

2024 Southwest Florida Water Management District Priority List and Schedule for the Establishment of Minimum Flows, Minimum Water Levels and Reservations

Overview

Pursuant to Sections 373.036(7) and 373.042(3), Florida Statutes (F.S.), the Southwest Florida Water Management District is required to annually update its priority list and schedule for the establishment of minimum flows and minimum water levels, submit the updated list and schedule to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) by November 15th for approval, and include the approved list and schedule in the District's Consolidated Annual Report by March 1st. Minimum flows and minimum water levels are rules adopted by the state water management districts or DEP that define the limit at which further withdrawals would be significantly harmful to the water resources or ecology of the area. In addition to prioritized minimum flows and minimum water levels, the priority list and schedule must include reservations proposed for establishment. Reservations are rules that reserve water from use by permit applications, as necessary for the protection of fish and wildlife or public health and safety.

The District prepared this 2024 priority list and schedule to address all relevant statutory directives, and guidance concerning minimum flow, minimum water level and water reservation prioritization included in Rules 62-40.473, and 62-40.474 within the State Water Resource Implementation Rule, Chapter 62-40, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.) and in Rule 62.41.304 within the Regulation of the Consumptive Use of Water Rule (Chapter 62-41, F.A.C.) of the DEP that address the Central Florida Water Initiative Area defined in Section 373.0465(2)(a), F.S.

Established Minimum Flows, Minimum Water Levels and Reservations

As of FY2023, District rules include minimum flows or minimum water levels for 207 water bodies (Chapter 40D-8, F.A.C.) and reservations for 2 water bodies (Chapter 40D-2, F.A.C.). As listed below, minimum flows or water levels are established for 126 lakes, 34 wetlands, 28 freshwater and estuarine river segments, 10 springs or spring groups (including all first magnitude springs and all second magnitude springs within the District that occur within state or federal lands purchased for conservation purposes), 7 Upper Floridan aquifer (UFA) sites in the northern Tampa Bay area, an UFA site in the Dover/Plant City area, and the UFA in the Most Impacted Area of the Southern Water Use Caution Area. In addition, 130 minimum flow or level reevaluations have been completed to confirm or support the revision or repeal of established minimum flows or minimum water levels. As also listed below, reservations have been established for Lake Hancock/Lower Saddle Creek and Morris Bridge Sink to support minimum flow recovery in 2 rivers.

Water Bodies with Adopted and Effective Minimum Flow and Minimum Water Level Rules, Including Those That Have Been Reevaluated

- Alafia River (upper segment)
- Alafia River (lower segment)/Lithia-Buckhorn Spring Group
- Anclote River (lower segment)

- Anclote River (upper segment)
- Braden River (upper segment)
- Charlie Creek
- Chassahowitzka River/Chassahowitzka Spring Group (an Outstanding Florida Spring) and Blind Spring (reevaluated)
- Citrus County Lakes – Ft. Cooper, Tsala Apopka – Floral City, Inverness, and Hernando Pools
- Crystal River/Kings Bay Spring Group (an Outstanding Florida Spring)
- Crystal Springs
- Dona Bay/Shakett Creek System
- Dover/Plant City Water Use Caution Area Minimum Aquifer Level
- Gum Slough Spring Run/Group
- Hernando County Lakes – Hunters (reevaluated), Lindsey (reevaluated), Mountain (reevaluated), Neff (reevaluated), Spring, Tooke, Weekiwachee Prairie, Whitehurst
- Highland County Lakes – Angelo, Anoka, Damon, Denton, Jackson (reevaluated), Little Lake Jackson (reevaluated), June-in-Winter, Letta (reevaluated), Lotela (reevaluated), Placid, Tulane, Verona
- Hillsborough County Lakes – Alice (reevaluated), Allen (reevaluated twice), Barbara (reevaluated), Bird (reevaluated twice), Brant (reevaluated twice), Calm (reevaluated), Carroll, Charles (reevaluated), Church (reevaluated), Crenshaw, Crescent, Crystal (reevaluated twice), Cypress (reevaluated), Dan (reevaluated), Deer (reevaluated), Dosson (reevaluated twice), Echo (reevaluated), Ellen (reevaluated), Fairy [Maurine] (reevaluated), Garden, Halfmoon (reevaluated), Hanna (reevaluated), Harvey (reevaluated twice), Helen (reevaluated), Hobbs (reevaluated twice), Hooker, Horse (reevaluated), Jackson (reevaluated), Juanita (reevaluated twice), Keene, Kell, Little Moon (reevaluated), Merrywater (reevaluated twice), Mound, Platt, Pretty, Rainbow (reevaluated), Raleigh, Reinheimer, Rogers, Round (reevaluated), Saddleback (reevaluated twice), Sapphire (reevaluated twice), Starvation, Stemper (reevaluated), Strawberry (reevaluated), Sunset (reevaluated twice), Sunshine (reevaluated twice), Taylor (reevaluated), Virginia (reevaluated twice), Wimauma (reevaluated)
- Hillsborough County Wetlands – Cypress Bridge 32 (reevaluated), Cone Ranch 1 (reevaluated), Cone Ranch 2 (reevaluated), Cone Ranch 3 (reevaluated), Cone Ranch 4 (reevaluated), Cone Ranch 5 (reevaluated), Cone Ranch 6 (reevaluated), Eldridge Wilde 11 (NW-44) (reevaluated), Morris Bridge Clay Gully Cypress (MBR-88) (reevaluated), Morris Bridge Entry Dome (MBR-35) (reevaluated), Morris Bridge Unnamed (MBR-16) (reevaluated), Morris Bridge X-4 (MBR-89) (reevaluated)
- Hillsborough River (lower segment) (reevaluated)
- Hillsborough River (upper segment)
- Homosassa River/Homosassa Spring Group (an Outstanding Florida Spring) (reevaluated)
- Horse Creek
- Little Manatee River (lower segment)
- Little Manatee River (upper segment)
- Levy County Lake – Marion (reevaluated)
- Marion County Lakes – Bonable, Little Bonable, Tiger
- Myakka River (lower segment)
- Myakka River (upper segment)
- Northern Tampa Bay – 7 Wells – Upper Floridan aquifer/Saltwater Intrusion
- Pasco County Lakes – Bell, Big Fish (reevaluated), Bird, Buddy (reevaluated), Camp (reevaluated), Clear (reevaluated), Crews, Green, Hancock (reevaluated), Lola, Jessamine, King, King [East], Linda, Middle, Moon (reevaluated), Padgett (reevaluated), Parker aka Ann, Pasadena (reevaluated), Pierce (reevaluated), Unnamed #22 aka Loyce

- Pasco County Wetlands – Cross Bar Q-1 (reevaluated), Cross Bar T-3 (reevaluated), Cypress Bridge 4 (reevaluated), Cypress Bridge 16 (reevaluated), Cypress Bridge 25 (reevaluated), Cypress Creek W-56 (G) (reevaluated), Cypress Creek W-11 (reevaluated), Cypress Creek W-12 (reevaluated), Cypress Creek W-17 (reevaluated), North Pasco 3 (reevaluated), North Pasco 21 (reevaluated), South Pasco 2 (NW-49) (reevaluated), South Pasco 6 (NW-50) (reevaluated), South Pasco South Cypress (reevaluated), Starkey Central (reevaluated), Starkey Eastern (S-73) (reevaluated), Starkey M (S-69) (reevaluated), Starkey N (reevaluated), Starkey S-75 (reevaluated), Starkey S-99, Starkey Z (reevaluated)
- Peace River (lower segment) (reevaluated twice)
- Peace River (middle segment)
- Peace River (three upper segments – "low" minimum flows)
- Pinellas County Wetland – Eldridge Wilde 5
- Pithlachascotee River (lower segment)
- Pithlachascotee River (upper segment)
- Polk County Lakes – Annie, Aurora, Bonnie, Clinch (reevaluated), Crooked (reevaluated), Crystal, Dinner, Eagle (reevaluated), Easy, Eva, Hancock, Lee, Lowery, Mabel, McLeod (reevaluated), North Lake Wales, Parker (reevaluated), Starr (reevaluated), Venus, Wailes (reevaluated)
- Rainbow River/Rainbow Spring Group (an Outstanding Florida Spring)
- Shell Creek (lower segment)
- Sulphur Springs
- Sumter County Lakes – Big Gant, Black, Deaton, Miona, Okahumpka, Panasoffkee
- Southern Water Use Caution Area – Upper Floridan aquifer
- Tampa Bypass Canal
- Weeki Wachee River/Weeki Wachee Spring Group (an Outstanding Florida Spring)

Water Bodies with Adopted and Effective Reservation Rules

- Lake Hancock/Lower Saddle Creek (water reserved to contribute to achieving minimum flows adopted for the three upper segments of the Peace River for the protection of fish and wildlife)
- Morris Bridge Sink (water reserved to contribute to achieving or maintaining minimum flows adopted for the lower segment of the Hillsborough River for the protection of fish and wildlife)

Prioritized Water Bodies for Establishment or Reevaluation of Minimum Flows and Minimum Water Levels

Minimum flows and minimum water levels proposed for establishment or reevaluation through 2027 are listed by water body name in tabular form below. The single reservation prioritized for reevaluation during this period is also listed below.

System name is provided for each water body to distinguish waterbodies that may be part of a larger system. Water body type, i.e., lake, river, river-estuary, spring, or aquifer is identified along with water body location information. Spring magnitude based on flow rate is provided for prioritized spring systems.

District intent regarding completion of voluntary, independent, scientific peer review is also identified for each water body. Voluntary scientific peer review is proposed for minimum flows development or reevaluation for all prioritized river segments and the single prioritized minimum aquifer level reevaluation based on the expected level of complexity of these minimum flows and levels, and the anticipated degree of public concern regarding their development. None of the

prioritized lake minimum levels are expected to be subjected to voluntary scientific peer review, based on anticipated use of previously peer-reviewed criteria for their development.

Prioritized water bodies that may be affected by withdrawals occurring in other water management districts due to cross-boundary impacts are identified to support coordination of regulatory activities among the districts and DEP. This includes those specifically associated with withdrawals from within the Central Florida Water Initiative area. Development of minimum flow or water levels by the DEP for any of these water bodies is not, however, currently considered necessary or appropriate.

The status of rulemaking for each prioritized water body is also listed.

Minimum Flows and Minimum Water Levels to be Adopted in 2024.

New or Re-Evaluation	Waterbody Name or Compliance Point	System Name ^a	Waterbody Type	County(s)	Voluntary Peer Review to be Completed?	Cross-Boundary Impacts from Adjacent Water Management District?	Latitude	Longitude	Rulemaking Status ^b
Reevaluation (first)	Angelo, Lake	Angelo, Lake	Lake	Highlands	No	Yes	27.5861	-81.4665	N/A
Reevaluation (first)	Denton, Lake	Denton, Lake	Lake	Highlands	No	Yes	27.5563	-81.4893	N/A

Minimum Flows and Minimum Water Levels to be Adopted in 2025.

New or Re-Evaluation	Waterbody Name or Compliance Point	System Name ^a	Waterbody Type	County(s)	Voluntary Peer Review to be Completed?	Cross-Boundary Impacts from Adjacent Water Management District?	Latitude	Longitude	Rulemaking Status ^b
Reevaluation (first)	Aurora, Lake	Aurora, Lake	Lake	Polk	No	Yes ^c	27.8791	-81.4655	N/A
Reevaluation (first)	Bonnie, Lake	Bonnie, Lake	Lake	Polk	No	Yes ^c	27.9118	-81.557	N/A
Reevaluation (second)	Eagle Lake	Eagle Lake	Lake	Polk	No	Yes ^c	27.9867	-81.7665	N/A
Reevaluation (first)	Eva, Lake	Eva, Lake	Lake	Polk	No	Yes ^c	28.0952	-81.6281	N/A
Reevaluation (first)	North Lake Wales	North Lake Wales	Lake	Polk	No	Yes ^c	27.9096	-81.5805	N/A
Reevaluation (first)	Peace River (upper segment, U.S. Geological Survey Zolfo Springs gage to U.S. Geological Survey Ft. Meade gage)	Peace River (upper segment, U.S. Geological Survey Zolfo Springs gage to U.S. Geological Survey Ft. Meade gage)	River	Hardee, Polk	Yes	Yes ^c	27.5042	-81.8011	N/A
Reevaluation (first)	Peace River (upper segment, U.S. Geological Survey Ft. Meade gage to U.S. Geological Survey Bartow gage)	Peace River (upper segment, U.S. Geological Survey Ft. Meade gage to U.S. Geological Survey Bartow gage)	River	Polk	Yes	Yes ^c	27.7511	-81.7822	N/A

New or Re-Evaluation	Waterbody Name or Compliance Point	System Name ^a	Waterbody Type	County(s)	Voluntary Peer Review to be Completed?	Cross-Boundary Impacts from Adjacent Water Management District?	Latitude	Longitude	Rulemaking Status ^b
Reevaluation (first)	Peace River (upper segment, upstream of U.S. Geological Survey Bartow gage)	Peace River (upper segment, upstream of U.S. Geological Survey Bartow gage)	River	Polk	Yes	Yes ^c	27.9019	-81.8175	N/A
New	Withlacoochee River (upper segment, U.S. Geological Survey Holder gage to U.S. Geological Survey Wysong gage)	Withlacoochee River (upper segment, U.S. Geological Survey Holder gage to U.S. Geological Survey Wysong gage)	River	Citrus, Marion, Sumter	Yes	Yes	28.9886	-82.3497	N/A
New	Withlacoochee River (upper segment, U.S. Geological Survey Wysong gage to U.S. Geological Survey Croom gage)	Withlacoochee River (upper segment, U.S. Geological Survey Wysong gage to U.S. Geological Survey Croom gage)	River	Citrus, Sumter, Hernando	Yes	No	28.8231	-82.1833	N/A
New	Withlacoochee River (upper segment, upstream of U.S. Geological Survey Croom gage)	Withlacoochee River (upper segment, upstream of U.S. Geological Survey Croom gage)	River	Hernando, Sumter, Pasco, Lake, Polk	Yes	Yes ^c	28.5925	-82.2222	N/A

Minimum Flows and Minimum Water Levels to be Adopted in 2026.

New or Re-Evaluation	Waterbody Name or Compliance Point	System Name ^a	Waterbody Type	County(s)	Voluntary Peer Review to be Completed?	Cross-Boundary Impacts from Adjacent Water Management District?	Latitude	Longitude	Rulemaking Status ^b
Reevaluation (first)	Gum Slough Spring Group	Gum Slough Spring Group	Spring (2 nd magnitude)	Sumter	Yes	Yes	28.9511	-82.2500	N/A
New	Withlacoochee River (lower segment)	Withlacoochee River (lower segment)	River-Estuary	Citrus, Levy	Yes	Yes	29.0208	-82.6381	N/A

New or Re-Evaluation	Waterbody Name or Compliance Point	System Name ^a	Waterbody Type	County(s)	Voluntary Peer Review to be Completed?	Cross-Boundary Impacts from Adjacent Water Management District?	Latitude	Longitude	Rulemaking Status ^b
Reevaluation (first)	Southern Water Use Caution Area Saltwater Intrusion Minimum Aquifer Level (SWIMAL)	Southern Water Use Caution Area Saltwater Intrusion Minimum Aquifer Level (SWIMAL)	Aquifer	Hillsborough, Manatee, Sarasota	Yes	No	27.5603	-82.4013	N/A
Reevaluation (first)	Anoka, Lake	Anoka, Lake	Lake	Highlands	No	Yes	27.5805	-81.5121	N/A
Reevaluation (first)	Easy, Lake	Easy, Lake	Lake	Polk	No	Yes ^c	27.8581	-81.5620	N/A
Reevaluation (second)	Starr, Lake	Starr, Lake	Lake	Polk	No	Yes ^c	27.9566	-81.5874	N/A

Minimum Flows and Minimum Water Levels to be Adopted in 2027.

New or Re-Evaluation	Waterbody Name or Compliance Point	System Name ^a	Waterbody Type	County(s)	Voluntary Peer Review to be Completed?	Cross-Boundary Impacts from Adjacent Water Management District?	Latitude	Longitude	Rulemaking Status ^b
Reevaluation (first)	Crystal River	Crystal River	River-Estuary	Citrus	Yes	No	28.9064	-82.6239	N/A
Reevaluation (first)	Kings Bay Spring Group (OFS)	Crystal River	Spring (1 st magnitude)	Citrus	Yes	No	28.9064	-82.6239	N/A
Reevaluation (second)	Jackson, Lake	Jackson, Lake	Lake	Highlands	No	Yes	27.4910	-81.4624	N/A
Reevaluation (second)	Letta, Lake	Letta, Lake	Lake	Highlands	No	Yes	27.5603	-81.4617	N/A
Reevaluation (second)	Little Lake Jackson	Little Lake Jackson	Lake	Highlands	No	Yes	27.4677	-81.4635	N/A
Reevaluation (second)	Lotela, Lake	Lotela, Lake	Lake	Highlands	No	Yes	27.5772	-81.4820	N/A

Reservations Priority List.

Waterbody Name	Waterbody Type	County(s)	Proposed Year	Rulemaking Status ^b
Hancock, Lake/Lower Saddle Creek (reevaluation)	Lake, River	Polk	2025	N/A

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- ^a System name identifies larger system that the water body is associated with for minimum flows or minimum water levels rule development; otherwise, system name is same as waterbody name or compliance point.
- ^b Last rulemaking action taken: Notice of Rule Development published; Notice of Proposed Rule published; Rule challenge pending; Rule adopted, Ratification not required; Rule adopted, Awaiting ratification; Rule adopted, Ratified. N/A indicates formal rulemaking has not been initiated.
- ^c Potential cross-boundary withdrawal impacts from adjacent water management district associated with the Central Florida Water Initiative area.