Water Reuse Week in 2007, after the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recognized the Department's Reuse Program as a national leader in water efficiency. Since then, Water Reuse Week has gained momentum and recognition with the help of partnerships from the Florida Department of Health, Florida Public Service Commission and other state agencies.

"While Florida currently reuses more water than any other state, there is still great potential for increased reclaimed water use to be a major part of meeting our future water needs while also protecting the environment," said DEP's Director of Water Policy Tom Beck.

Reclaimed water maintains hundreds of Florida golf courses and thousands of private residences – lowering the demands on valuable surface and ground waters used for



drinking. In 2010, Florida conserved more than 121 billion gallons of fresh potable quality water and replenished more than 80 billion gallons of recycled water back into aquifers as a result of water reuse. Florida currently uses reclaimed water to irrigate 281,781 residences, 525 golf courses, 877 parks and 324 schools statewide.

As part of the Department's efforts to bring greater consistency and predictability to its regulatory programs, the Department has worked with the state's five water management districts, the Florida Water Environment Association, utilities and other stakeholders to develop consistent approaches and incentives to increase the use of reclaimed water to meet the state's future water supply needs.

The Department's recently adopted CUPCon rule specifies how reclaimed water can be used to eliminate the harmful impacts of ground and surface water withdrawals, or to replace non-potable uses of high quality water in water limited areas. This results in increased use of reclaimed water, a decrease in disposal of reclaimed water into our rivers and estuaries, and less use of high quality water for non-potable purposes such as irrigation and industrial processes.

City and county governments, water and wastewater utilities, water management districts, state agencies, engineering firms and other organizations are invited to participate in the celebration. Floridians are urged to adopt the proclamation declaring their support for Water Reuse Week. Those who fill out the proclamation on the DEP Water Reuse Week [webpage](#) can provide a copy to Florida's Water Reuse Coordinator to have their name listed among other supporters on the DEP website.

Floridians are also encouraged to participate in Water Reuse Week by implementing these tips on saving and reusing water at home, starting this week:

1. Turn off the tap when not in use. Regularly check taps and pipes for leaks and repair any leaks detected.
2. Never pour water away when there may be another use for it.
3. Washing machine rinse water, especially the last few batches of rinse water can be used for toilet flushing and floor cleaning.
4. Reuse water from washing of fruits and vegetables, and dish/cup washing final rinse water to water plants.
5. Install water-efficient taps and showerheads to cut water usage.
6. Take shorter showers and turn off the shower while lathering and washing your hair.
7. Use a tumbler of water to rinse your mouth instead of leaving the tap running while you brush your teeth.
8. Use a pail of water to wash your car rather than a hose.
9. Rinse dishes in a plugged sink rather than under running water.
10. Do not use running water to defrost frozen food.

Diane Salz <salz.govconsultant@gmail.com>

\$10 Million set aside for Springs...

May 28, 2013 12:03 PM

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## **\$10M set aside for springs stirs hope and discussion**

*By Kristine Crane*

*Staff writer*

*Published: Monday, May 27, 2013 at 5:36 p.m.*

When Mark Wray took ownership of Ginnie Springs in 1971, its crystalline waters were picture perfect.

But like the rest of Florida's springs, patches of algae have since clouded over some of the waters, making parts seem more like a moat than a sanctuary.

The demise of Florida's springs is an old problem, and for years, various solutions have been batted around among environmental activists, legislators and scientists.

Last week, state government might have signaled a willingness to dive into solving the host of problems in the springs by assigning \$10 million out of the budget to springs protection for efforts such as improving water quality, reducing nitrate levels and conserving water.

"We have a lot of projects in house that we know can help the springs," Florida Department of Environmental Protection press secretary Patrick Gillespie said.

Lawmakers and experts also are reviewing various counties' projects on restoring the springs, he said. Lawmakers will meet with officials from the DEP, the water management district and, possibly, the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to work out the details. "Our goal is to get the best bang for our buck and stretch that \$10 million to benefit the most springs throughout the state," Gillespie said.

On paper, this bodes well for the decades-long battle to restore the springs to health, but in practice some of the players entrenched in the fight, such as Wray, say other issues need to be solved at the legislative level before that money can be put to good use.

"No money is going to do any good if we don't have maximum daily load numbers for nitrates and basin management action plans," Wray said. "We need accurate models and serious science to support an action plan that's realistic about our goals for having a healthy ecosystem."

Lesley Gamble, a partner in the "springs eternal project," a collaborative effort among scientists, artists and activists to promote and protect the springs, added that the nitrate levels for all springs — mainly from large-scale agriculture, leaky septic systems and animal waste — greatly exceed healthy levels.

"We need to think about having the right kind of agriculture in the right kind of places," Gamble

said. When dairy farms were relocated decades ago from South to North Florida, he explained, they were put in "unconfined" areas where the karst geology that typifies much of North Central Florida with its porous texture has allowed chemicals from fertilizers to seep into the aquifer that supplies most of the springs.

Wray agreed that a cap on commercial agricultural activity would be a step in the right direction. Instead, water districts "are issuing agricultural permits when springs and rivers are already struggling for flow and quality," he said, adding that recently two new vegetable farms have been licensed to operate on properties adjacent to Ginnie Springs.

Beyond the aesthetic and ecological ruin this agricultural activity is costing the springs, it's also spoiling the water we drink, Wray continued.

"We're all drinking this. Everyone in this county (Gilchrist) and in Alachua County is drinking this," he said. "It's just absurd."

Karen Ahlers, an environmental activist in Gainesville, said breaching the Rodman Dam, which was built half a century ago during construction of the ill-fated Cross-Florida Barge Canal, would be the "biggest bang for your buck that could be done" to help save the springs and other bodies of water.

"It would be to the benefit of the entire St. Johns River Basin, including the Oklawaha River and Silver Springs," Ahlers said.

Silver Springs, outside Ocala, could be a prime beneficiary of the Legislature's spending, Sen. Charlie Dean, chairman of the Environmental Preservation and Conservation Committee, said recently. Dean said Silver Springs was at the top of his list of "doable" springs for improving water quality.

Ahlers said algae-eating fish populations in Silver Springs declined 90 percent after the construction of the dam.

"They could be doing a lot to improve the ecology of the spring that has been in steady decline for 40 years when these natural migratory paths were blocked," she said.

For her part, Gamble is also a water lover and diver who's disheartened to see the slimy water and loss of species and plant diversity up close.

"It's happening in less than a span of a generation. It's happening fast," she said.

*Contact Kristine Crane at 338-3119 or [kristine.crane@qvillesun.com](mailto:kristine.crane@qvillesun.com).*

## Governor vetoes \$50 million for proposed bike trail along with \$27.3 million in water projects

Bruce Ritchie, 05/20/2013 - 03:54 PM

**Gov. Rick Scott** on Monday approved \$32 million in water projects in the 2013-14 state budget while vetoing others totaling \$27.3 million.

The governor also vetoed a \$50 million for a proposed bicycling trail across Central Florida that would have linked 14 existing bicycling trails.

The \$74.1 billion budget includes \$70 million for the **Florida Forever** land-buying program including \$50 million from the sale of state lands, plus \$11.1 million for agricultural conservation easements. Other budget highlights include \$70 million for Everglades restoration, \$10 million for springs protection and \$37.5 million for beach renourishment projects.

In 2011, Scott vetoed more than \$600 million of what he described as "special interest earmarks" including \$16.5 million in water projects. That included \$10 million to help improve St. Johns River water quality. Of the \$19 million in water projects proposed 2012, Scott vetoed \$12.6 million -- but not \$5.6 million for St. Johns River restoration.

The \$32 million in water projects approved this year includes \$7 million for St. Johns River restoration and an economic impact study. That project is supported by **Sen. John Thrasher**, R-St. Augustine and chairman of the **Senate Committee on Rules**.

Among the projects vetoed were three in Walton County in the home district of **Sen. Don Gaetz**, R-Niceville, totaling \$4.5 million.

The governor sounded a common refrain in answers to questions about his vetoes, including a direct question about whether he evaluated each of the water projects.

"We went through every line and tried to make sure we did the right thing for Florida citizens," the governor said. "The goal was jobs, improve education and keep the cost of government as low as possible."

The **Florida Department of Environmental Protection** had estimated the cost of the "Coast-to-Coast Connector" at \$42 million but \$50 million for the project appeared in the **Department of Transportation** budget during conference negotiations between the House and Senate.

"We love to bike," Scott said when asked about the veto. "We are doing projects like that out of the Department of Transportation. That's how we should be doing it instead of having a project like that."

Closing the gaps remains a priority of the **Florida Greenways & Trails Foundation Inc.**, foundation **President Dale Allen** said in an email. The group's web site highlights the Coast to Coast Connector.

"We will continue to work to educate elected officials as to the important public safety and transportation benefits of connecting existing trails into a real system of healthy outdoor mobility," Allen said.

While some environmentalists have expressed disappointment that the Florida Forever program remains below its historic \$300-million allocation from 1990 to 2008, some did praise the budget signed by the governor for funding the program and Everglades restoration.

"The Everglades still faces a multibillion dollar price tag to get much-needed clean freshwater flowing into its fragile ecosystems," **Eric Draper**, executive director of **Audubon Florida**, said in a written statement. "In addition, millions of acres of conservation lands on the Florida Forever list are waiting for funds for permanent protection. We look forward to working with agencies and our conservation partners to protect Florida's most special places."

The governor, for the third year in a row, vetoed \$2.5 million for regional planning councils. **Scott R. Koons**, chairman of the **Florida Regional Councils Association Executive Directors Advisory Committee**, said the money would have provided positions in the state's 11 councils to support infrastructure development for economic development projects. "We are extremely grateful to the support of the Legislature and the recognition of the role we play in job creation in Florida," Koons said.

The governor vetoed \$750,000 appropriated for **Friends of Florida Parks Inc.** for a match to private and public donations along with \$1 million to the **Wildlife Foundation of Florida**. The Wildlife Foundation of Florida said the \$1 million was needed to help the foundation grow and attract donors for state programs. Friends of Florida State Parks said it would have used the \$750,000 to provide a 40 percent match to local support groups to pay for state park improvements.

**Related Research:** \* List of Water Projects Approved and Vetoed by Governor Rick Scott in the 2013-2014 Budget \* Governor Scott: Florida Families First Budget Invests to Protect Florida's Natural Resources \* Governor Rick Scott's Veto Letter for SB 1500 \* Governor Rick Scott's Veto List for SB 1500 \* April 4, 2013 "'Water parade' in House follows vetoes of water projects in past 2 years" from The Florida Current \* Senate list of water project requests for FY 2013-2014 \* Governor's Water Project Criteria \* May 16, 2013 Florida TaxWatch 2013 Turkey Watch Report \* May 16, 2013 Statement from President Don Gaetz regarding Florida TaxWatch

*Reporter Bruce Ritchie can be reached at [britchie@thefloridacurrent.com](mailto:britchie@thefloridacurrent.com).*



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Fwd: NEWS RELEASE: District's Spring Experts to Begin Improvements at Chassahowitzka Springs

~~May 22, 2013 5:09 PM~~

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Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Chris Zajac <[Chris.Zajac@swfwmd.state.fl.us](mailto:Chris.Zajac@swfwmd.state.fl.us)>

**Date:** May 22, 2013, 2:35:07 PM EDT

**Subject:** NEWS RELEASE: District's Spring Experts to Begin Improvements at Chassahowitzka Springs

May, 22, 2013

## **District's Spring Experts to Begin Improvements at Chassahowitzka Springs**

The Southwest Florida Water Management District's (District) team of springs experts will begin the Chassahowitzka Springs sediment removal project the week of May 27, 2013. Eliminating the sand and organic materials that have deposited at the bottom of the spring over time will improve the recreational, economical and ecological value of the Chassahowitzka waterway, resulting in a cleaner, more historic looking body of water.

The District contracted with Underwater Engineering Services, Inc. (UESI), a marine construction company based in Fort Pierce, Florida, to complete the sediment removal. The project is scheduled to be completed in September 2013. UESI divers will remove the damaging nutrient-rich sediments from the headsprings by using a pump that works much like a swimming pool vacuum. The sand and water mixture moves through hoses to fabric bags where clear water filters out leaving the sediments in the bags. The bags are then removed and the sediments are used as a soil supplement on nearby private property.

The project is divided into different phases, including several weeks for site preparation, a few weeks for the installation of piping, tanks and other machinery and 10 weeks for the sediment removal operations.

The Chassahowitzka headsprings are rich in both prehistoric and historic artifacts. To protect and conserve these non-renewable cultural

resources, UESI contracted with Southeastern Archaeological Research, Inc. (SEARCH) to develop a plan to first survey the springs' basin and then monitor the sediment removal operation. SEARCH will identify and evaluate any cultural resources discovered for their National Register eligibility. Once identified, the artifacts will be documented by SEARCH and cataloged by the Division of Historical Resources in Tallahassee. The items will then be returned to Citrus County for public display. SEARCH and the District will also conduct a Public Archaeology event at the Chassahowitzka Headsprings to educate participants about the resources encountered during the survey and promote preservation of cultural materials found in Florida's springs.

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Fwd: NEWS RELEASE: SWFWMD Governing Board Elects Officers  
May 21, 2013 2:56 PM

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Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Chris Zajac <[Chris.Zajac@swfwmd.state.fl.us](mailto:Chris.Zajac@swfwmd.state.fl.us)>  
**Date:** May 21, 2013, 2:55:49 PM EDT  
**Subject:** NEWS RELEASE: SWFWMD Governing Board Elects Officers

May 21, 2013

## Governing Board Elects Officers

The Southwest Florida Water Management Governing Board voted today to elect new officers to the board.

**Carlos M. Beruff** was elected chair of the Governing Board. Beruff represents Manatee County, and is owner and president of Medallion Homes Gulf Coast, Inc. Beruff was appointed to the Board in July 2009, and re-appointed in March 2013.

**Michael A. Babb** was elected vice-chair of the Governing Board. Babb represents Hillsborough County and is president of Two Rivers Ranch, Inc. in Thonotosassa. Babb was appointed to the Board in June 2011.

**Randall S. "Randy" Maggard** was elected secretary of the Governing Board. Maggard represents Pasco County and is vice president of Sonny's Discount Appliances Inc. in Dade City. Maggard was appointed to the Board in October 2011.

**Jeffery M. Adams** was re-elected treasurer of the Governing Board. Adams represents Pinellas County and is an attorney and partner with the law firm of Abbey, Adams, LLP. Adams was appointed to the Board in April 2010.

Governing Board members are unpaid, citizen volunteers who are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Florida Senate. The Governing Board sets policy for the District, whose mission is to manage

the water and related resources of west central Florida to meet the needs of current and future water users while protecting the environment.

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