

**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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## Legislative Session Update

House and Senate leaders extended the regular session one week to finalize the fiscal year 2010 budget. Several bills passed the House and Senate that impact the District directly. These include:

### **SB 2080 — Water Resources**

The District's West-Central Florida Water Restoration Action Plan (WRAP) passed unanimously and became the vehicle for two other important pieces of legislation. The bill implements the Southern Water Use Caution Area Recovery Strategy and codifies the program in statute. The language provides a description of the intent of the program, program components and partners, and also offers the opportunity for the Legislature to receive updates on the progress of WRAP as it moves forward. This legislation was sponsored by Senator JD Alexander and Representative Seth McKeel.

The water management district sunset bill and the Florida-friendly landscaping bill were also amended to this legislation. The Florida-friendly section removes the term "Xeriscape" from Florida Statutes and replaces it with the term "Florida-friendly landscaping." It specifies additional principles that illustrate this particular landscaping approach. The legislation recognizes that the participation of homeowner associations and local governments is essential to state water conservation efforts. The bill also requires water management districts to use Florida-friendly landscaping around buildings and facilities owned by the districts and constructed after June 30, 2009.

The water management district sunset language removes the ex-officio designation of Basin Board chairs and reduces the Manasota Basin Board membership from three members representing Sarasota and three representing Manatee to two each. It allows substantive legislative committee chairs to provide input on proposed water

management district budgets, authorizes water management district governing boards to delegate authority for issuing general permits and issue 50-year consumptive use permits for certain alternative water supply development projects, and eliminates the Lake Panassoffkee Restoration Council and program. Further, the language requires that the total annual debt service for bonds issued may not exceed 20 percent of the annual ad valorem tax revenues of the water management district, unless approved by the Joint Legislative Budget Commission. Finally, it expands water management district lands eligible to receive payment in lieu of taxes (PILT) and revises the method used to determine eligibility for such payments.

### **HB 73 — Expedited Permitting Process for Economic Development Projects**

Representative Robert Schenck's expedited permitting legislation has passed both the House and Senate. In the Senate, the legislation was sponsored by Senator Fasano. The legislation expedites permitting for certain economic development projects that counties or municipalities identify as target industry businesses. It also states that charter counties with a population over 1.2 million are eligible for expedited permitting under this section only upon designation by resolution of the charter county's governing board.

### **SB 494 — Water Conservation**

This legislation requires the Department of Environmental Protection to create

a model ordinance to be adopted by local governments assessing penalties for violations to both operators of non-conforming automatic irrigation systems and licensed contractors who do not comply. Funds raised by a local government through penalties shall be used to further water conservation activities. Current law requires automatic lawn sprinkler systems to include rain sensor devices or switches, but there are no enforcement provisions in law. The legislation was amended to incorporate the smart irrigation controller language that would offer a variance from certain watering restrictions for residential or commercial irrigation systems that utilize a smart irrigation controller and are remotely monitored.

The bill was also amended to include urban landscape language, encouraging county and municipal governments to adopt and enforce the model ordinance for Florida-friendly fertilizer use on urban landscapes or an equivalent requirement as a mechanism for protecting local surface and groundwater quality. This legislation was sponsored by Senator Mike Bennett.





## Federal Update

### *State Revolving Fund Bill Moves Forward*

The Water Infrastructure Financing act, S.1005 by Senator Ben Cardin, was introduced to the Senate earlier this month. This legislation would increase funding for water quality programs and renew the State Revolving Fund (SRF) Program. This is the first legislation to reauthorize the SRF Program in more than 22 years. The legislation would authorize \$30.7 billion in funding to the SRF Program over the next five years.

The legislation also creates several modifications to the SRF Program. It changes the allocation formula to reflect population shifts across the country. The formula was last changed in 1987. The legislation also expands criteria for Clean Water and Drinking Water SRF, includes incentives for green infrastructure and additional subsidization for disadvantaged communities. The bill also includes a

grant program to encourage innovative technology and alternative approaches for increasing conservation and efficiency through water reuse, source water protection and other means.

According to the EPA, since its inception, the Clean Water SRFs have funded more than \$68 billion, providing over 22,700 low-interest loans to date.

## Florida Water Star<sup>SM</sup> Gold Program Launched

The District launched its Florida Water Star Gold (FWSG) certification program. FWSG is a voluntary certification program for builders who encourage water efficiency in household appliances, plumbing fixtures, irrigation systems and landscapes, as well as water quality benefits from best management practices in landscapes. The District's FWSG program will certify and recognize builders who incorporate water-saving efforts into new homes. The program is a point-based certification that addresses indoor irrigation and landscape conservation components.

Both the builders and buyers will benefit from a FWSG-certified home. FWSG-certified homes are expected to have lower utility bills and require less maintenance by using low-flow plumbing fixtures, high-efficiency toilets, ENERGY STAR<sup>®</sup> appliances, efficient irrigation systems and a low-maintenance, Florida-friendly landscape. In addition, buyers of FWSG homes will receive individual instruction on the care of their landscapes and irrigation systems as well as information on the unique features of their water-saving plumbing and appliances.

The FWSG kickoff event was held at Glencairn Cottages, a new development in downtown Dunedin in Pinellas County. Since the programs inception, two additional homes have been FWSG-certified in Polk County. Future plans to expand

the program include homeowner, community and commercial certifications. For more information about the District's FWSG program, please contact Susan Douglas at (352) 796-7211, ext. 4752, or visit the web site at [www.WaterMatters.org/FWSG](http://www.WaterMatters.org/FWSG).



## Florida Water Star<sup>SM</sup> Gold

The District does not discriminate based on disability. Anyone requiring reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act should contact the Community and Legislative Affairs Department at (352) 796-7211 or 1-800-423-1476 (FL only).

Southwest Florida  
Water Management District

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