

Withlacoochee Regional Water Supply Authority

Special District Public Facilities Report



September 2017

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**WITHLACOOCHEE REGIONAL WATER SUPPLY AUTHORITY
SPECIAL DISTRICT PUBLIC FACILITIES REPORT
September 1, 2017**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Beginning March 1, 1991, pursuant to state law enacted in the 1989 legislative session, [Chapter 89-169, Laws of Florida (Chapter 189, F.S.)], special districts such as the Withlacoochee Regional Water Supply Authority are required to file special district public facilities reports with each local government in which the special districts are located. The purpose of the report is to provide local governments with information pertinent to the development and updating of the local governments' comprehensive plans. The report is to contain the following elements:

- Description of existing facilities owned or operated
- Description of facilities being built / proposed to be expanded
- How the new facilities / expansions will be financed
- The anticipated time the construction will be completed.

As indicated in the statute the report is due to local governments twelve months prior to submission of Evaluation and Appraisal Letter to the Division of Community Development. In addition, the special district public facilities report is to be updated every seven years and may be referenced and relied upon by a local government when updating their local comprehensive plans.

**WITHLACOOCHEE REGIONAL WATER
SUPPLY AUTHORITY**

HISTORY

The Withlacoochee Regional Water Supply Authority (WRWSA) is an independent special district of the state of Florida, created and existing pursuant to Section 373.713 and 163.01, Florida Statutes and is one of four water supply authorities within the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD). The WRWSA was founded in 1977 by Hernando, Citrus, Sumter, Marion and Levy counties - in 1982, Levy County formally withdrew. The WRWSA is charged with planning for and developing cost efficient, high quality water supplies for its member governments and promotes environmental stewardship through its water conservation programs. In the future, it is anticipated that the WRWSA will partner with its member governments to develop water sources to augment current supplies to meet the region's long-term needs.

In 1984, an amendment to the WRWSA's inter-local agreement provided for municipal membership, which allowed cities within each county to become members. These include Belleview, Brooksville, Bushnell, Center Hill, Coleman, Crystal River, Dunnellon, Inverness, McIntosh, Ocala, Reddick, Webster, and Wildwood. Figure 1 depicts the WRWSA four-county region and its member governments.

In 2014, a revised and restated Inter-local agreement was approved by Citrus, Hernando, Marion and Sumter counties. Pursuant to the new agreement, the WRWSA Board is comprised of two county commissioners from Citrus, Hernando and Sumter counties, three commissioners from Marion County and one municipal representative from each of the member counties (currently Crystal River, Brooksville, Belleview and Bushnell).

EXISTING WATER SUPPLY FACILITIES

The WRWSA owns the Charles A. Black (CAB) wellfield in Citrus County, with a permitted capacity of approximately 4.6 mgd (4.597). The CAB water supply system consists of seven groundwater production wells and two water treatment facilities, CAB-1 and CAB-2. CAB-1 consists of two groundwater supply wells, disinfection equipment, storage tanks, and distribution piping equipment. CAB-2 consists of five groundwater supply wells, disinfection equipment, storage tanks, and distribution piping equipment. Both facilities are regulated by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and SWFWMD. The CAB current monthly pumpage (2017 monthly average) is averaging near its permitted quantity.

The WRWSA and Citrus County completed negotiations at the end of FY 2015-16 for a new water supply contract governing the operation and maintenance of the CAB wellfield. The new contract allows for the continued operation of the facilities by Citrus County in a cost effective manner ensuring a long-term water supply for the County and its customers while also providing for long-term financial stability for the WRWSA. Provisions of the new contract call for improved coordination between Citrus County and WRWSA.

There are no WRWSA plans or projects to construct new water supply facilities or expand the Charles A. Black wellfield facilities at this time. However, the WRWSA did complete an engineering analysis of the CAB facilities in September of 2016 that recommends annual contributions to and projected expenditures from a Renewal and Replacement fund. Expenditures for such items as wells, pumps, motors, storage, emergency power generation, meters and other items are recommended through the year 2036.

FISCAL YEAR 2017 – 2018 WORK PROGRAM

While there are no plans to construct new, or expand existing water supply production facilities, the WRWSA has a robust conservation, technical assistance and member advocacy program funded and active for FY 2017 - 2018.

1. Joint Funding of Water Conservation Projects with Member Local Governments

The WRWSA will continue its grant program to assist local governments in improving water conservation within the region in order to extend the use of groundwater as long as possible. Fresh groundwater is the least expensive source available to meet growing demands, however there is a limit to this source due to environmental impacts and impacts on other existing legal users. As the limit to fresh groundwater resources is reached, alternative, more expensive water sources will need to be developed. At the present time, water conservation programs are the most appropriate way for the WRWSA to help local governments extend the use of lower cost groundwater supplies. During Fiscal Year (FY) 2017-18, the proposed budget anticipates appropriating an additional \$130,000 toward local government water conservation projects. Proposals will be considered from local governments and public supply utilities in the WRWSA's jurisdiction. The grant program guidelines and application package may be found on the WRWSA's web page at www.wrwsa.org. The water conservation activities co-funded by this grant program help participating utilities meet and surpass the maximum 150 gallons per person per day that is required by the SWFWMD no later than 2019 and to meet the SJRWMD conservation requirements.

2. Enhancement of the Regional Residential Irrigation Audit Program to Promote Water Conservation within the Region

This ongoing program provides an opportunity for residential water utility customers to obtain site-specific evaluations for optimizing the use of water through landscaping techniques and efficient irrigation systems, and to implement recommendations provided by a professionally certified contractor. Contractors used for the site-specific evaluations are professionals certified by the Florida Irrigation Society (FIS) or other recognized certifying agency in the targeted region. The initiative includes program information, water conservation education, reporting and analysis by a consultant. This continuing project targets existing inefficient landscape and irrigation water use and results in significant water savings and can lead to water quality protection through reduced leaching of fertilizers and lawn chemicals. Results from the Pilot Project and Phase 2 indicate a total water savings of 41 million gallons per year for 371 residential customers, representing an average reduction in total water use of 33%.

The WRWSA initiated the Pilot program in 2011 with joint funding from the SWFWMD. The SWFWMD's cooperative funding has continued throughout all phases of the program. During Phase 2 of the program, 162 customers received evaluations of their irrigation systems; this phase was completed in November 2015. Phase 3 began on October 1, 2014 and is scheduled for completion in the current FY. The three programs combined will reach 532 utility customers. Phase 4 began in the current FY and includes an "Enhanced Program", whereby participants in certain utilities can elect to have the WRWSA's contractor assist in implementing certain recommendations. Phase 4 is planned to reach over 400

customers in the participating utilities. This water conservation initiative helps participating utilities meet and surpass the maximum 150 gallons per person per day that is required by the SWFWMD no later than 2019 and to meet the St. John's River Water Management District (SJRWMD) conservation requirements.

3. Legislative and Governmental Affairs Advocacy on Behalf of the WRWSA and Its Member Governments

The WRWSA conducts legislative and executive branch advocacy year-round to promote initiatives on behalf of the WRWSA and its member governments, and to protect the WRWSA's interests. Historically, the WRWSA has played a vital role in influencing state and regional water supply planning, permitting and funding programs including "local sources first," the Water Protection and Sustainability Program and subsequent water resource and supply funding programs. Each year prior to the Legislative Session, the WRWSA Board of Directors reviews and approves policy direction to guide its advocacy efforts. Progress reports are provided on a regular basis. It is anticipated that during FY 2017-18, the Florida Legislature will continue to make modifications to the state's comprehensive water policies and funding programs. The recent passage of comprehensive water protection legislation, springs protection and restoration funding and legislation, and the "Legacy Florida" legislation relating to the implementation of the Constitutional Land and Water Conservation Amendment will likely require continuing refinements in the upcoming session. The WRWSA will remain fully engaged in assisting the Legislature to implement and refine this recent legislation that significantly revamped the state's comprehensive water policies and funding programs, as well as engage as appropriate on new legislation that would affect the WRWSA and water supplies of our member governments.

4. Continued Cooperation with Citrus County in Operation and Management of the WRWSA's Charles A. Black Water Supply Facilities

The WRWSA and Citrus County completed negotiations at the end of FY 2015-16 of the new Water Supply Contract governing the operation and maintenance of the CABWSF. The new Contract allows for the continued operation of the facilities by Citrus County in a cost effective manner ensuring a long-term water supply for the County and its customers while also providing for long- term financial stability for the WRWSA. Various provisions of the new Contract call for improved coordination between the County and WRWSA.

5. Participation in Maintenance and Enhancement of the North-Central Florida Groundwater Model

The first phase of this project was jointly funded by the SWFWMD, SJRWMD, Marion County and the WRWSA. The project was initiated in fiscal year 2012-13. Phase 1 of the project entailed updating and expanding the SWFWMD's Northern District Groundwater Model to encompass all of Marion County and to incorporate

the most recent hydrologic data. Phase 1 of the project was successfully completed. The intent is for both water management districts to utilize this common model for determining the availability of groundwater in the region, particularly in Marion County which is split by the districts' boundaries. The SJRWMD and SWFWMD continue to improve upon the model and seek the engagement of various stakeholders. The model has significant implications for groundwater availability in the region and the WRWSA's continued participation and coordination with member governments is essential to ensure water supply implications are considered as the model is updated. The WRWSA also engages with both Districts to ensure continued use and support of the model.

6. Springs Protection and Restoration

Continue working with the SWFWMD on its Springs Coast Initiative. The SWFWMD is scheduled to complete preparation of Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) Plans for the five first magnitude springs in the northern District, as well as complete minimum flows and levels (MFLs) for these water bodies, in FY 2016-17. The WRWSA staff have actively participated in the Springs Coast Management Committee. It is anticipated the SWFWMD will continue some form of stakeholder involvement and the WRWSA will continue to represent public supply utilities in this effort.

7. Program Development and Technical Assistance

- a) Support efforts to further define the hydrogeology of the region. Continue cooperation with the water management districts on the collection of hydrologic data to further refine the Districts' planning and regulatory models. Coordinate on efforts to better define the lower Floridan aquifer and the extent of fresh and brackish groundwater within the aquifer.
- b) Promote the WRWSA Regional Framework through coordination with WRWSA member governments to facilitate regional and sub-regional cooperation on water supply development and reclaimed water projects. Work with the WMDs in defining strategic priorities for the region and how these priorities may influence the ranking criteria for the Districts' Cooperative Funding Initiatives, including potential District funding for regional and sub-regional traditional and non-traditional water supply development that is consistent with the WRWSA Regional Framework.
- c) Participate in the SWFWMD and SJRWMD minimum flows and levels (MFLs) programs representing the interests of member governments. Provide technical assistance to WRWSA member governments in determining the potential impact to both the environment and potential water supply development based on proposed MFLs from the Districts.
- d) Work with the SWFWMD and SJRWMD as they update their respective regional water supply plans to ensure the interests of the WRWSA and its member governments are represented in the process.

- e) Coordinate with FDEP, SJRWMD, SWFWMD and the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services on policy and rule development. Provide assistance to WRWSA member governments on FDEP and District rule development that may include Water Use Permitting, Environmental Resource Permitting, water conservation and future water supply development, including the statewide consistency initiatives. Monitor water management programs and rule development in other parts of the state, including the Central Florida Water Initiative, for implications to the WRWSA and its member governments.
- f) Monitor and coordinate with the water supply planning and development activities in adjacent communities and regions, including but not limited to Tampa Bay Water, the Central Florida Water Initiative, the recently formed Polk Water Cooperative, and Lake and Levy counties for possible implications on water resource availability within the WRWSA region. Provide input to such activities when appropriate.
- g) Monitor applications for significant water use permits and permit modifications within the region for potential impacts on WRWSA and member government existing and planned water supply facilities.