

Withlacoochee Regional Water Supply Authority

Board of Directors

Monthly Meeting

Supplemental Information

March 16, 2016

Withlacoochee Regional Water Supply Authority
3600 W. Sovereign Path, Suite 228, Lecanto, Florida 34461

Bills For Payment
2/17/2016

<u>Administrative Invoices</u>	<u>Invoice Number</u>	<u>Invoice Date</u>	<u>Amount</u>
Richard S. Owen, AICP	2016-01	2/3/2016	\$6,781.45
Larry Haag, Attorney	31674 31675	1/27/2016	\$736.24
Jack Pepper, Special Counsel		1/31/2016	\$1,996.28
Diane Salz, Governmental Affairs / Professional Fee	13116	1/31/2016	\$3,500.00
Diane Salz, Governmental Affairs / Past Chair Plaque		1/31/2016	\$97.63
C. LuAnne Stout, Administrative Assistant	001-Jan-2016	2/2/2016	\$3,125.00
Al Butler (Jan Board Travel)		1/20/2016	\$27.59
Ron Livsey (Jan Board Travel)		1/20/2016	\$17.80
Nick Nicholson (Jan Board Travel)		1/20/2016	\$19.58
Alys Brockway (Jan Board Travel)		1/20/2016	\$19.58
Karen Allen, Web Maintenance	#0071	1/10/2016	\$75.00
1-Stop Prints of Citrus County (Feb Bd Package)	16-00184	2/9/2016	\$82.80
Sun Trust Business Card Statement (ofc supplies)	2.2.2016	2/2/2016	\$94.40
Total Administrative Invoices			\$16,573.35

<u>Water Supply Studies and Facilities</u>	<u>Contract/ Budget</u>	<u>Balance Remaining</u>	<u>Current Invoice(s)</u>
<u>Water Resource Development Projects</u>			
General Services Contract	\$75,000.00	\$75,000.00	\$0.00
Work Order 14-03. Water Resource Associates	\$75,000.00	\$47,645.76	
	\$27,354.24	\$6,718.44	\$0.00
Work Order 15-01. C&D Engineering	\$2,500.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<u>FY14-15 Local Government Water Supply Projects</u>			
Citrus Water Conservation Pgm	\$40,250.00	\$7,973.40	\$0.00
Hernando Water Conservation Pgm	\$48,150.00	\$986.94	\$0.00
Marion Water Conservation Pgm	\$32,350.00	\$23,712.28	\$0.00
Phase 2 Irrigation Program (2013-2015)	\$69,584.00	\$65,484.00	\$0.00
Phase 3 Irrigation Program (2015-2016)	\$57,000.00	-\$57.73	\$465.00 (1)
Purvis Gray CAB Rate Analysis Work Order	\$12,000.00	\$9,900.00	\$0.00
Total Project Invoices	\$439,188.24	\$438,723.24	\$465.00

Total Bills to be Paid	\$17,038.35
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State Board of Administration	Transfer from SBA2 to SBA1	\$465.00
State Board of Administration	Transfer from SBA1 to SunTrust	\$17,038.35

Notes:

(1) Breakdown of charges for Phase 3 (N640)

Jack Overdorff, evaluations:	\$415.00	Invoice 219 Eco Land Design
C. LuAnne Stout, administration:	\$50.00	Invoice 2016-N640-01
	\$465.00	



February 2, 2016

Mr. Michael Babb, Chair
Southwest Florida Water Management District
2379 Broad Street
Brooksville, FL 34604

Dear Mr. Babb:

I am writing in regard to the District's Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) Plan for Crystal River/Kings Bay. At its January 20, 2016 meeting, the Withlacoochee Regional Water Supply Authority Board of Directors received an excellent presentation by Ms. Veronica Craw, Springs and Environmental Manager, SWFWMD, on the District's Crystal River/Kings Bay SWIM Plan. The Board expressed its support for the Plan through the adoption of the enclosed Resolution. The Board expresses its support for the approval of the Plan by the Governing Board and subsequent implementation by the District and its various partners.

We greatly appreciate the District's leadership in the protection and enhancement of the water resources within our region, including the world-class spring systems that make our region special.

Sincerely,

Richard S. Owen, AICP
Executive Director

Enclosure

cc: WRWSA Board Members

RESOLUTION 16-01

A RESOLUTION BY THE
WITHLACOOCHEE REGIONAL WATER SUPPLY AUTHORITY (WRWSA)
IN SUPPORT OF THE CRYSTAL RIVER / KINGS BAY SURFACE WATER
IMPROVEMENT AND MANAGEMENT (SWIM) PLAN

WHEREAS, the Florida Legislature created the Surface Water Improvement and Management Act of 1987, as amended for the purpose of protecting and restoring the surface water resources of the State of Florida, and

WHEREAS, the Act directs the water management districts to develop and implement management plans for protection and/or restoration of surface water bodies of state and regional significance, and

WHEREAS, the first SWIM Plan for Crystal River / Kings Bay was completed in 1989, and

WHEREAS, the Crystal River / Kings Bay spring system contains 70 documented springs that collectively form one of the largest spring groups in the state and this system contributes to the region's aesthetic, ecological, and economic resources, and

WHEREAS, the Southwest Florida Water Management District, in cooperation with the Springs Coast Steering Committee and other resource management agencies, developed a SWIM plan for Crystal River / Kings Bay, and

WHEREAS, the SWIM plan identifies the issues, strategies, and priority projects necessary to protect and restore the water body, and

WHEREAS, the SWIM plan identifies septic tanks, stormwater, and urban/residential fertilizer as the priority water quality management action categories, and

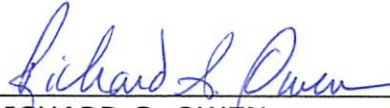
WHEREAS, the successful implementation of the management plan for Crystal River / Kings Bay will require a continuing commitment from the State, water management district, local governments and other stakeholders to the Surface Water Improvement and Management Act of 1987, as amended, to fulfill the requirements of the Act and Legislative mandates,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the WRWSA expresses its support for approval and implementation of the Crystal River / Kings Bay SWIM plan by the responsible parties within the limits of their respective resources.

PASSED AND ADOPTED this 20th day of January 2016 by the WRWSA Board of Directors.

ATTESTED:

**WITHLACOOCHEE REGIONAL
WATER SUPPLY AUTHORITY**



RICHARD S. OWEN
Executive Director

By: 

AL BUTLER
Chairman

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Subject: [FWD: Revised Letter]

From: richardowen@wrwsa.org

Date: Mon, Feb 08, 2016 7:54 am

To: "Luanne Stout" <lstout@wrwsa.org>

Attach: WRWSA Letter.pdf

LuAnne, please include in packet for distribution at Board meeting - additional correspondence. Thanks.

Richard S. Owen, AICP

Executive Director

Withlacoochee Regional Water Supply Authority

richardowen@wrwsa.org

www.wrwsa.org

Mobile: 352-293-5955

----- Original Message -----

Subject: Revised Letter

From: Susan Sullivan <ssullivan@clerk.citrus.fl.us>

Date: Thu, February 04, 2016 1:35 pm

To: "richardowen@wrwsa.org" <richardowen@wrwsa.org>

Cc: "GARY S. LOGGINS (GARY.LOGGINS@citrusbocc.com)" <GARY.LOGGINS@citrusbocc.com>

Good afternoon.

There was, indeed, a typo in the letter. The total is correct at \$2,104,402.57. The deposit amount was \$168,944.

Susan A Sullivan, CPA

Financial Analyst

Clerk of the Circuit Court and Comptroller

Citrus County, Florida

352-341-6464

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Board of County Commissioners
Citrus County
NEW CITRUS COUNTY COURTHOUSE
110 North Apopka Avenue
Inverness, Florida 34450
(352) 341-6400

December 10, 2015

Mr. Richard Owen
Withlacoochee River Water Supply Authority
3600 West Sovereign Path – Suite 228
Lecanto, Florida 34461

Dear Mr. Owen:

Enclosed is a copy of the expenditures Citrus County made from the renewal and replacement fund for the fiscal year ended September 30, 2015. These expenditures were allowed by the Third Amendment to Joint Use, Operation and Management between the County and WRWSA dated August 20, 1997. This information is provided so that your records may accurately reflect the change in the amount of this fund. The following is a summary of the transactions in the renewal and replacement fund:

Beginning Balance 10/1/2014	\$1,964,521.64
Deposit	168,944.00
Expenses	<u>(29,063.07)</u>
Ending Balance 9/30/2015	\$2,104,402.57

I have enclosed a computer printout of the expenditures along with copies of the individual invoices. If you have any questions regarding these transactions, please give me a call at 352-341-6464.

Sincerely,

Susan Sullivan, CPA
Financial Analyst

Enclosures

Cc via e-mail: Randy Oliver, County Administrator
Ken Cheek, Water Resources Director

FUND	DEPARTMENT	ACCOUNT	ACCOUNT TITLE	DATE	PERIOD	PO	REFERENCE	VENDOR	EXPENDITURES	DESCRIPTION
453	9700	54600	REPAIR & MAINTENANCE	11/21/14	2		442400	6191 CARDNO INC	10,231.41	58604 / 11/5/14
453	9700	54600	REPAIR & MAINTENANCE	02/27/15	5	74671-02	444694	6191 CARDNO INC	5,776.09	152065 / 1/30/15
453	9700	54600	REPAIR & MAINTENANCE	11/23/15	13	74671-02	451616	6191 CARDNO INC	9,684.25	179783 / 11/19/15
453	9700	54605	EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE	02/09/15	5		JV 1159		(2,566.05)	REIMB CLM 2013248 8/15/13
453	9700	54605	EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE	03/02/15	5		JV 1377		86.73	E/C CAB II REPAIR CHGES
453	9700	54605	EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE	03/20/15	6		JV 1555		34.10	WO 569009
453	9700	54605	EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE	04/15/15	7		JV 1784		1,273.23	MO34-15
453	9700	54605	EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE	07/31/15	10		P-CARD		314.46	AVANTI COMPANY
453	9700	54605	EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE	07/31/15	10		P-CARD		212.28	WW GRAINGER
453	9700	54605	EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE	09/01/15	12		P-CARD		1,163.07	ELECTRICMOTORWHOLESAL
453	9700	54605	EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE	09/30/15	13		P-CARD		2,113.00	IN TOM EVANS ENVIRONMENT
453	9700	54605	EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE	09/30/15	13		P-CARD		740.50	AUTOMATIONDIRECT.COM

Withlacoochee Regional Water Supply Authority

Legislative Report (updated information underlined)

February 12, 2016

The 2016 Regular Legislative Session began on January 12th and is scheduled to end on March 11.th Staff is monitoring over two dozen bills that could impact the Authority, as noted in the Authority's weekly bill tracking report. SB 1290 (Simpson) and HB 1075 (Caldwell) related to state lands defines the term "water resource development project" to include "construction of treatment, transmission, or distribution facilities," for state funding eligibility, under Florida Forever. DEP supports this provision, with billions of dollars needed for water infrastructure projects around the state. SB 1290 is now in the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee of General Government. HB 1075 is in the House State Affairs Committee, its last committee.

The Governor signed CS/CS/SB 552 relating to comprehensive water policy, a product of three years of work. Effective July 1, 2016, this legislation does not include a provision to create a "water resource advisory council" to determine which water projects warrant funding, as proposed last year by the Senate. This legislation includes provisions to: codify the Central Florida Water Initiative; create a springs protection act; set up a pilot program for alternative water supply (AWS) in restricted allocation areas; establish a new classification for surface waters used for potable water supply that would protect such surface water from pollution; revise water resource planning, and minimum flows and levels (MFLs) establishment and implementation; among other things.

The Governor has recommended a \$79.3 billion budget for 2016. Among other things, \$50 million is included for springs restoration or \$1.6 billion over 20-years, and \$50 million is included for sustainable water supply. This week, the House and Senate approved their respective budgets, which are nearly \$1 billion apart. The Senate includes \$50 million in its budget for springs and \$50 million for water projects. The House includes \$50 for water projects, \$30 for alternative water supplies, and \$30 million for springs. Next, budget conferences will work out these and other differences. Additionally, SB 1168 (Negron) related to the Land and Water Conservation Constitutional Amendment was amended by Senator Charlie Dean to ensure annual funding for springs restoration, protection and management projects at "the lesser of 7.6% or \$75 million," which works out to \$50 million this year. HB 989 (Harrell) is ready for consideration on the House Floor, and will likely be amended to reflect this change.

The Senate Environmental Preservation and Conservation Committee and the Ethics and Elections Committee have recommended for confirmation the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) governing board members: Jeffery Adams; Ed Armstrong; Randy Maggard; Michael Moran; Paul Senft; and Executive Director Robert Beltran. These recommendations will be considered by the full Senate Chamber, historically near the end of Session. Recently appointed SWFWMD governing board members Kelly Rice and John Henslick were recommended for confirmation by the Senate Environmental Preservation Committee and will next be considered by the Senate Ethics & Elections Committee on 2/16.

Additionally, the Senate Environmental Preservation and the Senate Ethics and Elections committees have recommended the confirmation of (SJRWMD) governing board members: Charles Drake; Fred Roberts; Ronald Howse; and Executive Director Dr. Ann Shortelle. The next and final stop will be consideration by the full Senate Chamber.

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Subject: Fwd: 2/12 Bill Tracking Report
From: Diane Salz <salz.govconsultant@gmail.com>
Date: Fri, Feb 12, 2016 3:33 pm
To: Richard Owen <richardowen@wrwsa.org>
Cc: LuAnne Stout <lstout@wrwsa.org>

----- Forwarded message -----
From: Diane Salz <noreply@lobbytools.com>
Date: Fri, Feb 12, 2016 at 5:29 PM
Subject: 2/12 Bill Tracking Report
To: salz.govconsultant@gmail.com

FYI.

2016 Bills (29)

Num	Title	Sponsor	
SB 0324	Relating to Utility Projects	Legg	02/10/16
	02/10/16 - SENATE Now in Communications, Energy, and Public Utilities		
HB 0347	Relating to Utility Projects	Sprowls	01/14/16
	01/14/16 - HOUSE Placed on Calendar, on 2nd reading		
SB 0400	Relating to Organizational Structure of the Department of Environmental Protection	Hays	01/14/16
	01/14/16 - SENATE Now in Appropriations		
SB 0416	Relating to Location of Utilities	Flores	02/11/16
	02/11/16 - SENATE Read Third Time; Passed (Vote: 34 Yeas / 4 Nays)		
HB 0461	Relating to Location of Utilities	Ingram	02/10/16
	02/10/16 - HOUSE Placed on Calendar, on 2nd reading		
HB 0479	Relating to Special Districts	Metz	02/03/16
	02/03/16 - SENATE Referred to Community Affairs; Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Tourism, and Economic Development; Fiscal Policy		
HB 0491	Relating to Water and Wastewater	Smith (J)	02/11/16
	02/11/16 - HOUSE Placed on Calendar, on 2nd reading		
SB 0516	Relating to Special Districts	Ring	01/12/16
	01/12/16 - SENATE Now in Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Tourism, and Economic Development		
SB 0534	Relating to Water and Wastewater	Hays	01/13/16
	01/13/16 - SENATE Now in Appropriations		
SB 0552	Relating to Environmental Resources	Dean	01/21/16
	01/21/16 - Approved by Governor, Chapter No. 2016-1		
HB 0561	Relating to Organizational Structure of the Department of Environmental Protection	Combee	02/11/16
	02/11/16 - HOUSE Now in State Affairs Committee		
HB 0589	Relating to Environmental Control	Pigman	02/11/16
	02/11/16 - HOUSE Now in State Affairs Committee		
SB 0598	Relating to Public Works Projects	Brandes	01/26/16
	01/26/16 - SENATE Laid on Table		
HB 0745	Relating to Special Districts	Nuñez	01/14/16
	01/14/16 - HOUSE Now in Government Operations Subcommittee		

HB 0851	Relating to Onsite Sewage Treatment and Disposal Systems 01/21/16 - HOUSE Placed on Calendar, on 2nd reading	Drake	01/21/16
HB 0989	Relating to Implementation of Water and Land Conservation Constitutional Amendment 02/10/16 - HOUSE Placed on Calendar, on 2nd reading	Harrell	02/10/16
SB 1052	Relating to Environmental Control 02/11/16 - SENATE Favorable with CS by Appropriations Subcommittee on General Government; 5 Years, 0 Days	Hays	02/11/16
HB 1057	Relating to Special Districts 01/04/16 - HOUSE Withdrawn prior to introduction	Caldwell	01/04/16
HB 1069	Relating to Water Resources 01/08/16 - HOUSE Now in Transportation & Ports Subcommittee	Murphy	01/08/16
HB 1075	Relating to State Lands 02/05/16 - HOUSE Now in State Affairs Committee	Caldwell	02/05/16
HB 1159	Relating to Water Oversight and Planning 01/13/16 - HOUSE Now in Agriculture & Natural Resources Subcommittee	Antone	01/13/16
SB 1168	Relating to Implementation of the Water and Land Conservation Constitutional Amendment 02/11/16 - SENATE Committee Substitute Text (C1) Filed	Negron	02/11/16
SB 1204	Relating to Water Resources 01/08/16 - SENATE Referred to Communications, Energy, and Public Utilities; Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, Tourism, and Economic Development; Appropriations	Altman	01/08/16
SB 1290	Relating to State Lands 02/09/16 - SENATE Now in Appropriations Subcommittee on General Government	Simpson	02/09/16
SB 1312	Relating to Protection Zones For Springs 02/12/16 - SENATE On Committee agenda - Appropriations Subcommittee on General Government, 02/17/16, 10:00 am, 110 S	Dean	02/12/16
SB 1400	Relating to Water Oversight and Planning 01/14/16 - SENATE Referred to Higher Education; Appropriations Subcommittee on Education; Appropriations	Gibson	01/14/16
HB 7001	Relating to Special District Accountability 12/03/15 - HOUSE Now in Local & Federal Affairs Committee	Local Government Affairs Subcommittee	12/03/15
HB 7005	Relating to Environmental Resources 01/14/16 - HOUSE Read Second Time; Substituted for SB 0552; Laid on Table, Refer to SB 0552	State Affairs Committee	01/14/16
HB 9031	Relating to Springs Protection Awareness Month 02/03/16 - HOUSE Filed	Porter	02/03/16



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Daily Commercial

Permit seeks 500K gallons a day from aquifer

Scott Callahan scott.callahan@dailycommercial.com | Feb. 6, 2016

BUSHNELL — An Ocala company wants to sink a well and pump nearly a half-million gallons of water a day near Bushnell and sell it to a Leesburg bottling company.

SWR Properties' water use permit request is currently under review by the Southwest Florida Water Management District, or SWFWMD.

The company owns about 10 acres southeast of the intersection of County Road 470 and State Road 301, northeast of Bushnell, that contains what has been called Fern Spring and Heart Spring.

"Overall, this is a very good site for a spring water withdrawal project, utilizing a well, drilled to public supply standards, that is constructed near a flowing spring with excellent water quality, high spring flow rate, and definite hydrogeologic connection between the spring and well," according to company agent Vivian Bielski, of Andreyev Engineering in Hudson, in one of the application documents.

SWR Properties bought the parcel in 2012, and it appears that's when Bielski evaluated the springs, according to documents, because two months ago, after a site visit on Dec. 23, SWFWMD senior geologist Ralph O. Kerr said neither spring was flowing.

"The potentiometric surface (water table) would have to rise several feet for either pool to flow," he said in a report. "There was no evidence that water has flowed out of the pools for quite some time."

In an email to SWFWMD, Tallahassee geologist Scott Sigler said the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services might have a problem with the water being advertised as coming from a spring when, in this case, it might not be coming from an "underground formation which flows naturally to the surface of the earth through a natural orifice under natural force."

SWR Properties is seeking to pump 496,000 gallons of water a day for 20 years — 4,000 less than the 500,000-gallon threshold needed to schedule a public meeting on the permit application, according to Kerr.

Summerfield resident Russ Cuddy sent SWFWMD a letter of opposition to the permit, pointing out that residents have been asked to conserve water.

"Also, there are businesses and housing projects which will need water in the area," he wrote.

Arlene Smith, a resident of The Villages, also touched upon current watering limitations.

"If we have such an abundance (of water in the ground), why do we have water restrictions?" she wrote. "We need our own water. To sell this precious resource is sinful."

Fruitland Park resident Bertha Erickson complained about giving away water for the sake of commerce.

"We will run out of water," she wrote. "Just a matter of time before it is gone."

A Hydrogeologic Impact Analysis, prepared by Bielski last November, calculated the Floridan aquifer will be impacted by only a few inches in the immediate area of the proposed well.

"Therefore, there are reasonable assurances that the requested withdrawals will not significantly impact the Floridan aquifer, major spring complexes, and legal existing users in the area of the proposed withdrawals," she wrote.

There is an existing monitoring well on the property which will be used to monitor this drawdown, according to other documents.

If granted a permit, SWR Properties has an agreement to sell the water to Azure Water, which has an about 15,000-square-foot bottled water co-packing operation at 1903 Greenleaf Lane, off Tally Road, in Leesburg.

In turn, Azure would sell the water to existing clients like Publix, Nestle, DS Water and the Niagra Bottling Company. Permit documents show Azure has other potential bottled water buyers that include big-box stores like Wal-Mart, Sams, Target and Kmart; grocery store chains like Winn-Dixie, Kroger, Fresh Market and Whole Foods; convenience store chains like 7-Eleven, Race Trac, Wawa and Hess; and drug stores like Walgreens and CVS.

Azure — founded in Hudson in 2006 and expanded to Leesburg in 2013 — has the capability of producing 14,000 customizable bottles of water an hour or 5,000 cases a day, according to the company's website. A single-serving bottle manufacturing and filling component was added to the business two years ago, adding to the gallon-jug line.

It currently produces purified water using Leesburg's municipal water — that has been triple-filtered, ozonated and purified by reverse osmosis — and spring water from a couple of other Florida springs — Wildwood Springs and Orange Springs — that are also used by other bottlers.

Bielski said the "proposed withdrawal source would help satisfy existing demand that is currently under-supplied through existing spring water sources," according to documents.

Besides sinking a 10-inch-wide well, SWR Properties plans to build a pumping station, driveway and modular office building on the site. Eighty 6,200-gallon trucks per day on average and 144 trucks on a peak month daily average would ship the water to Azure, according to documents.

There is no timetable for when SWFWMD could approve or deny the permit, but Azure's 20-year buy offer comes with a clause saying the water must be delivered beginning this calendar year.

SWR Properties said in documents it hopes to be up and running by November.

Homosassa water supplier fears new Suncoast leg will pollute its well field

To some people in Citrus County, the second leg of the Suncoast Parkway would be a tremendous economic boost, spurring new development in areas now far off the beaten path.

But to the 6,000 people who get their water from the Homosassa Special Water District, the new toll road is a pollution threat.

The road's stormwater retention ponds would be located next to — and upstream from — the water district's Peach Orchard well field, which produces more than 7 million gallons of water a day. Both are atop a highly porous geological formation known as karst, which is made of easily dissolved limestone riddled with holes and channels.

"The ponds sit like a loaded gun pointing at the well field," said Carol Joy Barice, the Brooksville attorney representing the Homosassa water supplier.

What the water supplier fears, Barice said, is a tanker truck loaded with fuel or chemicals crashing on the new road, spilling its contents, which would then flow into the retention ponds. Because of the porous karst, she said, "there's a good possibility that will go towards the well field and we'll have to shut down the well field."

Getting it wrong: Suncoast Parkway set to expand even as it fails to meet projections

Barice pointed out that in 2001, shortly after the first leg of the Suncoast began allowing cars and trucks, a sinkhole opened under one of that road's retention ponds. Soon thereafter elevated levels of fecal coliform bacteria turned up in six private wells nearby.

She said the water provider has tried negotiating with the DOT's Turnpike Enterprise division, but at a meeting last June the road-builder's response was basically, "Trust us."

One solution would be to move the ponds, but Barice said it's probably too late for that.

"There's an awful lot of political support for the road and they're trying to get it built very rapidly," she said.

The Suncoast extension had been dormant for years when Gov. Rick Scott put \$150 million in the budget last year to revive it. Neither Scott's staff nor the DOT could explain why he selected that one highway project for a revival.

In December, while the Homosassa agency's negotiations were still going on with DOT, the Southwest Florida Water Management District — more commonly known as Swiftmud — announced it was approving the permit for the ponds. That forced the Homosassa agency to challenge the permit in the state Division of Administrative Hearings. A trial is set for April.

Turnpike spokeswoman Christa Deason said the DOT does not comment on pending litigation. Swiftmud spokeswoman Terri Behling said the water district took the Homosassa well field concerns into account in deciding the ponds were safe.

Contact Craig Pittman at craig@tampabay.com. Follow @craigtimes.

Bradenton Herald

Many cities at risk of lead in drinking water

Flint, Michigan, isn't the only city struggling with contamination

It could cost between \$16.5 billion and \$50 billion to replace all lead pipes

By Michael Wines and John Schwartz
New York Times News Service

In Sebring, Ohio, routine laboratory tests in August found unsafe levels of lead in the town's drinking water after workers stopped adding a chemical to keep lead water pipes from corroding. Five months passed before the city told pregnant women and children not to drink the water, and shut down taps and fountains in schools.

In 2001, after Washington, D.C., changed how it disinfected drinking water, lead in tap water at thousands of homes spiked as much as 20 times the federally approved level. Residents did not find out for three years. When they did, officials ripped out lead water pipes feeding 17,600 homes — and discovered three years later that many of the repairs had only prolonged the contamination.

The crisis in Flint, Michigan, where as many as 8,000 children under age 6 were exposed to unsafe levels of lead after a budget-cutting decision to switch drinking-water sources, may be the most serious contamination threat facing the country's water supplies. But it is hardly the only one.

Unsafe levels of lead have turned up in tap water in city after city — in Durham and Greenville, North Carolina, in 2006; in Columbia, South Carolina, in 2005; and in July in Jackson, Mississippi, where officials waited six months to disclose the contamination — as well as in scores of other places in recent years.

Safety net

Federal officials and many scientists agree that most of the nation's 53,000 community water systems provide safe drinking water. But such episodes are unsettling reminders of what experts say are holes in the safety net of rules and procedures intended to keep water not just lead-free, but free of all poisons.

It doesn't take much for our aging infrastructure or an unprofessional actor to allow that protection to fall apart. Dr. Jeffrey K. Griffiths, a professor of public health at Tufts University and a former chairman of the EPA's Drinking Water Committee

The Environmental Protection Agency says streams tapped by water utilities serving a third of the population are not yet covered by clean-water laws that limit levels of toxic pollutants. Even purified water often travels to homes through pipes that are in stunning disrepair, potentially open to disease and pollutants.

Although Congress banned lead water pipes 30 years ago, between 3.3 million and 10 million older ones remain, primed to leach lead into tap water by forces as simple as jostling during repairs or a change in water chemistry.

"We have a lot of threats to the water supply," said Dr. Jeffrey K. Griffiths, a professor of public health at Tufts University and a former chairman of the EPA's Drinking Water Committee. "And we have lots of really good professionals in the water industry who see themselves as protecting the public good. But it doesn't take much for our aging infrastructure or an unprofessional actor to allow that protection to fall apart."

Both researchers and industry officials say problems extend well beyond lead. Many potentially harmful contaminants have yet to be evaluated, much less regulated. Efforts to address shortcomings often encounter pushback from industries like agriculture and mining that fear cost increases, and from politicians ideologically opposed to regulation.

Rules and science are outdated. The EPA's trigger level for addressing lead in drinking water — 15 parts per billion — is not based on any health threat; rather, it reflects a calculation that water in at least 9 in 10 homes susceptible to lead contamination will fall below that standard.

Lack of funding

And while political leaders upbraid the EPA and state regulators for laggard responses to crises in Flint and elsewhere, they have themselves lagged in offering support. Adjusted for inflation, the \$100 million annual budget of the EPA's drinking water office has fallen 15 percent since 2006, and the office has lost more than a tenth of its staff.

States are equally hard hit. In 2013, the Association of State Drinking Water Administrators said federal officials had slashed drinking-water grants, 17 states had cut drinking-water budgets by more than a fifth, and 27 had cut spending on full-time employees. "The cumulative effect of the resource gap has serious implications for states' ability to protect public health," the group stated.

As Flint's water crisis surfaced in the fall, Congress was considering the EPA's effort to clarify its regulatory powers over tributaries and wetlands — the streams that supply water to a third of Americans.

Both houses passed legislation to block a new Clean Water Act regulation, the Waters of the United States rule, that aims to assert authority over those waters, which the Supreme Court had questioned in 2001 and 2006 rulings.

And Sen. James M. Inhofe, R-Okla., who is chairman of the Committee on Environment and Public Works, denounced the rule as a federal power grab.

We need an aggressive program to get rid of lead service lines, starting with an inventory so we know where they are. Lynn Thorp, national campaigns director for Clean Water Action, an advocacy group

President Barack Obama vetoed that legislation last month, but more than two dozen states have sued to block the rule. Among their arguments: It would hurt business.

An EPA spokeswoman said Friday that the agency hoped to propose strengthened regulation of lead in drinking water in 2017, something the agency's administrator, Gina McCarthy, said was needed in a speech this month in Flint. She pledged then to start "a national conversation about this country's water infrastructure" and resources for states.

McCarthy has also issued a new policy calling for federal regulators to take a more active role in the face of public health crises.

Old lead pipes

In 2011, the water authority in Brick Township, New Jersey, an oceanside settlement of 75,000 people, tested tap water in a small sample of homes for lead, as the EPA requires be done periodically. It discovered two homes in which the level exceeded the agency's limit of 15 parts per billion, well short of the number that required remedial steps.

But in the next mandated test, three years later, it found that 16 of 34 homes exceeded the limit — one of them by a dozen times. The growing use of road salt in recent winters, it turned out,

had raised chloride levels in the river from which Brick drew its water. Undetected, the chloride corroded aged lead pipes running to older homes, leaching lead into tap water.

The town has since added an anti-corrosion agent to its water, but some residents remain wary.

“Why didn’t somebody in the water company realize with all the snow we’ve had in those years that something was going to affect the water?” asked Jeff Brown, 73, whose 1960s-era ranch home was built when lead was allowed in water lines and plumbing. “I hope they’ve learned a lesson.”

The authorities in Brick say the water now meets federal standards. But that is cold comfort to Brown. “I’m never reassured when they tell you what’s in federal guidelines,” he said. “Who sets the standards?”

Brick is but one example of how lead contamination can elude rules and authorities, potentially for years.

“We need an aggressive program to get rid of lead service lines, starting with an inventory so we know where they are,” said Lynn Thorp, the national campaigns director for Clean Water Action, an advocacy group. “Water systems need to up their game and take this problem more seriously.”

Loopholes in rules

Both scientists and advocates say the rules governing contamination from lead pipes are riddled with loopholes. For example, the EPA’s lead rule requires water systems to test in only a small number of homes with lead pipes — 50 to 100 for large systems — and intervals between testing can stretch to three years.

Water systems use various protocols for tap water tests, and rules allow ordinary homeowners to conduct them unsupervised, raising questions about their consistency. Officials must disclose contamination and take remedial action only if tests show more than 10 percent of sampled homes exceed the standard. Advocates say that lets utilities declare their water safe even if contamination is uncovered.

70.5 Percentage of water samplings that had been sitting in lead pipes and had unacceptable lead levels, according to a study for the American Water Works Association

“Over the last decade we’ve learned that the testing routines did not detect true risk from lead, that there are forms of lead that we’re not testing for and that testing was too infrequent,” said Griffiths, former chairman of the EPA’s Drinking Water Committee. “It’s hard to see how the status quo in December, the Drinking Water Committee endorsed recommendations by an advisory group to strengthen the lead rule in several critical areas. The group said water systems should bolster their anti-corrosion efforts and test more often to ensure that they are working. It called for the EPA to set a standard for lead in drinking water based on its effect on people’s health, likely below the current level, and to require water systems to tell homeowners and public-health officials whenever it is exceeded.

Yanna Lambrinidou, who was on the advisory panel, is an adjunct assistant professor of science and technology studies at Virginia Tech, whose experts first disclosed the scope of Flint’s lead problem. She dissented from the group’s recommendations, arguing that they did not go far enough.

A study for the American Water Works Association, she noted, found that samplings of water that had been sitting in lead pipes had unacceptable lead levels in as much as 70.5 percent of water systems.

Replacement costs

The advisory group also urged the EPA to require water systems to eventually replace all lead pipes, but it did not address the main obstacle to that goal: cost. At \$5,000 per pipe, by one estimate, that would consume between \$16.5 billion and \$50 billion — and that is but a fraction of the \$384 billion in deferred maintenance the EPA says is needed by 2030 to keep drinking water safe.

Erik D. Olson, head of the health and environment program at the Natural Resources Defense Council, said: “You think our roads and bridges aren’t being fixed? The stuff underground is just totally ignored. We’re mostly living off the investment of our parents and grandparents for our drinking water supply.”

Some systems have gone ahead despite the cost. In Lansing, Michigan, not 60 miles from Flint, the Board of Water and Light has replaced 13,500 lead lines since 2004, part of a \$42 million project that has only 650 pipes to go. Some residents used to fight the intrusion on their property, said Richard R. Peffley, the utility’s general manager.

Since the Flint crisis, he said, “there’s been no resistance.”

Unregulated chemicals

The biggest hole in the drinking-water safety net may be the least visible: the potential for water to be tainted by substances that scientists and officials have not even studied, much less regulated.

The EPA has compiled a list of 100 potentially risky chemicals and 12 microbes that are known or expected to be found in public water systems, but are not yet regulated. In the last 15 years, it also has required water systems to test for 80 additional contaminants to see whether they merit regulation.

So far, it has decided to place limits on just one, perchlorate, a salt found in rocket propellants and explosives. And what an arduous decision it has been: The EPA began tests for perchlorate in 2001 and resolved to regulate it in 2011, but does not expect to publish its proposed rule until March 2017.

There are thousands of other chemicals, viruses and microbes that scientists like Griffiths say the agency has not begun to assess. The scientists say they can make educated guesses about the potential for harm, and most are harmless or exist in vanishingly small amounts. But they also admit they can be blindsided.

Many water systems draw from rivers loaded with nitrates, the product of fertilizer runoff and sewage overflow.

“We just don’t have enough research to tell us,” said Rebecca D. Klaper, a professor of freshwater science at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. “This suite of 100 things might be in the water, but you have to have methods and standards developed to measure these things. Unless you have a preconceived notion of what you’re looking for, you don’t know what’s there.”

Toledo, Ohio, shut down its drinking water for three days in 2014 after microcystin, an unregulated toxin produced by algae-like bacteria clogging Lake Erie, tainted its supplies. Microcystin and related toxins, which can cause liver damage and have killed animals, have since been added to the list of potentially dangerous contaminants.

Long-term impacts

Another example: Many water systems draw from rivers loaded with nitrates, the product of fertilizer runoff and sewage overflow. But researchers were long unaware that removing nitrates from finished water can leave behind a toxic byproduct, nitrosamines, the cancer-causing chemical found in cooked bacon.

The soup of contaminants in many water sources holds other possibilities for trouble. The EPA's latest list of potentially risky substances includes some variants of estrogen, compounds from birth-control pills and other pharmaceuticals that are already linked to sexual changes in fish. Individually, they probably pose little risk to humans. Together, Klaper said, the risk may or may not be greater.

"How do you look at the long-term impact of these trace chemicals?" she asked. "That's what we're trying to wrap our heads around. The research that could determine whether anything is a problem is very complicated."

Ultimately, water problems in Flint and elsewhere suggest a failing in society's concept of water, said Henry L. Henderson, the Midwest program director for the Natural Resources Defense Council.

"We see safe and sufficient water as a human right," he said. "It needs to be approached as a public service matter, not a private commercial commodity."

Cost considerations drove the decision to switch Flint from Lake Huron water to Flint River water, unleashing the lead problems. But water, Henderson said, has to be more than a matter of the bottom line.

"It doesn't just come out of the wall," he said.

Read more here: <http://www.bradenton.com/news/nation-world/national/article59227723.html#storylink=cpy>

Springs funding added to Everglades fix

By Jim Turner

The News Service of Florida

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TALLAHASSEE -- Money to restore the state's natural springs has been attached to a proposal that would direct as much as \$200 million a year to South Florida water projects.

The Senate Environmental Preservation and Conservation Committee supported an amendment Tuesday that would require at least \$75 million a year to be budgeted for springs preservation.

Sen. Joe Negron, the sponsor of the overall bill (SB 1168) known as "Legacy Florida," said the money for the springs makes the proposal more statewide and won't impact his desire to direct to South Florida some of the funds approved by voters in a 2014 constitutional amendment for water and land preservation.

"By adding the springs component we're not detracting anything from the Everglades restoration," Negron said. "In fact, they complement each other and make the bill even stronger."

The House Appropriations Committee on Tuesday approved a similar measure (HB 989) to fund South Florida projects. The bill, which does not include the springs funding, is ready for the House floor.

Michael Williams, a spokesman for House Speaker Steve Crisafulli, said in an email Tuesday the House and Senate have not had discussions about the springs funding "concept."

"We look forward to learning more about their proposal," Williams said.

The Legacy Florida money is expected to pay for projects that will eventually reduce the need for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to release billions of gallons of contaminated water into the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee estuaries, as it is currently does as a way to reduce stress on the Herbert Hoover Dike that surrounds Lake Okeechobee.

The proposal has drawn support from organizations such as the Florida League of Cities, Audubon Florida, 1000 Friends of Florida, the Nature Conservancy and the Everglades Foundation.

"Right now, billions of gallons of polluted water are pouring out of Lake Okeechobee into the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie rivers, wreaking havoc on their ecologies and economies," Everglades Foundation CEO Eric Eikenberg said in a prepared statement supporting the Legacy Florida proposal.

Sen. Darren Soto, D-Orlando, said lawmakers need to ensure the funding remains available.

"We're just going to have to dig deep to make sure there is the actual funding there to make this a reality," Soto said.

Soto is expected to join Sen. Thad Altman, R-Rockledge, on Wednesday in proposing a budget amendment that would increase funding from \$22.3 million to \$220 million for land acquisition through the Florida Forever program. The Senate will take up its proposed budget Wednesday during a floor session.

Florida Forever, which uses bonds backed with revenue from documentary-stamp real-estate taxes, authorizes lawmakers to spend up to \$300 million a year for preservation. But as the economy went sour during the recession, so did funding for Florida Forever.

Under Negrón's bill, 25 percent or \$200 million a year, whichever is lower, would go from what is known as the state land-acquisition trust fund to Everglades and Lake Okeechobee projects.

Of that money, \$32 million would go to the South Florida Water Management District for the Long-Term Plan through the 2023-2024 fiscal year, about \$100 million annually for the next decade would be used to plan, design, engineer and construct works already approved under the Central Everglades Planning Project, and the remaining funds would go the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan and the Northern Everglades and Estuaries Protection Program.

"It reflects a long-term commitment, over the next 10 years, toward restoration of the Everglades," Negrón said.

The measure also would require the Department of Environmental Protection and the South Florida Water Management District to give preference to Everglades restoration projects that reduce discharges of water from Lake Okeechobee to the St. Lucie or Caloosahatchee estuaries.

The land-acquisition trust fund is being used to carry out the 2014 constitutional amendment, which requires that a portion of documentary-stamp taxes are set aside for land and water buying and preservation.

Gov. Rick Scott's office has estimated the real estate tax is expected to generate \$905 million for the land-acquisition trust fund during the fiscal year that starts July 1. The measure was projected to generate \$740 million in the current fiscal year.