

Diane Salz <salz.govconsultant@gmail.com>  
Fwd: Weatherford, Gaetz ponder committees  
November 14, 2012 10:43 AM

---

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

From: **Diane Salz** <salz.govconsultant@gmail.com>  
Date: Wed, Nov 14, 2012 at 10:42 AM  
Subject: Weatherford, Gaetz ponder committees  
To: Diane Salz <salz.govconsultant@gmail.com>

Campaigns over, Weatherford, Gaetz ponder committees, organization  
Gray Rohrer, 11/09/2012 - 05:30 PM

Incoming presiding officers **Will Weatherford** and **Don Gaetz** are turning their attention to organizing the Legislature after a campaign season that saw Republicans lose a handful of seats in each chamber.

Both Weatherford, slated to become House Speaker on Nov. 20, and Gaetz, the Senate President-designate, sent memos to the members of their respective chambers this week asking for committee assignment preferences. The assignments are expected to be announced by the end of the month.

Weatherford already has announced his leadership team, but will likely have tougher decisions to make than Gaetz. It appears his pick for **House Majority Leader, Chris Dorworth**, next in line to be House Speaker after Weatherford, narrowly lost his re-election bid to Democrat **Mike Clelland**. Clelland held a 123-vote lead after provisional ballots were counted **Thursday**, but the margin is close enough to force an automated recount if Dorworth doesn't concede.

**Rep. Seth McKeel**, R-Lakeland, has been tapped by Weatherford to chair the **House Appropriations Committee** and lead budget talks. **Rep. Rob Schenk**, R-Spring Hill, is chairman of the **Rules Committee**, and **Rep. Marti Coley**, R-Marianna, has been named **speaker pro-tempore**.

**House Minority Leader Perry Thurston** of Plantation said he has spoken with Weatherford about committee assignments and has asked that **Rep. Joe Gibbons**, D-Hallandale Beach, be the ranking Democratic member on the **Appropriations Committee**. **Rep. Janet Cruz**, D-Tampa, has been tapped as the Democrats' leading voice on ethics reform.

Likewise, Gaetz said he has had similar talks with **Senate Minority Leader Chris Smith** of Fort Lauderdale about committee assignments.

Gaetz hasn't yet announced his leadership team or any committee chairs. He will be greeted with a significantly different Senate when the Legislature convenes Nov. 20 for the organizational session, as 15 freshman members will be sworn in to office.

Weatherford has shaken up the committee structure somewhat, moving subcommittees such as **Insurance and Banking** from the full **Economic Affairs Committee** to the **Regulatory Affairs Committee**, and splitting the education subcommittees into **Choice & Innovation, K-12** and **Higher Education & Workforce**.

Gaetz has made no final decisions on switching up the committee structure, but has said he may merge the **Senate K-12** and higher education committees together.

Diane Salz <salz.govconsultant@gmail.com>  
Fwd: Panel OKs estuary nutrient limits  
November 14, 2012 10:38 AM

---

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

From: **Diane Salz** <salz.govconsultant@gmail.com>  
Date: Wed, Nov 14, 2012 at 10:37 AM  
Subject: Panel OKs estuary nutrient limits  
To: Diane Salz <salz.govconsultant@gmail.com>

Panel OKs estuary nutrient limits as environmental groups mount new challenge  
Bruce Ritchie, 11/13/2012 - 02:02 PM

A state panel on Tuesday approved phosphorus and nitrogen limits recommended by the **Florida Department of Environmental Protection** for Panhandle estuaries.

Environmental groups have been battling DEP and industry groups over setting nutrient limits to prevent waterways from becoming choked with weeds and algae. Industry groups opposed pollution limits set by the **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency** as too expensive while environmental groups supported them.

The Legislature this year waived ratification of DEP rules establishing limits for lakes, streams and rivers. DEP is awaiting approval by the federal EPA, but environmental groups have filed a new challenge to the state rules.

Department officials said the "rigorous" nutrient limits for Panhandle estuaries were established using "cutting-edge" science.

"We believe it is important to show EPA that Florida can protect our waters without their help," **Jeff Littlejohn**, DEP's deputy secretary for regulatory programs, told the state **Environmental Regulation Commission** on Tuesday.

He said Florida is continuing to "push hard" for EPA to approve its petition to lift the federal rules in Florida and approve state rules.

But **Josh Smith**, an attorney with the **Earthjustice** law firm, said the environmental groups filed an amended petition last week with the federal EPA challenging the legality of a DEP implementation plan issued in September.

"We disagree vigorously with that assessment (by DEP) of how things are going," Smith said. "I think as we've made clear the Florida standards don't help; they don't do what EPA has found necessary to protect Florida's waters."

Although EPA officials have said they hope to issue a decision by Nov. 30, the federal agency may now take longer because of the challenge filed to Florida's implementation plan, Smith said. The amended petition was filed by the **Florida Wildlife Federation**, the **Environmental Confederation of Southwest Florida**, **St. Johns Riverkeeper** and the **Sierra Club**.

During the **Environmental Regulation Commission** meeting Tuesday, no one spoke against the proposed nutrient limits recommended by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection.

With the approval, nutrient limits have been set for three-fourths of Florida's estuaries, DEP officials said. Limits for the remaining estuaries, located in the Big Bend, will be established by June 30, 2015.

**Terry Cole**, an attorney representing agricultural groups, praised DEP officials at the commission hearing for their work.

**David Childs**, representing wastewater utilities, said afterward that Florida's water quality experts are "second to none."

"Florida should be in control of its own waters and water quality standards," Childs said, in reference to the state awaiting the EPA's approval. He represents the **Florida Water Environment Association Utility Council**.

**Linda Young**, who in 2010 strongly criticized DEP's analysis of estuaries, said she did not attend because it would have been pointless because the commission is a "rubber-stamp" for the department. She is director of the **Clean Water Network of Florida**.

Diane Salz <salz.govconsultant@gmail.com>  
Fwd: DEP job vacancies  
November 14, 2012 10:28 AM

---

----- Forwarded message -----  
From: **Diane Salz** <salz.govconsultant@gmail.com>  
Date: Wed, Nov 14, 2012 at 10:27 AM  
Subject: DEP job vacancies  
To: Diane Salz <salz.govconsultant@gmail.com>

Only "mission critical" job vacancies at DEP can be filled, deputy secretary says in memo amid layoffs  
Bruce Ritchie, 11/13/2012 - 04:09 PM

A **Florida Department of Environmental Protection** deputy secretary last month told managers they may only to fill "mission critical" job vacancies and that a cost-benefit analysis must be performed before filling them.

**Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility**, which released the department memo on Tuesday, said in a news release that working at DEP has become the "absolute pits" after layoffs last month and other such "callous" managerial tactics. A department spokesman said the PEER news release contained inaccurate allegations.

In an Oct. 11 memo to regulatory division directors and directors of district offices, **Deputy Secretary for Regulatory Affairs Jeff Littlejohn** said advance approval is required when filling a vacant position or reclassifying and filling a vacant position.

Prior to requesting approval, directors must determine whether the job duties are critical to DEP's mission, according to criteria attached to his memo. If a vacancy is critical, then a cost-benefit analysis must be done to determine whether the duties can be performed at a lower cost by outside entities including water management districts, universities, county departments or the private sector.

Directors also must say whether the duties and workload can be "equitably" transferred to other staff and whether filling the position will result in cost savings.

Also last month, DEP laid off 24 employees in its **Division of Water Resources**, including 15 in Tallahassee. In September, the Tampa district office laid off 25 employees.

Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility said one DEP manager was fired for refusing to terminate an employee who was ill. In Tampa, all employees were told to pack their personal belongings in their cars because 25 were being laid off -- and then they were told to unpack and return to work, the group said.

"These callous and needlessly cruel tactics suggest a staggering level of managerial incompetence," said **Florida PEER Director Jerry Phillips**, a former DEP enforcement attorney.

He said department documents requires employees who survive the layoffs to show they have achieved "job creation" and cost savings for regulated industries.

"DEP has been through some tough times before but employees are saying that this is the absolute pits," Phillips said.

Department spokesman **Patrick Gillespie** said employees in Tampa were not told to pack their cars and no water manager was fired for refusing to terminate an ill employee. And he said no supervisors were required to fire staff to earn raises, as PEER asserts.

The memo, Gillespie said, "was simply guidance for managers to make sound hiring and pay raise decisions to allow management to make those decisions without approval by Deputy Secretary Littlejohn."

Gillespie also said the department is continuing assessments of its district offices and divisions in Tallahassee to determine how "to best protect the environment and human health while being good stewards of taxpayer dollars."

Diane Salz <disalz@yahoo.com>  
Fwd: St. Johns River Water Management District Water News  
November 13, 2012 4:47 PM

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Water News <[waternews@sjrwmd.com](mailto:waternews@sjrwmd.com)>  
**Date:** November 13, 2012, 4:43:50 PM EST  
**To:** <[disalz@yahoo.com](mailto:disalz@yahoo.com)>  
**Subject:** St. Johns River Water Management District Water News

Email not displaying correctly? [Click to view online.](#)

## St. Johns River Water Management District Water News

News, meetings  
and notices

November 13, 2012

### District Governing Board elects 2012–2013 officers

The St. Johns River Water Management District's Governing Board on Nov. 13 unanimously **re-elected** Lad Daniels of Jacksonville to serve as Board chairman for a second year.

The Board also re-elected John A. Miklos of Orlando to serve as vice chairman and Douglas C. Bournique of Vero Beach as secretary. Maryam H. Ghyabi of Ormond Beach was re-elected as treasurer.

### One-day-a-week landscape irrigation resumes

With the return to Eastern Standard Time on Nov. 3, landscape irrigation has returned to no more than one day a week for fall and winter when lawns need less water.

The **watering restrictions** are designed to allow enough water to maintain healthy landscapes year-round and to ensure the efficient use of water. The restrictions apply to water withdrawn from ground or surface water, from a private well or pump, or from a public or private water utility.

### Upcoming meetings

- **Nov. 27, 9a.m.** — Clay-Putnam Minimum Flows and Levels Prevention/Recovery Strategies Implementation Team meeting; District headquarters, Governing Board room, 4049 Reid St., Palatka.
- **Dec. 12, 1 p.m.** — North Florida Regional Water Supply Partnership Stakeholder Advisory Committee meeting; Florida Gateway College, Wilson S. River Library and Media Center, 149 S.E. College Place, Building 200, Room 102, Lake City.

### Connect with us



### Upcoming meetings

For a listing of upcoming meeting dates, times and locations, visit our [meetings calendar page](#).

### Contacts

District staff contacts for:

- [Local governments](#)
- [Public and media](#)

[How to contact your local government](#)

### 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](http://floridaswater.com)



Complaint of public records violation filed against school board member

## Environmentalists criticize new Florida development rules

Published: November 12, 2012



An aerial view of a housing development in East Manatee. A Florida bill that has amended growth management may soon help Manatee and other state-wide developers improve the country's slow moving economy. HERALD FILE PHOTO

Grant Jefferies

By NICK WILLIAMS — [nwilliams@bradenton.com](mailto:nwilliams@bradenton.com)

MANATEE -- A Florida bill that amended growth management rules to eliminate duplicative regulations and expedite the permitting process is receiving mixed reviews.

Signed into law in May by Gov. Rick Scott and implemented July 1, House Bill 503, also known as the Environmental Regulation Bill, streamlines the permitting process, helps move projects along, including hiring subcontractors and putting more people to work, say supporters.

"In some instances, the developers have benefited from the state taking corrective action," said Alan Anderson, executive vice president of Manatee-Sarasota Home builders Association. "It really saves time, steps and energy. Some projects, the new projects since it was just passed, it will bring them to the market faster."

Among the state-wide revisions the expansions made by the bill, it reduces approval of wetland and environmental resource permits from 90 to 60 days, enlarges state methodology for general permits, provides incentives and allows developers to extend permits set to expire between Jan. 1 of 2012 and 2014 for two more years.

Some say the bill lacks oversights for environmental protection.

"The last couple of years we've seen bad bills passed," said Glenn Compton, director of ManaSota-88, a local nonprofit group dedicated to protecting Florida's environment. "This is just another example."

Compton said the bill does not prioritize environmental protection and urged citizens to realize the environment can't recover as quickly as the economy.

"Once you do degradation to environment, that's a permanent impact all citizens of Florida should be concerned with."

Before his term expired this year, former state senator Mike Bennett,

R-Bradenton, sponsored the senate version of the bill. Senate Bill 716 provides a reduction in fees and waivers for permits regarding projects that serve the public and prohibits a county or city from requiring an applicant to obtain a state or federal permit under certain conditions.

"What we wanted to do was cut out the duplication of services," said Bennett, the newly elected Manatee Supervisor of Elections. "It was costing time and money. You had government-paid engineers reviewing government-paid engineers."

Former state senator Pat Neal, owner of Neal Communities, a Manatee-based home builder, helped pass legislation in the 1980s involving planning and land development. He said the new bill will help strengthen the home-building business.

"It gets the state out of the land use business and helps with local control and local decision-making," Neal said. "Over the long term, it will enhance jobs and economic environmental stability and allow projects to go forward that have been stuck at state level for years."

Some environmental-ists, however, say scaling back on government per-mitting lessens the regulations and analysis needed to protect the environment.

[Back to Top](#)  
[< Previous Story](#)

**Weather alert: A sunny Tuesday expected in Bradenton**

[Next Story >](#)



**Complaint of public records violation filed against school board member Julie Aranibar**

[Email Newsletters >](#)

## Florida's Water Supply Is Limited, Conservation Is Essential

It has been a big year for water issues in Florida – particularly North Florida.

Folks in every corner of the state have likely heard about the Adena Springs Ranch permit application in Marion County, originally for 13.2 million gallons per day (mgd) from the Floridan aquifer, now for 5.3 mgd.

A North Florida Regional Water Supply Partnership has been convened to solve boundary water issues between the lesser developed Suwanee River Water Management District and the ever-thirsty St. Johns River Water Management District.

In Crystal River, residents and local government are outraged over a water bottling permit issued by the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) to allow between 76,700 gallons and 153,400 gallons to be withdrawn daily from the Floridan aquifer.

Granting this permit came after residents and the environmental community worked arduously to purchase and protect local springs, only to have a well permitted in the city limits so water can be pumped, shipped, bottled, and sold by a private water bottling company.

Meanwhile, no minimum flows and levels (MFLs) have been set for Crystal River and Kings Bay, where anyone who lives on or recreates on the water will tell you that the bay is saltier and the spring flows have been reduced.

Just to the south, stakeholders have been fighting proposals from the SWFWMD for the Chassahowitzka and Homosassa Rivers that would allow reduced flows. All of these issues are integral to the future of our state's water supply and the vitality of our aquatic ecosystems and the species that depend on them, including manatees.

While these permit applications and the continued mindset of the water management districts to find "more" water are disconcerting, there is one positive result: people are angry.

People are tired of business as usual while they watch the waters they love continue to decline. They are angry that Florida's leadership lacks vision and a sustainable long-term plan for water use.

Folks are right to be angry, and if we are going to create positive change in the way we provide, use, and value water, we all need to channel that anger into action – to contact our water management districts and local governments, to show up at the public meetings where these issues are being discussed, and to let our leaders know that we want a more sustainable future for Florida's water resources.

What we need are safeguards that will curb our wasteful water use and move us toward water neutrality where we find creative ways to use what we already have.

We need to stop giving our limited and precious water away to corporations that will turn around and use our public resources for private profit.

New developments can find water from the existing permitted water supplies. They can install cisterns in those new developments; pay to install low-flow fixtures in every home near and within those developments; and plant Florida-friendly landscapes that do not need intensive

irrigation. Our existing developments also must do more to curb water use.

Our water management districts are tasked with providing us water. As long as they see a demand, they will make it happen, but at what cost?

Whether that means setting a lower MFL for state water bodies, drawing surface waters off our rivers like the St. Johns, or building a seawater desalination facility, they will “find” the water.

Meanwhile, people and the environment will pay the price. By 2030, the districts have estimated that Floridians will “need” 1.9 billion gallons more per day than they did in 2005, as our population is expected to grow by 48 percent. The price tag to build the alternative water supply projects to meet this demand: \$3.6 billion.

Our state is at a crossroads, or perhaps more appropriately, a fork in the river. If we want to steer the ship down a path of sustainability, we must get and stay engaged. We must be vigilant in defending our natural resources and our water supply, and we must support laws and leaders that are committed to these principles.

Ultimately, we must realize the true costs associated with the water that seems to flow so freely from our faucets.

*Katie Tripp has been Save the Manatee Club's Director of Science and Conservation ([savethemanatee.org](http://savethemanatee.org)) since May, 2008. She received her Ph.D. in Veterinary Medical Sciences from the University of Florida, where she conducted research on manatee physiology.*



## IN OUR OPINION

### Editorial: Analyze the aquifer

*Published: Saturday, November 3, 2012 at 6:30 a.m.*

For White Springs Mayor Helen B. Miller, Florida's water problems hit home more than two decades ago, when White Sulphur Springs dried up. It was a stunning natural phenomenon, considering White Sulphur Springs used to spew out of the banks of the Suwannee River.

"Hydrologists and other experts tell us excessive consumptive water withdrawals and compromised recharge zones are the cause," Miller wrote in a recent letter to water advocates. "However, our situation is not unique."

Indeed it is not. We here in Marion County know all about declining spring flows and other signs our springs are deteriorating, maybe even disappearing as White Sulphur Springs did. And as Florida springs expert Jim Peterson famously noted, our springs are merely windows into the aquifer.

Simply, Florida's vast underground aquifer is under siege as a result of overpumping, nutrient pollution, salt-water intrusion and other negative impacts.

And although the topic of water has been much discussed in recent years, what we don't know about the true condition of our aquifers may be more important than what we do know.

That's why Miller and representatives of 27 other North Florida counties and 70 area cities and towns are asking the Florida Legislature to mandate a more comprehensive mining of the data regarding Florida's aquifers.

A resolution adopted by the Northwest Florida League of Cities and the Suwannee River League of Cities implores the Legislature to fund "an unbiased scientific study of the Floridan Aquifer due to its critical implications to statewide water supply."

In other words, what we don't know about the water under our feet — the water that provides life support for nearly all Floridians -- may be more than enough to hurt us.

The proposed The Floridan Aquifer System Sustainability Act of 2013 would direct the state's Department of Environmental Protection and its water management districts to amass and analyze the existing and new data necessary to protect the aquifer against over-pumping and pollution.

Lawmakers should do exactly that.

"Springs from central Georgia to southern Florida are experiencing reduced or intermittent flows. And, wells throughout the State are drying up every day," Mayor Miller wrote. "... (A) piecemeal approach cannot restore sustainability to the Floridan Aquifer System or provide for future growth. A system-wide approach is needed."



It's true. What we don't know about the water beneath our feet could hurt us, and we would urge Marion County and our county's three municipalities to seek to join in this sensible and needed scientific undertaking.

Copyright © 2012 Ocala.com — All rights reserved. Restricted use only.

# Maintaining utility ownership is right move for Hernando County

In Print: Thursday, November 1, 2012

The Hernando Commission correctly pulled the plug on the misguided and shortsighted scheme of selling one its most valuable assets — the county water and sewer system.

With no public comment, commissioners last week declined to research further the notion of divesting itself of the utility. That suggestion originally came in June from Commissioner David Russell and was one of two utility-related schemes the county considered to ease future budget crunches. Neither came to fruition as the commission quickly retreated from the other proposal as well — balancing its general fund budget with a newly created, but ill-defined "return on investment surcharge" in its utility department.

Russell, however, eyed the water and sewer system because its balance sheet showed \$212 million in assets with a \$63 million debt. A sale could have allowed the commission an infusion of cash that he wanted to use to subsidize customers' rates to sidestep increases planned for 2014 and beyond; and supplement the county's general fund that is facing a nearly \$10 million projected shortfall next year.

The long-term solvency of the system came into question after commissioners decided three years ago to keep rates artificially low. That maneuver came as the county embarked on a \$150 million renovation including consolidating smaller sewage treatment sites into bigger, regional plants. The commission's lack of political will was just one of the problems. A federal grant also failed to materialize and few new customers joined the system because of the dismal construction activity in the county.

The investment community responded five months ago by lowering the county's bond rating, which could translate to higher future costs to the public via higher interest rates for county borrowing.

But, selling the utility smacked of desperation and the commission finally recognized it. A county truly interested in the long-term solvency of a prized asset should simply charge market rates for the water and sewer service and allow the customers to properly finance its operations.

Give Russell credit for at least floating an unorthodox idea. Some of his fellow commissioners, Jim Adkins, in particular, simply call for spending and tax cuts and let others worry about the details.

These continued budget gimmicks that have included raiding land-buying trusts, dipping into reserve accounts and hanging for-sale signs on public assets are indicative of failing leadership that does not recognize the need for a balanced budget. County revenue should match its expenses.

[Last modified: Oct 31, 2012 05:34 PM]

Copyright 2012 Tampa Bay Times



News

## Water partnership gets in sync with state

Print Page

Stakeholders group gathers in Lake City to finalize plans.

By [TONY BRITT](#)

Published: Wednesday, October 31, 2012 10:09 AM EDT

[tbritt@lakecityreporter.com](mailto:tbritt@lakecityreporter.com)

The North Florida Regional Water Supply Partnership Stakeholder Advisory Committee now has a plan with its key components in line with the plans of the state water authority boards.

The North Florida Regional Water Supply Partnership Stakeholder Advisory Committee met Monday at the Wilson S. Rivers Library and Media Center at Florida Gateway College for its regularly scheduled monthly meeting with close to 20 people in attendance. During the meeting the realigned components listing for the regional water supply plan were presented. The regional water supply plan is designed for the protection of water resources in North Florida for adequate water supplies for the future.



A man swims in the Ichetucknee Springs head in early October. JASON MATTHEW WALKER/Lake City Reporter

Jeff Blair, facilitator for the stakeholder advisory committee, said there are 15 key components that make up the development of the regional water supply plan.

The realignment will allow the advisory committee to determine what issues they need to engage and discuss, and what recommendations they need to make to the water management districts as the districts develop the regional water supply plan.

"This is a tool to help them stay abreast of what the districts are doing and provide feedback at the proper input points," Blair said.

The Suwannee River Water Management District and the St. Johns River Water Management District staffs have compiled a work plan for the regional water supply plan. The North Florida Regional Water Supply Partnership Stakeholder Advisory Committee has its own workplan and the advisory committee's work plan has been realigned so that it will correlate with the plan for the water management districts.

"We've correlated the two plans, so they (advisory committees) can follow along with the key tasks, issues, schedules and milestones and committee can be working and plotting recommendations in a timely manner on each of the 15 components as we go through this process over the next three years," Blair said.

The workplan was initially given to advisory committee members weeks ago, but during the group's Sept. 24 meeting, committee members asked that the work plan be revised so it would follow and mirror in the same order, the work plans of the water management districts.

Carlos Herd, SRWMD director of water supply, also gave a presentation in which he unveiled a proposed boundary map showing for the potentially impacted areas within the two districts.

The map, which is designed to encompass areas common to both water management districts, goes west

to Suwannee County, south to Gilchrist County and east to Duval, Flagler, St. Johns County and north to Nassau County.

"We revised the map because some stakeholders have requested a larger map to make sure we encompass the entire region of concern," Herd said. "The purpose of the map is to make sure we include all of the water resource caution areas that the SRWMD has declared and include all the northern, nine counties of the St. Johns Water Management District that will be included in the planning region."

The North Florida Regional Water Supply Partnership was established by the Suwannee River Water Management District, the St. Johns River Water Management District, and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection as an initiative to protect natural resources and ensure cost-effective and sustainable water supplies in North Florida.

The NFRWSP formed a stakeholder advisory committee to serve in an advisory capacity to the districts and DEP on water supply issues. The committee includes representatives of groups and entities from throughout the region.

The St. Johns River and the Suwannee River Water Management districts, have each appointed six members representing six stakeholder groups which is how the advisory committee was compiled.

The stakeholder advisory committee's role and function is to provide the water management districts with recommendations on the development of the regional water supply plan going forward.

Copyright © 2012 - Lake City Reporter

[x] Close Window

Diane Salz <salz.govconsultant@gmail.com>  
Fwd: DEP lay offs in Tallahassee  
October 31, 2012 9:59 AM

---

----- Forwarded message -----  
From: **Diane Salz** <salz.govconsultant@gmail.com>  
Date: Wed, Oct 31, 2012 at 9:58 AM  
Subject: DEP lay offs in Tallahassee  
To: Diane Salz <salz.govconsultant@gmail.com>

DEP lays off 15 in Tallahassee as part of ongoing evaluation of positions  
Bruce Ritchie, 10/30/2012 - 04:51 PM

The **Florida Department of Environmental Protection** this week laid off 15 employees in Tallahassee and nine in other offices across the state and eliminated another 24 vacant positions.

The move at the **Division of Water Resources** follows a reduction of 25 employees on Oct. 18 at the DEP district office in Tampa.

A DEP spokeswoman said Tuesday there is an ongoing evaluation and assessment of positions to ensure the department is being fiscally responsible. The process will continue through the new year at district offices across the state.

"These assessments and evaluations are being conducted throughout all divisions, districts and programs within the department and is a critical component of being able to improve the effectiveness of the way we do business," spokeswoman **Dee Ann Miller** wrote in an email.

She added that the assessment does not necessarily mean layoffs. At the Fort Myers district office, she said, eight new positions are being created as a result of the assessment.

A presentation on the restructuring was shown to department employees during a meeting Tuesday at DEP's Bob Martinez Center in Tallahassee.

One laid-off employee who did not want to be identified told *The Florida Current* that employees with seniority appeared to be the target of layoffs.

**Doug Martin**, legislative director with the **American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Council 79**, said the layoffs in Tallahassee appeared unnecessary because many DEP positions are paid for with federal funds.

"There was not a financial reason for these layoffs," he said. "And the business community often complains about the time, etc., involved in the permitting process. So they are laying off some of their most experienced people in areas where the staff is needed."

"It's hard to think of a more important duty of the state than to ensure the cleanliness of drinking water," Martin said.

Asked whether environmental protection will be reduced, DEP's Miller responded, "No programs or core functions have been eliminated and our level of service will not be compromised."

And in response to Martin's comments, she said fiscal responsibility does not depend upon the funding source.

"Whether it is state or federal funds, they are both taxpayer dollars and it is our responsibility to be careful stewards," she said.

Diane Salz <salz.govconsultant@gmail.com>  
Fwd: springs protection legislation  
October 30, 2012 11:22 AM

---

----- Forwarded message -----  
From: **Diane Salz** <salz.govconsultant@gmail.com>  
Date: Tue, Oct 30, 2012 at 11:18 AM  
Subject: springs protection legislation  
To: Diane Salz <salz.govconsultant@gmail.com>

White Springs mayor leads support for water legislation that seeks to protect springs  
Bruce Ritchie, 10/29/2012 - 05:50 PM

The mayor of White Springs, a north Central Florida town whose namesake springs quit flowing more than two decades ago, is leading an effort behind proposed legislation to restore the Floridan Aquifer to levels before development occurred in Florida.

**Helen Miller**, mayor of White Springs and vice chair of [Florida Leaders Organized for Water](#) (FLOW), says the draft **Floridan Aquifer Sustainability Act of 2013** arose from the drought that gripped Florida in 2011 and early 2012 and concerns about water-use permitting in the Panhandle and North Central Florida.

The proposed legislation directs the **Florida Department of Environmental Protection** to proceed with studies to develop a uniform model of the Floridan Aquifer, which provides drinking water for much of the state. The model would use 1980 as a pre-development baseline or earlier if data is available.

DEP and the state's five water management districts would be required to review water permits of 100,000 gallons or more per day to determine whether they were causing adverse effects to the aquifer or "significant harm" to springs, lakes and rivers. The harm would be mitigated immediately and eliminated within five years.

"We have to balance that (importance of water utilities) with what is in the best interest of water sustainability in the state," Miller said. She said she also has asked the **Florida League of Cities** to support the legislation

**Tropical Storm Debby** in June eased the drought's grip on the region but environmental groups across the state have continued to raise concerns about permitting.

A DEP spokesman said it wasn't appropriate to comment on the legislation because it hasn't been presented to the department.

**Patrick Lehman**, executive director of the **Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority**, said he'd have to see how the legislation fit in with ongoing state programs to know whether it was a duplication or an expansion.

DEP spokesman **Patrick Gillespie** said the department is working to improve its Floridan Aquifer modeling. Lehman said he supports developing a consistent model as is being done now in Central Florida with DEP and three water districts in the region.

"It is always great to have consistency between districts," Lehman said.

DEP also is leading an initiative that it says will reward conservation and establish water-use permitting consistency across the state's five water management districts. The water management districts also are conducting minimum flow studies as part of permitting as required in state law beginning in 1972.

Miller said the proposed legislation arose from resolutions adopted earlier this year by the **Northwest Florida League of Cities** and **Suwannee River League of Cities** calling for reviews of permits that affect springs flows in the region. Florida Leaders Organized for Water voted this month to support the draft legislation.

She has introduced the legislation to the Florida League of Cities energy and environmental quality committee, which she serves on, and she hopes the League will take up the issue at its [legislative conference](#) in Orlando on Feb. 15-16.

"No easy answers," she said. "But it is crucial that each municipality understands being on the side of history on this one in terms of water sustainability for future generations."





Environment

4:25 PM THU OCTOBER 18, 2012

## Florida Expects Federal Approval Of New Water Quality Standards

By [TRIMMEL GOMES \(/PEOPLE/TRIMMEL-GOMES\)](#)**Listen**

00:47

Despite pending legal challenges, Florida officials are expecting the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to sign off on new water quality standards for the state's lakes and streams.

The federal Environmental Protection Agency is still reviewing Florida's revamped criteria for measuring water quality, called [Numeric Nutrient Standards \(/http://www.npr.org/2011/01/17/132994237/EPA-Florida-Face-Off-Over-Water-Standards\)](#). It was adopted last December and was quickly challenged by some environmental groups that claimed it wasn't strict enough. Director of the Florida Division of Environmental Assessment and Restoration Support, Drew Bartlett, says that's not the case:

"What you have to understand is we used the same science EPA used when adopting our rules and so we put the same numbers on the books, we added some additional provisions to look at biology and look at other important measures."

Environmental groups like EarthJustice want the agency to impose quantifiable and enforceable limits for nutrient contaminants in the state. It's not clear when the federal agency will rule.

For more news updates, follow **Trimmel Gomes** on Twitter [@TrimmelG \(/https://twitter.com/TrimmelG\)](#)

**TAGS:** [Numeric Nutrient Standards \(/term/numeric-nutrient-standards\)](#) [Drew Bartlett \(/term/drew-bartlett\)](#) [DEAR \(/term/dear\)](#) [water \(/term/water\)](#) [EarthJustice \(/term/earthjustice\)](#)