

**e-Resource** is a monthly electronic communiqué designed to keep you apprised of the community and legislative activities undertaken by the Southwest Florida Water Management District and provide up-to-date information on important water issues.

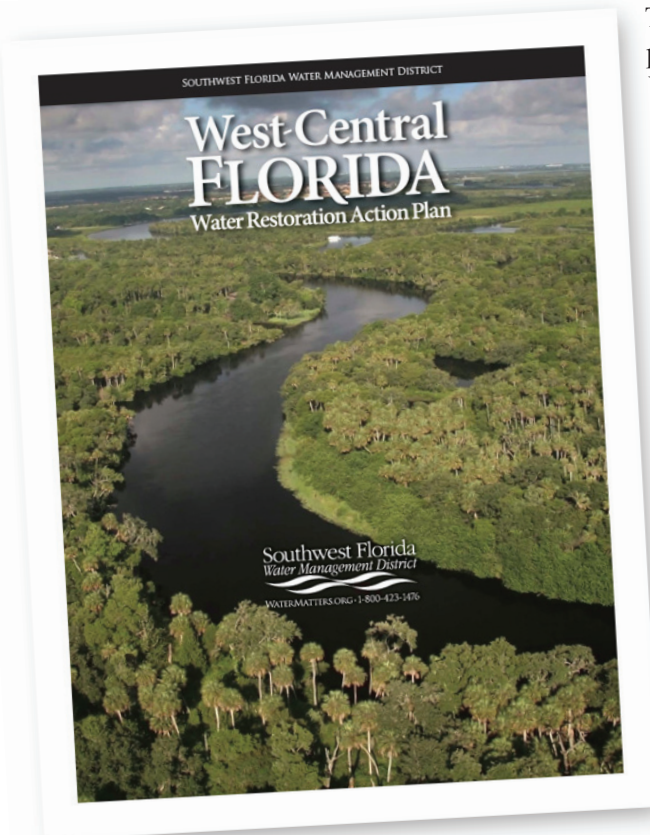


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## *West-Central Florida Water Restoration Action Plan* **Included in Governor's Proposed Budget**

The West-Central Florida Water Restoration Action Plan (WRAP) was included in Governor Crist's proposed budget. The WRAP is a key regional environmental restoration and water resource sustainability program that furthers the progressive water resource management that has evolved in this area. The eight-county area has experienced increased groundwater demands over decades that have resulted in declines in aquifer levels. The result of these declines is saltwater intrusion along the coast, reduced flows in the upper Peace River and lowered water levels of some lakes in the Lake Wales Ridge areas of Polk and Highlands counties.



The WRAP has several main project components: the Central West Coast Surface Water Enhancement Initiative, the Facilitating Agricultural Resource Management Systems program, the Ridge Lakes Restoration Initiative, the Upper Peace River Watershed Restoration Initiative and the Central Florida Water Resource Development Project.

Governor Charlie Crist has recognized the water resource needs of the region and has made a commitment to water supply and environmental resource sustainability with the inclusion of the WRAP in his 2008–2009 recommended state budget. To date, more than \$36 million has been invested by the District and project partners. The total cost of WRAP is expected to be

The WRAP provides benefits in water quantity and water quality, as well as the sustainability of natural systems through conservation, best management practices and a reduction in the

dependence on ground water. These benefits will restore the natural pattern of major rivers, wetlands, swamps and lakes.

\$1.8 billion over a period of 17 years. Of these costs, it is anticipated that approximately one-third will need to be derived from state and federal sources.

## **Strategic Aggregates Review Task Force Submits Final Report**

The Strategic Aggregates Review Task Force submitted its final report to Governor Crist, Senate President Ken Pruitt and House Speaker Marco Rubio on February 1. The report outlined a series of recommendations to improve land use and environmental regulatory controls. The final report identifies 33 counties where aggregate and sand resources exist. Ten of the counties are within the Southwest Florida Water Management District (Charlotte, Citrus, Hernando, Lake, Levy, Marion, Pasco, Polk, Sarasota and Sumter).

There has not been consensus on the future of the Task Force. The door was left open for the committee to continue to meet through the 2009 legislative session or to sunset as provided by under the original legislation.

The Task Force was formed with the passage of House Bill 985 during the 2007 session and was charged with identifying areas of improvement in policy and public investment as it related to the supply aggregate materials and to evaluate related mining and land use practices.



## Governor Crist Releases 2008–2009 Budget Priorities

Governor Crist unveiled his proposed \$70 billion budget. The energy portion of the budget includes a \$200 million energy and climate change package — \$50 million for solar, wind and other renewable energy, \$42.5 million to promote and develop biofuels in Florida and \$107.5 million to encourage and develop green industries and strengthen Florida's economy.

In addition to investing in energy and climate change initiatives, Governor Crist proposes spending \$300 million to protect and preserve Florida's environment through Florida Forever, adding to the nearly 3.6 million acres of land already in conservation. The Governor also recommends a

continuation of the restoration of Lake Okeechobee, funds for its downstream coastal estuaries and \$100 million to fully fund the state's annual share of Everglade's restoration.

As traditional water sources become overstressed and southeastern states continue to experience extraordinary drought conditions, the Governor's budget proposes restoring the full \$60 million to the Water Protection and Sustainability Trust Fund's alternative water supply development. As mentioned previously, the Governor's budget also includes the District's West-Central Florida Water Restoration Action Plan as well as \$5 million for the continued implementation of the Florida Keys Wastewater Management Plan.

## Tampa Bay Water System Configuration II Project

The District is seeking \$10 million in state funding for the Tampa Bay Water System Configuration II Project. This project will build on Tampa Bay Water's existing enhanced surface water system and is the second phase of an alternative water supply project to meet the growing water needs of the region. The project involves an expansion of Tampa Bay Water's surface water supply system by implementing enhancements that will ultimately provide an additional 25 mgd of alternative water supply. In addition, the project will ensure the recovery of the region's natural systems that are impacted by groundwater withdrawals.

A core component of the project is an expansion of the regional treatment plant's capacity to 99 mgd. Specifically, the project includes the construction of withdrawal, transmission, pumping and treatment facilities.

Senator Victor Crist has sponsored the budget request and will assist the District and Tampa Bay Water as the project moves through the legislative process.

## Tampa Bay Water's Desal Plant Hosts Ribbon Cutting

Tampa Bay Water recently celebrated the Tampa Bay Seawater Desalination Plant in Apollo Beach with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. The plant is now fully operational, providing 25 million gallons per day (mgd) of drinking water. District Governing and Basin Board members, as well as District staff, attended the event.

This plant is the largest seawater desalination plant in North America. At 25 mgd, the plant provides 10 percent of the Tampa Bay region's drinking water supply. The plant is operated by American Water and Acciona Agua through their joint venture subsidiary American Water-Pridesa.



Southwest Florida  
Water Management District

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