

Item. 8.d.
News Articles

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Adam Putnam says Florida should focus on energy, water use

*Joshua Gillin, PolitiFact Florida/Times Staff Writer
Friday, September 26, 2014 4:13pm*

Agriculture Commissioner Adam Putnam is hoping a second term will allow him to look ahead to new challenges, including building strategies for energy and water use.

The Bartow native told the *Tampa Bay Times* editorial board Friday those were just some of the issues the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services faces as he seeks re-election. He named other worries ranging from citrus greening to giant African land snails.

"A consequence of a smaller world and increased trade and increased visitation is that Florida is ground zero for any number of things," he said, "whether it's pythons in the Everglades or a threat to citrus or things with goofy names like redbay ambrosia beetle that threaten ficus trees and avocado industries and all the fancy hedges in Palm Beach."

But energy and water, those are the big ones people recognize right away. Although Putnam is an advocate of nuclear power, he said he thought the fiasco over Duke Energy's failed nuclear power plants highlights how Florida needs sustainable energy goals. And if consumer sentiment in the Tampa Bay area is any indicator, the state's Public Service Commission, which works with utility companies to set rates, needs to be addressed, too.

"This particular service area has had more than its share of problems, and they need to be corrected," he said of Tampa Bay, which comprises the bulk of Duke Energy's Florida customers. "There are other service areas who are paying less than what the Duke service area are paying, and they're less inclined to show up at the PSC with pitchforks and torches."

He said he thought the money Duke Energy is still collecting for the damaged Crystal River plant, specifically, is a burden that "could be more fairly apportioned between ratepayers and shareholders."

The visit came the same day word spread that state Sen. Jack Latvala, R-Clearwater, and Rep. Kathleen Peters, R-South Pasadena, [announced plans to draft legislation](#) to tighten regulation of Florida's utilities. And it follows criticism by Sen. Wilton Simpson, R-Trilby, of a [PSC staff recommendation in support of Duke](#) over a potential \$54 million credit to customers.

There already are programs in place to help large vehicle fleets convert to liquid and compressed natural gas, and in the future the Legislature could consider incentives for electric vehicles. The state is becoming increasingly dependent on natural gas, he said, so resource diversity and reliability is paramount, as long as it's affordable.

Creative solutions are also necessary for water policy, which the Republican sees as a goal

Tallahassee may be able to tackle soon. He would like to see an "overarching regional framework" in which all parts of Florida help one another in times of need.

"We need to recognize that every corner of Florida now has some type of water conflict," he said. "It's not just Tampa Bay water wars anymore."

He said would like to see three water districts in close proximity to Orlando working together to formulate a plan to deal with projected growth. He wants the state to work with ranchers to develop a shallow water storage plan to help control water levels in Lake Okeechobee. He thinks policies should foster the use of reclaimed water instead of groundwater for industrial use.

Florida should have a state funding mechanism that would spread project costs across the counties -- just as Pinellas County pays in part for cleanups in Monroe County, the Keys should help fund restoring Apalachicola Bay.

Putnam further noted he opposes Amendment 1, which would dedicate 33 percent of a tax on documentation to the Land Acquisition Trust Fund, because he was "opposed to writing the state's budget into the state's Constitution."

He also opposes Amendment 2, the medical marijuana initiative, because there were no caps on THC potency or the number of dispensaries. Among other objections, he cited murky liability language.

"No one has ever prescribed smoking anything as a medicine," he said, also expressing fears about edible marijuana. "Florida does not need to legalize marijuana for any reason, in the Constitution."

Putnam shrugged off a question about his [controversial hunting trips](#) to King Ranch in Texas, where he and other top Florida Republican elected officials have visited since U.S. Sugar leased land there in 2011. Putnam [previously told the Times](#) he has been on two deer hunts and one turkey shoot at King Ranch, but his last visit was 2012.

"I was invited to participate in a Republican fundraiser," he said, saying other politicians often come to this state for similar events. "Raising money around Florida and raising money outside of Florida is an unfortunate part of running in a state this expensive."

[Last modified: Friday, September 26, 2014 4:18pm]

Subject: Fwd: NEWS RELEASE: District Approves Millage and Budget
From: Diane Salz <disalz@yahoo.com>
Date: Wed, Oct 01, 2014 9:12 am
To: Richard Owen <richardowen@wrwsa.org>
Cc: Nancy Smith <nsmith@wrwsa.org>

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Chris Zajac <Chris.Zajac@swfwmd.state.fl.us>
Date: October 1, 2014 at 7:16:31 AM EDT
Subject: NEWS RELEASE: District Approves Millage and Budget

September 30, 2014

District Approves Millage and Budget

On Tuesday, the Governing Board of the Southwest Florida Water Management District adopted a FY2014-15 millage rate of 0.3658 mill, four percent lower than the current fiscal year. For the owner of a \$150,000 home with a \$50,000 homestead exemption, the District tax would be \$36.58 a year, or about \$3.05 per month. The fiscal year runs from Oct. 1, 2014, through Sept. 30, 2015. The total FY2014-15 budget for the District is \$166.3 million.

The budget is designed to protect Florida's water resources and to improve Florida's economic vitality. All programs and projects are dedicated to the mission of the District and designed to provide the highest quality service to residents within the District.

The District will also leverage \$75 million of its funds through cooperative partnerships with public and private partners. The funds are matched by our partners resulting in approximately \$150 million available for alternative water supply development and other water resource management projects.

Additionally, a total of \$12 million is budgeted for springs initiatives, of which \$5.7 million is designed to enhance and improve submerged aquatic vegetation and wetland habitat. Another \$6.4 million in state funding is designated for water supply activities to reduce groundwater withdrawals and improve water quality.

Other key budget highlights include \$22 million for reclaimed water projects which reduce reliance on groundwater sources; \$12 million for the restoration of impacted lands to improve water quality and re-establish wetland and upland natural systems; and \$11 million for stormwater improvement projects to improve water quality of SWIM priority water bodies.

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Subject: Fwd: NEWS RELEASE: District to Hold Public Workshop on Priority List and Schedule for the Establishment of Minimum Flows and Levels
From: Diane Salz <disalz@yahoo.com>
Date: Thu, Sep 25, 2014 4:32 pm
To: Richard Owen <richardowen@wrwsa.org>
Cc: Nancy Smith <nsmith@wrwsa.org>

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: Chris Zajac <Chris.Zajac@swfwmd.state.fl.us>
Date: September 25, 2014 at 3:16:16 PM EDT
Subject: NEWS RELEASE: District to Hold Public Workshop on Priority List and Schedule for the Establishment of Minimum Flows and Levels

September 25, 2014

District to Hold Public Workshop on Priority List and Schedule for the Establishment of Minimum Flows and Levels

The Southwest Florida Water Management District (District) is soliciting stakeholder input on the annual update of the Priority List and Schedule for the Establishment of Minimum Flows and Levels. A workshop will be held at the District's Tampa Service Office, 7601 Highway 301 North on Wednesday, Oct. 1 from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.

Minimum flows and levels are limits set by the District Governing Board for surface waters and groundwater that are intended to prevent significant harm to the water resources or ecology of an area that may be caused by water withdrawals. Reservations set aside water from withdrawals for the protection of fish and wildlife or public health and safety. The Priority List identifies water bodies for which the District plans to establish minimum flows and levels and reservations.

Written comments on the draft Priority List and Schedule are welcome and may be submitted to Doug Leeper, Chief Advisory Environmental Scientist with the District's Water Resources Bureau via email at doug.leeper@watermatters.org or by U.S. Mail at 2379 Broad Street, Brooksville, Florida, 34604-6899 no later than October 15, 2014.

The current Priority List and Schedule is posted on the District's Minimum Flows and Levels (Environmental Flows) Documents and Reports web page at: www.watermatters.org. The draft FY2015 Priority List and Schedule will be made available at the same web page on September 19, 2014.

This workshop can also be accessed remotely via conference call and on-line through Cisco WebEx Meetings. For instructions, please visit www.watermatters.org/calendar and click on the meeting agenda.

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September 18, 2014

It is always a pleasure to share my views and experiences in working to save our waters.

In keeping with this year's Save Our Waters Week theme of "Florida Springs: A Treasure in Jeopardy," the opportunity to update our community about an important local springs water quality initiative — the Springs Coast Steering Committee — is very much appreciated.

The Southwest Florida Water Management District has designated the first-magnitude Rainbow, Crystal River/King's Bay, Homosassa and Weeki Wachee springs groups as a top priority.

These springs groups, located in an area known as the Springs Coast, collectively discharge more than a billion gallons per day. Because of the uniqueness and complexity of each spring within the system, the water management district invited local, regional and state agencies to form the Springs Coast Steering Committee (SCSC).

The steering committee is composed of the following members: the city of Crystal River, Citrus County, Hernando County, Marion County, the Florida Department of Environmental protection (FDEP), Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWCC) and the water management district. The goal of the SCSC is to develop management plans tailored for each springs system to identify issues, solutions, cost and responsibilities. I was unanimously chosen by the Board of County Commissioners to represent Citrus County.

A technical working group conducts informal discussions and provides all options to the management group outside of the Sunshine Law. The management committee conducts its discussions at meetings in the sunshine, providing recommendations to the steering committee, which also operates in the Sunshine.

During our first meeting on July 30, 2014, at the water management district headquarters in Brooksville, I presented two projects for study and future funding:

- * The treatment of storm water in existing water courses before it reaches the Three Sisters Spring remediation project and the Hunters Spring Water Quality Improvement Project for the area around Hunter Springs Bay, funded by the water management district and Citrus County.

- * An application for the water management district's "Living Shorelines" project around Hunters Spring bay.

Under action item No. 7: Development of Management Plans Schedule, I motioned to have the Crystal River/King's Bay spring group, along with Rainbow Spring, receive future priority project funding by the water management district. The motion was seconded by Marion County Commissioner Stan McClain and unanimously approved. This presentation can be viewed on the BOCC website under "Commissioner Dennis Damato."

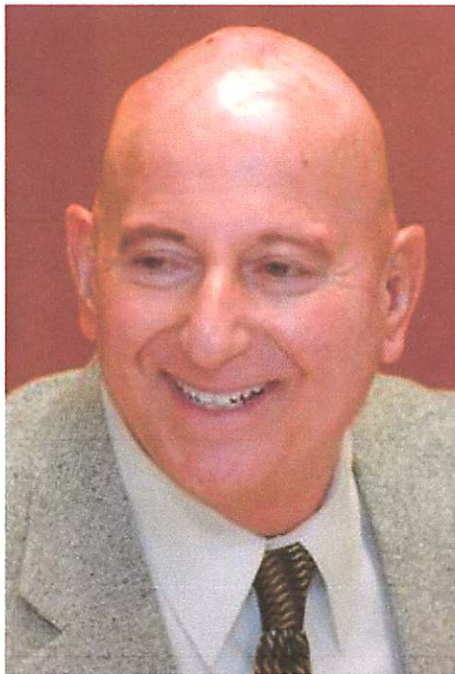
Spring initiatives are very important to our local water management district. They are endeavoring to identify, develop management plans and provide future funding for projects aligned with their 2013-17 Springs Management Plan.

Please keep in mind, springs protection and water quality issues are an extremely important priority which state lawmakers have promised to address during the 2015 and 2016 legislative sessions.

I am currently researching and compiling information for three new water quality projects that will be presented to the SCSC at its next meeting in early November.

We all must be vigilant in educating ourselves about water quality and the value of local springs to our community — that is why the water management district has aptly named this area the “Springs Coast.” I strongly urge your support of the Springs Coast Steering Committee and my proposed model for the clean-up and restoration of our local waterways starting with the Crystal River/King's Bay spring group.

In closing, I would like to thank the Chronicle and the Save Our Waters Week Committee for affording me the opportunity to provide an update on the important work of the SCSC and my efforts on behalf of the Crystal River/Kings Bay Springs Group as the Citrus County Board of County Commissioners' representative to the SCSC.



Dennis Damato is a 43-year resident of Crystal River and represents District 1 on the Citrus County Commission

State projects planned in attempt to help Silver Springs

By Fred Hiers

Staff writer

Published: Thursday, September 18, 2014 at 6:20 p.m.

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Florida government scientists on Thursday laid out the first steps of their strategies that they hope will reduce polluting nitrogen in Silver Springs in order to meet new water quality standards.

But as they take better stock of the sources of nitrogen — such as a before-uncounted 7,141 septic tanks near the springs — Florida Department of Environmental Protection scientists say they cannot guarantee how much cleaner the springs will get when nitrogen loading is reduced on the 588,417-acre area that recharges the springs.

The state-mandated goal is to reduce all of Florida springs' nitrogen concentrations to 0.35 milligrams per liter (mg/l) of spring water, a 79 percent reduction from Silver Springs' current concentration of 1.69 mg/l.

The FDEP has registered nearly 80 projects, overseen by a variety of government agencies, that scientists hope will help reduce Silver Springs polluting nitrogen.

But FDEP scientist Mary Paulic told the Star-Banner there was an "unclear linkage" and "uncertainty between land application (of nitrogen) and the concentration in the springs." She drew the conclusion immediately after a meeting in Marion County to discuss the Silver Springs Basin Management Action Plan.

In addition, Paulic said there is no clear-cut answer as to how much each project will reduce nitrogen concentrations in the springs.

But despite the uncertainty, Paulic said scientists know that reducing the amount of nitrogen that's loaded onto the springs recharge area will reduce the amount of nitrogen in the springs.

The basin management action plan is the blueprint by which Marion County and FDEP determine which activities, such as nitrogen generation, affect the springs, and it spells out how such activities can be curtailed. There are basin management action plans (BMAPs) for a number of water basins throughout Florida.

The nitrogen comes from a variety of sources, such as septic tanks, cattle and horse ranches, farms and residential fertilizer.

The FDEP has already designated Silver Springs as impaired, with a nitrate level that is more than three times beyond the acceptable range.

Nitrogen contributes to unwanted, high concentrations of algae and water grasses in the springs and creates a chemical imbalance in the spring affecting fish and wildlife that depend on the water body.

Here's a look at some key nitrogen numbers:

FDEP estimates that 12 million pounds of nitrogen is placed on land surfaces making up the BMAP area.

About 7.6 million pounds of that comes from commercial agriculture: cattle, horse and crop farms.

Paulic said that if all of the BMAP area farms and ranches follow state laid-out best management practices, the amount of nitrogen applied to the land would be reduced by 30 percent, or 2.3 million pounds.

Florida requires farms and ranches in the basin area to follow best management practices, but there is no penalty if they do not.

Paulic reported during the meeting that 18.2 percent of the agricultural land in the BMAP area already reports following best management practices. More farms and ranches may already be following those practices, but the FDEP may not be aware of it.

In addition, following draft basin management recommendations would also reduce nitrogen from wastewater treatment plants, septic tanks, drain fields and urban fertilizer and runoff another nearly another 300,000 pounds.

About 1.6 million pounds of nitrogen annually makes its way into the area groundwater.

But Paulic and Shane Williams, a Marion County stormwater project manager who helped organize the meeting and some of the nitrogen data, warned that the nitrogen reduction estimates are still preliminary and could likely change.

But some of the 40 people in attendance said they wanted a clearer tie from DEP showing how the projects and best management practices would reduce nitrogen polluting Silver Springs.

"How on earth is this getting us to (a) 79 percent (nitrogen reduction in Silver Springs)?" asked Lisa Saupp, a Silver Springs Alliance board member.

If many farmers and ranchers are already following best management practices and "if there's no enforcement ... beyond that point, we're just continuing to build the problem," Saupp said.

"We need to show actual (nitrogen reduction) outcome," she said, not lists of projects.

Paulic replied that best management practices were complicated and their effect not immediately known. In addition, the basin management plan report calls for FDEP to come back in five years and review nitrogen concentrations and measure how well projects are helping to reduce those levels.

"That's for the five-year reviews to figure out," she told the audience, made up mostly of local and state officials and environmentalists. "That's the best answer I can give you right now."

Whitey Markle, Suwannee/St. Johns Sierra Club conservation chairman, said five years was too long to wait.

"What I see is a slow moving machine not keeping up with (the rising level of nitrogen)," he said during the meeting. "Step it up."

Bill Dunn is an environmental consultant, often for the St. Johns River Water Management District. He attended the meeting Thursday and told the crowd that the effort to quantify the nitrogen loading into the spring is still new. The projects to clean the spring are moving the community in the right direction.

"We're not going to get it all right," he said during the meeting. "We want to get it mostly right."

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

Subject: Fwd: District adopts final FY 2014-2015 budget
From: Diane Salz <disalz@yahoo.com>
Date: Tue, Sep 23, 2014 6:21 pm
To: Richard Owen <richardowen@wrwsa.org>
Cc: Nancy Smith <nsmith@wrwsa.org>

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Begin forwarded message:

From: Water News <waternews@sjrwmd.com>
Date: September 23, 2014 at 5:53:20 PM EDT
To: disalz@yahoo.com
Subject: District adopts final FY 2014-2015 budget
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St. Johns River Water Management District

Water News

News, meetings
and notices

September 23, 2014

District adopts final FY 2014-2015 budget

The St. Johns River Water Management District's Governing Board gave final approval on Sept. 23 to a fiscal year 2014-2015 budget that reduces the millage rate for taxpayers and funds projects to protect the region's springs and improve water quality in the Indian River Lagoon and St. Johns River.

The Board approved a 0.3164 millage rate that will generate \$81.8 million in tax revenue toward a total \$145.5 million budget for the fiscal year beginning Oct. 1, 2014. The new millage rate is approximately 3.6 percent less than the current year's tax rate. The budget is also funded through state, federal and other sources, including timber sales, cattle leases, interest earnings and permit fees.

Under a 0.3164 millage rate - 31.64 cents for every \$1,000 of assessed property value - the owner of a \$200,000 house with a \$50,000 homestead exemption will pay \$47.46 in the coming year in property taxes to the District.

"This balanced budget includes more than \$41 million for strategic priorities that reflect our continued commitment to water resource and water supply development, natural systems

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Lobbyist registration requirements

Contacts

District staff contacts for:

protection and restoration, surface water restoration and regional flood protection," said Governing Board Chairman John A. Miklos of Orlando.

Major projects in the budget focus on District initiatives supporting minimum flows and levels prevention and recovery strategies, springs protection, and water quality protection in the Indian River Lagoon, Northern Coastal Basins and the middle and lower St. Johns River basins. The final budget includes \$33.6 million in cooperative cost-share funding for construction of projects that will help to reduce nutrient loading in springsheds and other water bodies, develop traditional and alternative water supplies, and conserve water.

Funds also will pay for reclaimed water and stormwater projects, water conservation, muck removal and restoration activities. Other projects included in the final budget:

- Completion of the Fellsmere Water Management Area and the final phase of the Canal 1 Rediversion Project in Brevard and Indian River counties, which are among the final components of the Upper St. Johns River Basin Project
- Construction of the 1,300-acre C-10 Reservoir in Brevard County, which will provide additional water storage and treatment and nutrient reduction benefits
- Construction of Lower Floridan aquifer wells, which will help to expand data collection to support priority District initiatives

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About us

The St. Johns River Water Management District is a regional agency of the state of Florida whose mission is to protect and ensure the sustainable use of water resources. The District is responsible for managing groundwater and surface water resources in all or part of 18 counties in northeast and east-central Florida.

floridaswater.com

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