

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.



Issue 30
May 2008

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District's WRAP Program Included in State Budget

The District's West-Central Florida Water Restoration Action Plan (WRAP) was included in the 2008–09 Conference Report for \$15 million. Senator J.D. Alexander led the effort in the Senate to secure the funding for the program and was diligent in working the issue throughout the budget process. On the House side, Representative Bill Galvano worked to include funding in the House budget and secure additional support, specifically from the Bay Area Legislative Delegation, who included WRAP as a legislative priority for the year. Additionally, legislators from throughout our District were supportive of the project and instrumental in WRAP's success during such a tight budget year.

The District is directed to apply WRAP funds to implement environmental restoration and water resource sustainabil-

ity projects and programs consistent with the *Southern Water Use Caution Area (SWUCA) Recovery Strategy* and *Regional Water Supply Plan*. The state funds are to be matched with one-third from the District and one-third from the project partners. The total cost of WRAP is expected to be \$1.8 billion over a period of 17 years.

In addition to legislative support, a number of groups and organizations lent their support to WRAP. These include 1000 Friends of Florida, Audubon Society, Charlotte County Chamber of Commerce, Department of Environmental Protection, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Florida Farm Bureau, Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association, Greater Sarasota Chamber of Commerce, Haines City Chamber of Commerce, Hardee County

Economic Development Council, Manasota League of Cities, Manatee County Chamber of Commerce, Nature Conservancy, North Port Chamber of Commerce, Peace River Valley Citrus Growers Association, Peace River/Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority, Polk County, Polk County Builders Association, Sarasota County Economic Development Corporation, Tampa Bay Partnership and Tampa Bay Wholesale Growers Association.

The District has launched a web site that will provide expanded information on the individual components of the WRAP, lists of supporters and partners, media information and a SWUCA overview in an easily accessible format. The site also provides answers to frequently asked questions concerning the WRAP. Please visit the site at WaterMatters.org/projects/wrap/.

Legislation Passes to Extend Florida Forever

The Florida Forever program will continue for ten years with the passage of Senate Bill 542. The legislation moves the bonding capacity for the program forward and establishes a funding mechanism for working waterfronts. The legislation places additional emphasis on less-than-fee acquisitions and land management reporting requirements and also requires that any single project that exceeds \$100 million in any one fiscal year must be approved by the Legislative Budget Commission.

The legislation redistributes Florida Forever funds, reducing the distribution to water management districts from 35 percent to 30 percent. The five percent will be distributed to

the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) and Florida Communities Trust (FCT). FDACS will receive 3.5 percent for rural and family easements and FCT will receive one and 1.5 percent for working waterfronts.



Legislative Session Draws to a Close

The focus of the 2008 legislative session was clearly on the budget, as it dominated discussion throughout the session. In the end, a total of 313 bills were passed by the House and Senate.

The Florida Legislature passed a \$66.2 billion 2008–09 state budget, a decrease of nearly \$7 billion from the previous year's budget. Some budget highlights relating to the environment and natural resources include funding for the Water Management Lands Trust Fund at \$59 million and Florida Forever at \$105 million. The Legislature also funded Everglades Restoration at \$50 million. The Water Protection and Sustainability Trust Fund was not kept intact at \$60 million statewide but was reduced to a total of \$7.7 million.

A total of \$66.5 million in water projects were funded statewide. This includes two projects that the District had requested: **Tampa Bay Restoration** at \$1 million, sponsored by Senator Dennis Jones and Representative Ed Hooper; and the **Myakka River Watershed Initiative** at \$1 million, sponsored by Senator Mike Bennett and Representative Ron Reagan.



Federal Update

Subcommittee Passes Legislation to Increase Water Supply

The House Subcommittee on Energy and Environment passed H.R. 2339, the Produced Water Utilization Act of 2007, sponsored by Ralph Hall (R-TX). This legislation directs the Energy Department to set up a program for the purpose of improving technologies that would allow water extracted during the development of domestic energy resources to be utilized for agriculture, irrigation, municipal or industrial purposes. The bill would authorize \$20 million each year from FY2008 through FY2016. There could be a potential benefit to the District under this legislation if new technologies are developed for desalination/demineralization of nonpotable-quality ground water. The District will continue to monitor this legislation as it progresses.

Farm Bill Passes

The House and Senate voted in support of the conference agreement for the five-year farm bill, which includes farm subsidies, conservation, nutrition and biofuels support programs. Additionally, the bill directs resources toward research and controlling the spread of diseases and pests that are a threat to agriculture in Florida. Funds are also included for water quality and wildlife protection measures. The bill had bipartisan support that included both of Florida's senators and a number of local House members including Representatives Putnam, Bilirakis, Brown-Waite and Castor. The President vetoed the bill; however, Congress had the votes to override the veto and the legislation will become law.

Community Affairs Program Managers

The community and legislative affairs coordinators are now community affairs program managers. These program managers are located at each District office, serving as the liaison to local governments, handling constituent issues and administering the cooperative funding program.

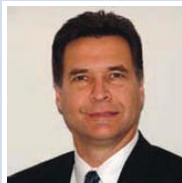
The community affairs program managers are here to assist you and can always be reached by email and/or cell phone. At right is a list of the program managers and their respective regions.



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