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# Consolidated Annual Report

March 1, 2025

Southwest Florida
Water Management District

# Consolidated Annual Report

## Project Team



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## Table of Contents

# *Executive Summary*

Section 373.036, F.S. requires the water management districts to prepare a "Consolidated Water Management District Annual Report" consisting of several reporting documents that had historically been submitted separately. The legislation requires the consolidated report to be submitted by March 1 of each year to the Governor, DEP, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives. In addition, copies must be provided, "… to the chairs of all legislative committees having substantive or fiscal jurisdiction over the districts and the governing body of each county in the district having jurisdiction or deriving any funds for operations of the District. Copies of the consolidated report must be made available to the public, either in printed or electronic format."

This consolidated report is an important communication tool for the District. The report's components were formerly individually distributed at various times of the year. The consolidation results in streamlining the reporting documents in one package. It also allows greater efficiency in comparing different reporting mechanisms.

Descriptions and highlights from the chapters that make up the 2025 Consolidated Annual Report follow:

***The Water Management District Performance Measures Annual Report*** Noteworthy metrics in this report include relatively stable growth in the amount of domestic wastewater reused over the past 28 years. Usage has increased from 104 million gallons per day (mgd) in 1995 to 255 mgd in 2023. Since 1994, approximately $1.211 billion in funding has been made available for water supply development assistance with an estimated 502 mgd of water supply made available by completed projects. In FY2024, MFLs were adopted for four river/stream segments and two lakes. The latter were reevaluations of previously adopted MFLs. The District continues to demonstrate effective maintenance control of exotic species on its managed lakes and rivers. Coverage has generally been less than five percent since the mid-1990s. Finally, water quality (nitrate concentrations) in District springs has remained stable overall since last year's report.

***The Minimum Flows and Levels Annual Priority List and Schedule*** The District's expenditures for minimum flows and levels (MFLs) and reservation adoption have changed from approximately $1 million in fiscal year 1998 to a peak of $4.9 million in 2009, with nearly $900,000 expended in FY2024. As of FY2024, District rules included 207 MFLs and two water reservations. In addition to efforts that supported the establishment of these rules, 130 reevaluations had been completed to confirm, revise or repeal established MFLs. By the end of 2027, 4 new MFLs are scheduled for adoption, and 21 existing MFLs and 1 reservation are scheduled for reevaluation.

***The Minimum Flows and Levels/Water Quality Grade for Projects Report*** This document satisfies new reporting called for in Section 373.036(7)(b)9, F.S. The report contains grades for each watershed, water body or water segment expected to be impacted by a project listed in the Five-Year Water Resource Development Work Program. Two grades are provided: 1) a grade that reflects the severity of a water quality impairment, and 2) a grade that represents the level of violation of an adopted minimum flow or minimum level. In total 91 projects (79 water resource development projects plus 12 BMAP projects) from the Work Program are listed with the corresponding impacted watershed, water body or water segment, the water quality impairment grade and the minimum flow or level grade.

***The Five-Year Capital Improvements Plan*** This includes projected revenues and expenditures for improvements for fiscal year (FY) 2024-25 through FY2028-29. Some of the major highlights for FY2024-25 include:

Research, Data Collection, Analysis and Monitoring:
- $4,355,000 for coring, drilling, testing, and construction of monitor wells at Regional Observation and Monitor-well Program sites and special project sites within the Central Florida Water Initiative region.

Land Acquisition:
- $18,400,000 for potential land acquisition under the Florida Forever program and funded from dollars generated from the sale of land or real estate interests within the state of Florida.

Land Management:
- $200,000 for the replacement of the dock at the Chassahowitzka boat ramp and campground in Citrus County.

Works:
- $7,640,000 for the replacement of the District's flood control gates and upgrades to their lifting systems. The replacement gates will be stainless steel gates and not require routine coating, which will reduce future maintenance costs. The existing hydraulic lift systems will be converted to electric drum and cable systems, which are more reliable and will reduce future maintenance costs.

- $2,000,000 for the replacement of the District's WC-2 structure located on the Gant Lake Canal in Sumter County with a permanent fixed weir system. The weir system will eliminate on-site operation requirements and reduce maintenance costs.

***The Alternative Water Supplies Annual Report*** This Legislatively required report describes alternative water supply projects funded as well as the quantity of new water to be created by these projects. The report also accounts for other funding sources, such as grants or the use of District lands or facilities to implement regional water supply plans. For FY2025, the District budgeted more than $66 million for alternative water supply projects, including reclaimed water, brackish desalination, and surface water/stormwater, projected to provide more than 22.5 mgd of water supply. In addition to infrastructure funding, the District continues to participate in studies and research with utilities and entities on alternative water sources in support of the District's mission to find and maintain adequate and ecologically sustainable resources.

***The Five-Year Water Resource Development Work Program*** The Work Program describes the District's implementation strategy for the Water Resource Development component of the District's 2025 Regional Water Supply Plan (RWSP) and the Central Florida Water Initiative 2025 RWSP. This 24th edition of the Work Program covers the period from FY 2025 to 2029. The Work Program presents the data collection and analyses activities and more narrowly defined "projects" that the District is financially and technically undertaking to enhance the water available to meet projected demands. To meet Subsection 373.536(6), F.S., the Work Program includes the anticipated five-year funding for Water Supply and Water Resource Development Assistance projects that are developed by cooperating water providers and qualify for District financial assistance, and an appendix of projects that help to implement Basin Management Action Plans (BMAPs). The Work Program outlines activities and projects that will make available 86.2 mgd of water supply upon completion, including reuse water and new potable supply. These benefits are associated with approximately $95.7 million budgeted for FY2025.

***The Polk Regional Water Cooperative Status Report*** This annual report provides a status on Polk Regional Water Cooperative (PRWC) projects receiving priority state funding. For the 2023 report, the cooperative and its members identified 47 prioritized projects and requested FY2025 funding by the Florida Legislature, with approximately $2.6 million in funding being received. For this 2024 report, a prioritized list of two PRWC and 27 local member government projects are being submitted for FY2026 funding consideration by the Florida Legislature. For FY2026, a total of $235.2 million would be required to implement the 13 ranked priority projects, with $197.6 million committed in local member government funding. A total of $37.6 million for these 13 ranked priority projects is being requested from the state and their implementation is subject to approval of state funding for the FY2026 budget year. An additional $15 million in annual funding is also being requested over the next five years for the PRWC's Southeast Wellfield Project and member local government receiving facilities.

***The Florida Forever Work Plan*** The Florida Forever Act established the Florida Forever Program that provided for the issuance of bonds to state agencies, water management districts and local governments. Florida Forever funds allocated to the water management districts were required to be used for land acquisition including less-than-fee interests, water resource development, and water body restoration. Over the life of the program, at least 50 percent of the funds allocated to each water management district must have been used for land acquisition. The District fully utilized its total funding allocation by FY2023 and expended approximately 6 percent on water resources development projects and approximately 94 percent on land acquisition. The District's acquisitions under this program supports the District's Four Areas of Responsibilities by providing ecosystem benefits including: water quality and quantity, resiliency from storm impacts, and natural systems protection.

As required by Section 373.199 (7), Florida Statues, the District must submit an annual update of its Florida Forever Work Plan (Work Plan). The Work Plan must include modifications or additions, a description of land management activity for each property or project area owned by the water management district, a list of any lands surplused and the amount of compensation received, and the progress of funding, staffing, and resource management for projects funded pursuant to the Preservation 2000 Act, the Florida Forever Act and the Water Management Lands Trust Fund. Modifications to the 2024 Work Plan are set forth in Chapter 8.

***The Mitigation Donation Annual Report*** This report identifies all cash donations, if any, accepted during the preceding fiscal year for wetland mitigation purposes. Similar to last year, no donations were received.

***The 2024 - 2028 Strategic Plan (updated February 2024), and the 2024 Strategic Plan Annual Work Plan*** The Strategic Plan is the guiding document for the District, identifying targets and how success will be achieved and measured. The plan identifies 12 Districtwide strategic initiatives, including regional water supply planning; alternative water supplies; reclaimed water; water conservation; water quality assessment and planning; water quality maintenance and improvement; minimum flows and levels establishment and monitoring; conservation and restoration; floodplain management; programs, projects, and regulations; flood protection; and emergency flood response and 34 regional priorities/objectives. The plan has a five-year time horizon and is updated on an annual basis. Cyber Security was added to core business practices, for a total of nine (9) core business practices.

The Strategic Plan Annual Work Plan details progress on efforts implementing priorities and objectives of the Strategic Plan. Notable accomplishments for the Northern region in FY2024, During FY2024 the District's Water Incentives Supporting Efficiency (WISE) program funded two

projects. In FY2024, within the Northern, Tampa Bay and Southern planning regions, the district began the quadrennial seagrass mapping project which was completed in 2024, with maps being available in 2025. In the Tampa Bay region and the Southern Water Caution Use Area (SWUCA), the District has offset approximately 28.4mgd of groundwater through Facilitating Agricultural Resource Management Systems (FARMS) projects that are operational, under construction and/or have contracts pending. Of significant note, in the Tampa Bay, Heartland and Southern regions, a status assessment completed in 2023 indicated that the SWUCA saltwater intrusion minimum aquifer level (SWIMAL) continues to be met. This success is based on the 13.1 ft Upper Floridan aquifer elevation associated with the SWIMAL being equaled or exceeded for five consecutive years, from 2019 through 2023.

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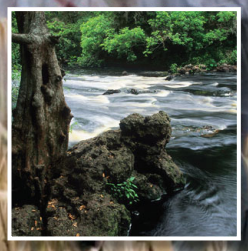
# 2024 Water Management District Performance Measures Annual Report




Southwest Florida Water Management District

# Chapter 1 Water Management Performance Measures

Government, like any meaningful enterprise, needs to measure the results of its actions to ensure that services provided are effective and efficient. The purpose of any measurement process must be aimed at accomplishing sound resource management while improving accountability. If measures are successfully developed, and communicated, they can be expected to:

- Provide better information for decision making.
- Document to taxpayers their dollars are being spent wisely.
- Spot potential problems before they become crises.
- Coordinate effective resource management among agencies.

The water management districts and the DEP jointly developed these performance measures. They are organized around the four primary areas of responsibility of the districts: Water Supply, Water Quality, Natural Systems and Flood Protection. Base years, assumptions and data sources for each measure were mutually agreed upon as one means of achieving consistency among districts. The time frames associated with each measure may vary, based upon the availability of data. A number of measures are provided for the areas of responsibility. The concept is that a few key measures for each of the District's responsibilities will be tracked over time to identify trends as they are reported annually. These measures will continue to be refined and coordinated with other agencies and the public, and periodic assessments will be necessary to ensure a measuring system that provides true accountability.

## Summary of Water Management Performance Measures

### Water Supply Measures

**Objective 1: Increase available water supplies and maximize overall water use efficiency to meet identified existing and future needs.**

a. Percentage of domestic wastewater reused
b. Uniform gross per capita water use (Public Supply) by District and water supply planning regions
c. Uniform residential per capita water use (Public Supply) by District and water supply planning regions
d. Within each water supply planning region: 1) the estimated amount of water supply to be made available through the water resource development component of the Regional Water Supply Plan; 2) percent of estimated amount under development; and 3) percent of estimated amount of water actually made available
e. Within each water supply planning region, the estimated additional quantities of water supply made available through District water supply development assistance.

**Objective 2: Prevent contamination of water supplies.**

a. Percentage of surface water supply sources for which water quality fully attains the designated use

## Water Quality Measures

**Objective 1: Protect and improve surface water quality.**

a. Percentage of surface waters with healthy nutrient levels
b. Percentage of surface waters with healthy biological conditions

**Objective 2: Protect and improve groundwater quality.**

a. Improving, degrading and stable trends in nitrate concentrations in springs

## Natural Systems Measures

**Objective 1: Maintain the integrity and functions of water resources and related natural systems.**

a. Number of MFLs, by water body type, established annually and cumulatively
b. Percentage of MFLs established in accordance with previous year's schedule
c. For the previous fiscal year, the total acres of wetlands or other surface waters authorized by Environmental Resource Permit (ERP) to be impacted and the number of acres required to be created, enhanced, restored and preserved

**Objective 2: Restore degraded water resources and related natural systems to a naturally functioning condition.**

a. Acres of invasive nonnative aquatic plants in inventoried public waters

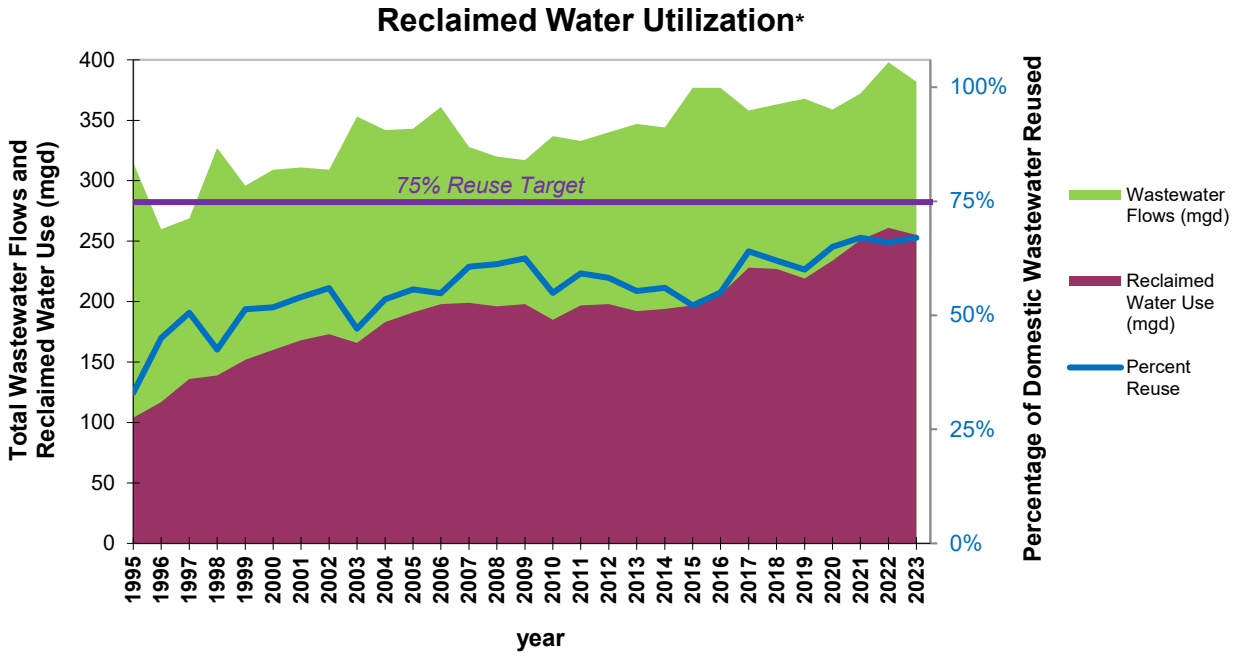
## Flood Protection Measures

**Objective 1: Minimize damage from flooding.**

a. Percentage of District works maintained on schedule

## Water Supply Measure 1a: Percentage of domestic wastewater reused.

The State and the District emphasize the beneficial use of reclaimed water as part of water supply planning strategies. This water resource has become an important alternative for potable quality supplies for such beneficial uses as irrigation, industrial processing, power generation and environmental enhancement. This measure is intended to reflect the quantity of reclaimed water available and reused.



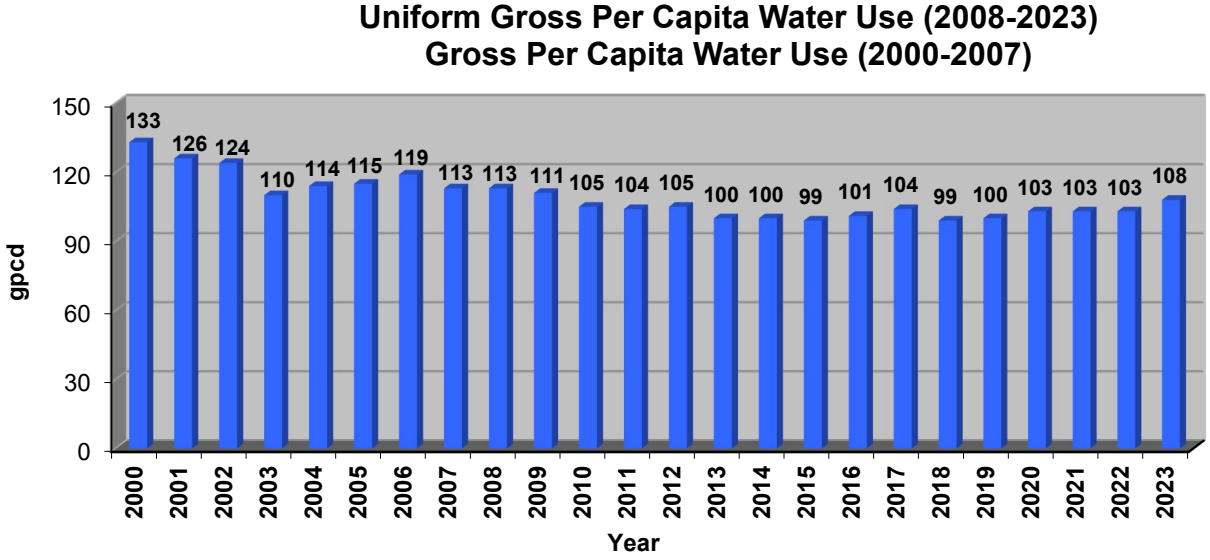

*Source: Annual Reuse Inventory Reports, Florida Department of Environmental Protection.*

The amount of domestic wastewater reused in the District has increased, from 104 million gallons per day (mgd) in 1995 to 255 mgd in 2023, based on available data. The percentage of wastewater reused has also increased, reaching 67 percent in 2023. The data show that there has been relatively stable growth in wastewater plant flows (i.e., reclaimed water available) and the amount of reclaimed water used over the past 28 years. The long-term increase in reclaimed water flows is associated with the increased number of online reclaimed water projects. Districtwide, reclaimed water customer numbers now exceed 197,000.

** The 2023 values reflect District-received Annual Reuse Report utility data, as the DEP's 2023 Reuse Inventory Report was not available at the time of publication. Data reflects the DEP's definition of reclaimed water, which includes rapid infiltration basins, sprayfields, and at treatment plant uses. The reduced reuse percentages in some years reflect elevated wastewater treatment plant flows associated with increased infiltration and inflow of stormwater into sanitary sewer systems. The 75 percent reuse target goal by 2040 is based on wastewater flows and is applied Districtwide. District estimates of "beneficial" reuse flows for other planning and tracking purposes may vary based upon regional water supply goals.*

## Water Supply Measure 1b: Uniform gross per capita water use (Public Supply) by District and water supply planning regions.

Public supply, water distributed by public and private water utilities, represents one of the largest water use sectors and is experiencing sustained year-to-year growth. Measuring public supply water use is intended to show the trend of such use, recognizing that water conservation can serve as a significant source of "new water" to meet public needs. In 2008, the DEP and the water management districts established Uniform Gross Per Capita for the purposes of consistent statewide assessment of water conservation performance, reporting, program evaluation and public communication. Uniform Gross Per Capita is defined as utility service area finished water use divided by utility service area residential population and is reported for 2008-2023. Other years (2000-2007) were generated using an earlier methodology, calculated by dividing the total publicly supplied water used (in gallons per day) by the functional population (includes seasonal and tourist) served.

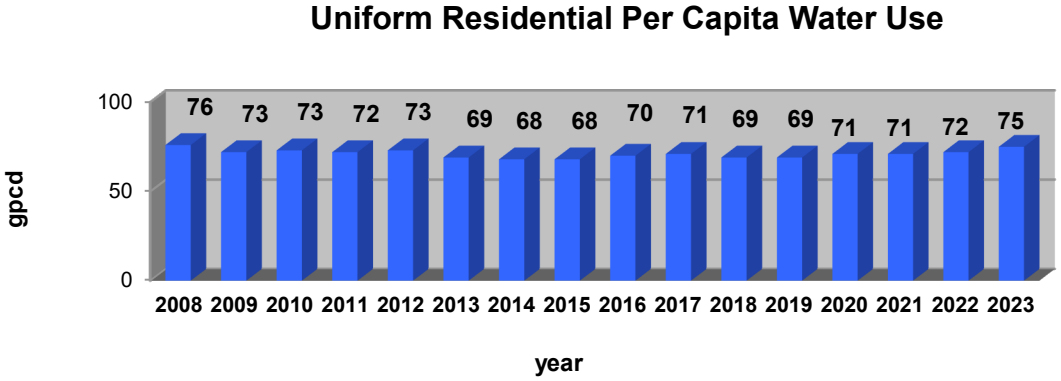



*Source: SWFWMD Estimated Water Use Reports, 2000-2022, draft 2023.*

The graphic reports gross per capita water use for the last 24 years. While it is recognized that many factors influence water use (e.g., rainfall), there has been a clear trend toward reduced per capita rates. This trend can be attributed in part to the increasing availability of reuse systems, water conservation programs, enhanced public awareness and related efforts.

## Water Supply Measure 1c: Uniform residential per capita water use (Public Supply) by District and water supply planning regions.

This measure accounts for the portion of publicly supplied water that is used for residential purposes only. The uniform residential per capita is defined as the utility service area finished water used by dwelling units (not connections) divided by the utility service area residential population. The DEP and the five water management districts agreed on this per capita definition in 2008, and to include the data in the annual progress report. This is the sixteenth reporting year for the residential uniform per capita measure.



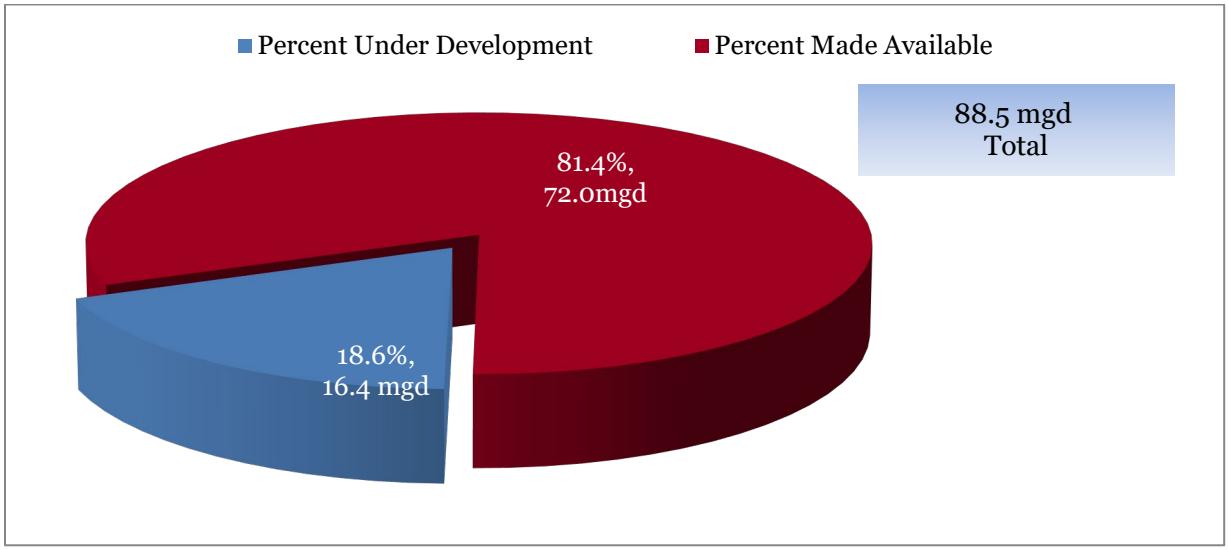

*Source: SWFWMD Estimated Water Use Reports, 2008-2022, draft 2023.*

To ensure a sustainable water supply, utilities are tapping alternative sources and emphasizing conservation. Opportunities exist for all public supply users to conserve, including residential users, which make up a significant portion of the public supply customers. The District has devoted considerable resources to encourage the implementation of water conserving rate structures and indoor/outdoor practices for residential water users. These efforts have resulted in a declining trend in uniform residential per capita water use since the methodology was implemented in 2008. Additionally, the District has implemented improvements to the reporting process to further ensure data accuracy.

**Water Supply Measure 1d: Within each water supply planning region: 1) the estimated amount of water supply to be made available through the water resource development component of the Regional Water Supply Plan (RWSP); 2) percent of estimated amount under development; and 3) percent of estimated amount of water actually made available.**

The District is charged with expanding the "water pie" to assure future water supply availability. This can be done, in part, through water resource development. Projects receiving District funding assistance are categorized as either Water Resource Development (WRD) or Water Supply Development assistance. This measure is intended to document progress toward WRD. The District typically has the lead role in identifying and implementing WRD efforts.

**Water Resource Development**

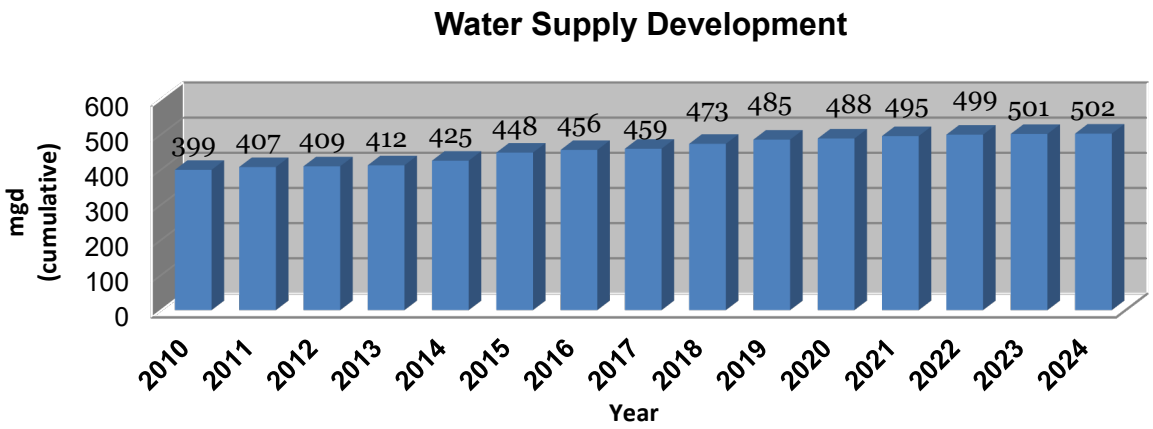



*Source: SWFWMD 2025 Proposed Five-Year Water Resource Development Work Program, District Water Resources Staff, 2024*

The District's WRD component takes two forms: activities and projects. The WRD "activities" are routine efforts that include hydrologic data collection, the evaluation and establishment of Minimum Flows and Levels (MFLs), watershed management planning, the Quality of Water Improvement Program that plugs abandoned wells to protect water quality, and stormwater storage and conveyance best management practice implementation. The District's WRD "projects" have goals and schedules and are intended to enhance the amount of water available for reasonable-beneficial uses and for natural systems. Current WRD projects include aquifer storage and recovery feasibility and pilot testing projects, agricultural water conservation projects, and MFL recovery projects. The water quantities produced or conserved by many WRD projects are difficult to measure until the projects are completed and the benefits are realized. Based on WRD projects undertaken and quantified since 2003, a total of 72 mgd has already been made available.

**Water Supply Measure 1e: Within each water supply planning region, the estimated additional quantities of water supply made available through District water supply development assistance.**

The Water Supply Development (WSD) component of the District's RWSP identifies water supply options from which regional authorities, local governments, private utilities, and other water users can choose to meet their individual needs. The options are provided as reasonable concepts that water users may pursue for their water supply planning efforts. Water users are primarily responsible for developing these options and are encouraged to apply for funding assistance from the District. Some options are large-scale alternative water supply projects that would likely be implemented by a regional water supply authority or a group of users. Other options, such as reclaimed water infrastructure and conservation programs, could be implemented by individual utilities and other users.

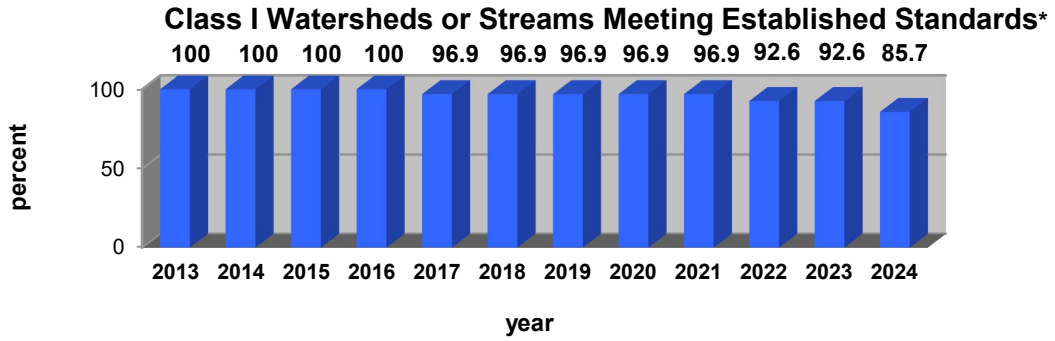



*Source: District Water Resources Staff, 2024.*

This graphic shows water supply made available or developed on a cumulative basis through WSD funding assistance, according to records from 2010 to present day. An estimated 502 mgd has been made available by completed projects. The water quantities produced or conserved by many WSD projects are difficult to measure until the projects are completed and the benefits are realized. From 1994 through 2024, the District provided $1.211 billion in project funding to develop and conserve water supplies. District funds are typically matched on a 50/50 cost-share basis with the partnering entity. Major accomplishments of the District's WSD component in FY2024 include the final project close out of the Pasco County River Landing Reclaimed Water transmission project.

**Water Supply Measure 2a: Percentage of surface water supply sources for which water quality fully attains the designated use.**

Protecting and maintaining high quality water for human use is a critical component of water management. It is essential these sources be monitored and maintained in a high-quality state for future water supply use. Under Florida's water quality monitoring programs, surface water bodies are regularly assessed to determine whether designated uses are being attained.




*Source: Florida Department of Environmental Protection, 2013-2024.*

Of the 63 Class I water body identification units (WBIDs) in the District, 8 water bodies were assessed in 2024. Data indicates these surface waters are currently meeting their designated use, except for iron impairment in four waterbodies.

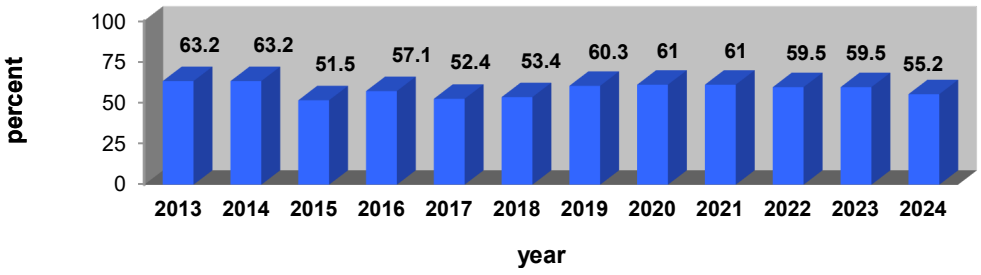
Since the 2013 reporting period, the methodologies utilized for determining whether a Class I Water is meeting its designated use have been based on assessment of toxic parameters (metals, pesticides, and chemicals). In 2015, DEP implemented new reporting criteria for this metric. Since the differences between the old and new reporting criteria are minimal, comparisons to prior years can still be made.

**The data provided by DEP in 2021 and 2023 are the same as that provided in the respective prior year (i.e., 2020 and 2022), as DEP adopts new basin assessments on a biennial basis.*

## Water Quality Measure 1a: Percent of surface waters with healthy nutrient levels.

The District has an abundance of surface waters used for a variety of purposes by the people who live and work here, by those who are visiting, and by the fish and wildlife that depend on these waters. Excessive nutrient loading remains the largest single threat to these resources. While nutrients are essential to life and ecosystem functions, excessive nutrients can cause nuisance algal and plant growth, oxygen depletion, loss of water clarity, loss of desirable species, loss of biodiversity, flavor effects on drinking water, increased probability of human and animal pathogens and other water quality impairments. This measure documents the percentage of surface waters with healthy nutrient levels.

**Watersheds or Streams with Healthy Nutrient Levels***




*Source: Florida Department of Environmental Protection, 2013-2024.*

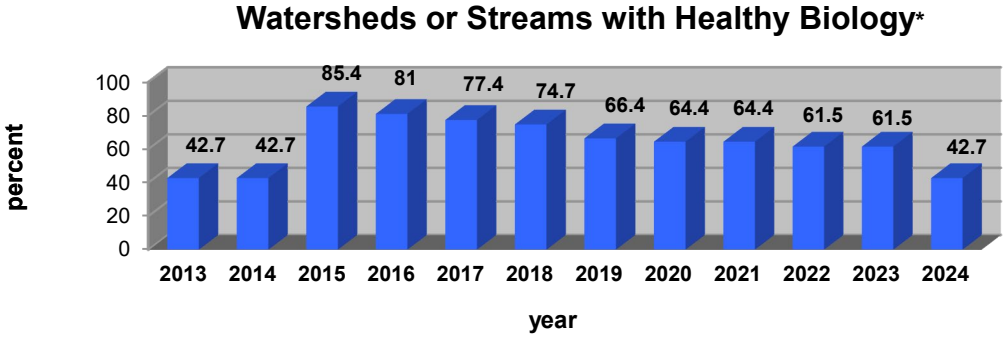
Of the total water bodies with sufficient data to satisfy assessment criteria (723 WBIDS out of 1,464 WBIDS Districtwide), 55.2 percent were determined to be healthy for nutrients in 2024.

In 2015, DEP implemented new reporting criteria. Under the new reporting criteria, eight nutrient-related parameters are utilized to determine waters with healthy levels of nutrients. For previous assessments, only two nutrient-related parameters (elevated Chlorophyll *a* concentrations or Trophic State Indices) were used. The expansion in the number of parameters evaluated has resulted in an increase in the number of water bodies determined to have unhealthy nutrient levels. Consequently, comparisons to years prior to 2015 can no longer be made.

**The data provided by DEP in 2021 and 2023 are the same as that provided in the respective prior year (i.e., 2020 and 2022), as DEP adopts new basin assessments on a biennial basis. The data provided by DEP in 2014 are the same as that provided in 2013, as DEP was developing new reporting criteria that went into effect in 2015.*

## Water Quality Measure 1b: Percentage of surface waters with healthy biological conditions.

Biological conditions are included in the broader definition of water quality. These conditions are indicators of water body health, and include investigations of dissolved oxygen, habitat conditions and the health of aquatic insect communities. Most importantly, the conditions provide cumulative information on all activities occurring within the watershed and can be used to establish baseline characteristics, characterize the overall condition of a watershed, identify potential problem pollutants, target more intensive diagnostic sampling and to support land use planning and management. This measure addresses the percentage of assessed watersheds or stream reaches with healthy biological conditions.




*Source: Florida Department of Environmental Protection, 2013-2024.*

The DEP primarily uses the Stream Condition Index (SCI), stream floral metrics and Lake Vegetation index (LVI) to evaluate the biological conditions in surface waters. Of the 234 watersheds or stream reaches assessed in 2024 within the District, 134 watersheds or stream reaches were determined to be impaired based on biological assessments. The numbers for the previous eleven years are as follows: 2022/2023 (283 assessed/109 impaired), 2020/2021 (250 assessed/89 impaired), 2019 (232 assessed/78 impaired), 2018 (174 assessed/44 impaired), 2017 (159 assessed/36 impaired), 2016 (84 assessed/16 impaired), 2015 (48 assessed/7 impaired), 2014 (157 assessed/90 impaired), 2013 (157 assessed/90 impaired).

In 2015, DEP implemented new reporting criteria for this metric. The primary differences between the old and the new reporting criteria include the number and frequency of the water bodies assessed, the basin(s) targeted for the assessment, and the quality of the data being used in the assessment. These changes have resulted in a decrease in the number of water bodies determined to have unhealthy biological conditions. Consequently, comparisons to years prior to 2015 can no longer be made. The difference in the percentage of healthy water bodies during years 2012-2014 is believed to be largely due to the number and frequency of the water bodies assessed, as well as the basin(s) targeted for the assessment.

**The data provided by DEP in 2021 and 2023 are the same as that provided in the respective prior year (i.e., 2020 and 2022), as DEP adopts new basin assessments on a biennial basis. The data provided by DEP in 2014 are the same as that provided in 2013, as DEP was developing new reporting criteria that went into effect in 2015. DEP uses LVI (Lake Vegetation Index) to assess biological health in lakes.*

## Water Quality Measure 2a: Improving, degrading and stable observations/conditions for nitrate concentrations in springs.

Increasing levels of nitrate-nitrogen in Upper Floridan aquifer groundwater discharging from springs is a continuing concern in the District and statewide. While not yet posing significant human health impacts, increasing nitrate concentrations stimulate the growth of aquatic vegetation which can alter the ecological function of springs and receiving water bodies. This measure is intended to identify District springs where nitrate concentrations are increasing (degrading), decreasing (improving), or remaining stable.
The table below depicts nitrate trend analyses for 48 selected springs within the District. As in previous years, the 2024 trends are determined using the Wilcoxon Rank-Sum test to compare data from the temporal groups of August 2017-August 2020 (Group 1) and August 2020-August 2024 (Group 2).

**Trends in Nitrate* Concentrations in Selected Springs** (*Source: District Data Collection Bureau, 2024*)

| Spring Group | Spring | Wilcoxon P-Statistic | No. of Samples Group 1 | Median Nitrate (mg/L) Group 1 | No. of Samples Group 2 | Median Nitrate (mg/L) Group 2 | Wilcoxon Trend |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ARIPEKA | BOBHILL SPRING WQ | 0.002357 | 12 | 0.635 | 16 | 0.471 | IMPROVING |
| ARIPEKA | MAGNOLIA SPRING | 0.143590 | 12 | 0.559 | 16 | 0.524 | IMPROVING |
| CHASSAHOWITZKA | BAIRD SPRING | 0.907593 | 12 | 0.323 | 16 | 0.328 | DEGRADING |
| CHASSAHOWITZKA | BETEEJAY SPRING | 0.147163 | 10 | 0.446 | 16 | 0.491 | DEGRADING |
| CHASSAHOWITZKA | CHASSAHOWITZKA 1 SPRING | 0.066469 | 12 | 0.653 | 16 | 0.657 | DEGRADING |
| CHASSAHOWITZKA | CHASSAHOWITZKA MAIN SPRING | 0.416489 | 12 | 0.582 | 16 | 0.604 | DEGRADING |
| CHASSAHOWITZKA | CRAB CREEK SPRING | 0.416489 | 12 | 0.659 | 16 | 0.633 | IMPROVING |
| CHASSAHOWITZKA | RUTH SPRING | 0.674751 | 11 | 0.650 | 16 | 0.642 | IMPROVING |
| GULF HAMMOCK | BIG KING SPRING | 0.727706 | 12 | 2.670 | 16 | 3.357 | DEGRADING |
| GULF HAMMOCK | LITTLE KING SPRING | 1.000000 | 12 | 1.400 | 16 | 1.490 | DEGRADING |
| GUM SLOUGH | ALLIGATOR SPRING (GUM SPRING 01A) | 0.925923 | 12 | 1.740 | 16 | 1.685 | IMPROVING |
| GUM SLOUGH | CITRUS-BLUE SPRING | 0.170842 | 12 | 0.754 | 16 | 0.814 | DEGRADING |
| GUM SLOUGH | GUM SPRINGS 1 | 0.889085 | 12 | 1.820 | 16 | 1.760 | IMPROVING |
| GUM SLOUGH | GUM SPRINGS 2 | 0.000272 | 10 | 1.530 | 15 | 1.690 | DEGRADING |
| GUM SLOUGH | GUM SPRINGS MAIN | 0.170432 | 12 | 1.660 | 16 | 1.685 | DEGRADING |
| GUM SLOUGH | WILSON HEAD SPRING | 0.014772 | 12 | 0.542 | 16 | 0.617 | DEGRADING |
| HIDDEN RIVER | HIDDEN RIVER 2 SPRING | 0.000224 | 10 | 0.934 | 15 | 0.868 | IMPROVING |
| HIDDEN RIVER | HIDDEN RIVER HEAD SPRING | 0.003576 | 10 | 0.958 | 15 | 0.897 | IMPROVING |
| HILLSBOROUGH | HILLSBOROUGH RIVER CRYSTAL SWAMP 1 | 0.025027 | 9 | 2.100 | 16 | 1.930 | IMPROVING |
| HOMOSASSA | BLUEBIRD SPRING VENT | 0.296237 | 12 | 0.692 | 16 | 0.740 | DEGRADING |
| HOMOSASSA | HALLS RIVER HEAD MAIN SPRING | 0.003191 | 12 | 0.497 | 16 | 0.413 | IMPROVING |

| Spring Group | Spring | Wilcoxon P-Statistic | No. of Samples Group 1 | Median Nitrate (mg/L) Group 1 | No. of Samples Group 2 | Median Nitrate (mg/L) Group 2 | Wilcoxon Trend |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| HOMOSASSA | HOMOSASSA 1 SPRING | 0.007599 | 12 | 0.738 | 16 | 0.782 | DEGRADING |
| HOMOSASSA | HOMOSASSA 2 SPRING | 0.053801 | 12 | 0.702 | 16 | 0.738 | DEGRADING |
| HOMOSASSA | HOMOSASSA 3 SPRING | 0.150055 | 12 | 0.766 | 16 | 0.798 | DEGRADING |
| HOMOSASSA | TROTTER MAIN | 0.209920 | 12 | 0.752 | 16 | 0.780 | DEGRADING |
| KINGS BAY | CATFISH SPRING | 0.003195 | 12 | 0.420 | 16 | 0.452 | DEGRADING |
| KINGS BAY | GOLFVIEW BOATHOUSE SPRING | 1.000000 | 4 | 0.261 | 4 | 0.260 | IMPROVING |
| KINGS BAY | HOUSE SPRING | 0.376759 | 3 | 0.545 | 4 | 0.575 | DEGRADING |
| KINGS BAY | HUNTERS SPRING | 0.489528 | 11 | 0.647 | 16 | 0.692 | DEGRADING |
| KINGS BAY | MAGNOLIA CIRCLE SPRING | 0.066543 | 12 | 0.627 | 16 | 0.692 | DEGRADING |
| KINGS BAY | PARKER ISLAND SPRING | 1.000000 | 12 | 0.210 | 16 | 0.196 | IMPROVING |
| KINGS BAY | TARPON HOLE COMPOSITE | 0.947615 | 11 | 0.218 | 11 | 0.206 | IMPROVING |
| LITHIA BUCKHORN | BUCKHORN MAIN SPRING | 0.004229 | 12 | 2.130 | 16 | 2.035 | IMPROVING |
| LITHIA BUCKHORN | LITHIA MAIN SPRING | 0.000453 | 12 | 2.493 | 16 | 2.305 | IMPROVING |
| PANASOFFKEE | BELTONS MILLPOND MAINTENANCE SPRING | 0.016736 | 12 | 0.140 | 16 | 0.322 | DEGRADING |
| PANASOFFKEE | CANAL 485A SPRING 1B | 0.000088 | 12 | 2.250 | 16 | 4.480 | DEGRADING |
| PANASOFFKEE | FENNEY SPRING | 0.981481 | 12 | 0.302 | 16 | 0.305 | DEGRADING |
| PINELLAS | HEALTH SPRING | 0.099343 | 12 | 4.960 | 16 | 4.580 | IMPROVING |
| RAINBOW | RAINBOW 1 SPRING | 0.025736 | 12 | 2.725 | 16 | 2.825 | DEGRADING |
| RAINBOW | RAINBOW 4 SPRING | 0.005629 | 12 | 2.495 | 16 | 2.605 | DEGRADING |
| RAINBOW | RAINBOW 6 SPRING | 0.000283 | 12 | 1.460 | 16 | 1.610 | DEGRADING |
| RAINBOW | RAINBOW BRIDGE SEEP NORTH | 0.000064 | 12 | 1.970 | 16 | 2.265 | DEGRADING |
| RAINBOW | RAINBOW BUBBLING SPRING | 0.744869 | 12 | 2.070 | 16 | 2.070 | STABLE |
| RAINBOW | RAINBOW SWAMP 3 SPRING | 0.304842 | 12 | 1.655 | 15 | 1.620 | IMPROVING |
| WEEKI WACHEE | JENKINS CREEK SPRING | 0.889221 | 12 | 0.805 | 16 | 0.811 | DEGRADING |
| WEEKI WACHEE | LITTLE WEEKI WACHEE SPRING | 0.041377 | 12 | 0.839 | 13 | 0.752 | IMPROVING |
| WEEKI WACHEE | WEEKI PRESERVE SPRING | 0.443680 | 12 | 0.260 | 16 | 0.211 | IMPROVING |
| WEEKI WACHEE | WEEKI WACHEE SPRINGS NR BROOKSVILLE | 0.156797 | 12 | 0.907 | 16 | 0.895 | IMPROVING |

**The sum of nitrite and nitrate are used to represent nitrate*

The Wilcoxon Rank-Sum test was used to determine whether there is a significant difference between spring water quality data populations grouped by time periods. It is a non-parametric statistical test that is used to determine whether one independent group of observations tends to contain larger values than another independent group. The Wilcoxon Rank-Sum test calculates a p-value, a significance level obtained by the data. If the calculated p-value is less than 0.05, the 95 percent confidence level, the groups are considered significantly different.

The results indicate that nitrate for levels for these 48 selected springs in the District remain similar to last year's report. The trend for 40 springs remained the same, while two changed from improving or stable to degrading and five formerly degrading springs changed to improving. It should be noted that changes in nitrate levels are typically very small from year to year, and the difference in median concentrations between temporal groups ranged from 0 (stable) at Rainbow Bubbling Spring, to 2.23 mg/l for Canal 485a Spring 1b, which is a significant change for this small spring. However, just 18 of the 48 springs analyzed exhibited a statistically significant nitrate trend, based on the 95% confidence threshold specified for the test.

Nitrate concentrations in springs may fluctuate based on a variety of factors including land use change, climate, irrigation practices, etc. Various DEP initiatives support funding for investigations and implementation of strategies to improve water quality in Florida's springs, including recognition of the significance of public education. The District continues to support springs conservation and water-quality improvements through cooperative funding initiatives and restoration efforts, such as storm water improvement projects, assisting with agricultural efficiencies, and conversion of onsite septic systems to municipal wastewater collection and treatment systems in spring basins.

## Natural Systems Measure 1a: Number of MFLs, by water body type, established annually and cumulatively.

The Florida Water Resources Act of 1972 (Chapter 373, F.S.) directs the District to establish minimum flows or minimum water levels (i.e., MFLs) for priority water bodies as the limit or water level at which further withdrawals would be significantly harmful to the water resources or ecology of the area. Adopted MFLs are incorporated into the District's Water Levels and Rates of Flow rules (Chapter 40D-8, F.A.C.) and used for regulatory and planning purposes. Based on changing environmental conditions and availability of additional information, MFLs are periodically reevaluated and revised, as necessary.

From the 1970s through the early 1990s, the District established regulatory flows and levels, including MFLs, for nearly 400 lakes. In the late 1990s, the District began developing new approaches for MFLs establishment based on statutory changes associated with MFLs. These efforts culminated in the reclassification of the nearly 400 previously established MFLs as guidance levels in FY2000 and adoption of 64 new MFLs for several lakes, wetlands, and aquifer sites and a river segment.

By the end of FY2024, District rules included MFLs for 207 water bodies, including those established for 126 lakes, 34 wetlands, 28 freshwater and estuarine river segments, 10 springs or spring groups, and 9 aquifer sites or areas. The following table lists the number of MFLs that have been developed by the District as new MFLs annually, the resulting cumulative total, and the number of MFLs reevaluated annually during the past 10 fiscal years.

### Adopted and Reevaluated Lake/Wetland, River/Stream, Spring, and Aquifer MFLs

| | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lakes and Wetlands | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cumulatively | 161 | 161 | 163 | 168 | 168 | 163* | 160* | 160 | 160 | 160 |
| Annually | 4 | 0 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| River/Stream Segments | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cumulatively | 19 | 19 | 19 | 22 | 22 | 23 | 23 | 24 | 24 | 28 |
| Annually | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 4 |
| Springs | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cumulatively | 7 | 8 | 8 | 9 | 9 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 |
| Annually | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Aquifers (Wells or Systems) | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cumulatively | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 9 |
| Annually | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Reevalutions (All Types) | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cumulatively | 8 | 0 | 29 | 33 | 40 | 91 | 127 | 128 | 128 | 130 |
| Annually | 7 | 0 | 21 | 4 | 7 | 51 | 36 | 1 | 0 | 2 |

Source: SWFWMD Environmental Flows and Levels Staff, 2024.

** Decreases in the numbers of cumulatively adopted lakes and wetlands MFLs for FY2020 relative to FY2019 and FY2021 relative to FY2020 were associated with repeal of previously established MFLs.*

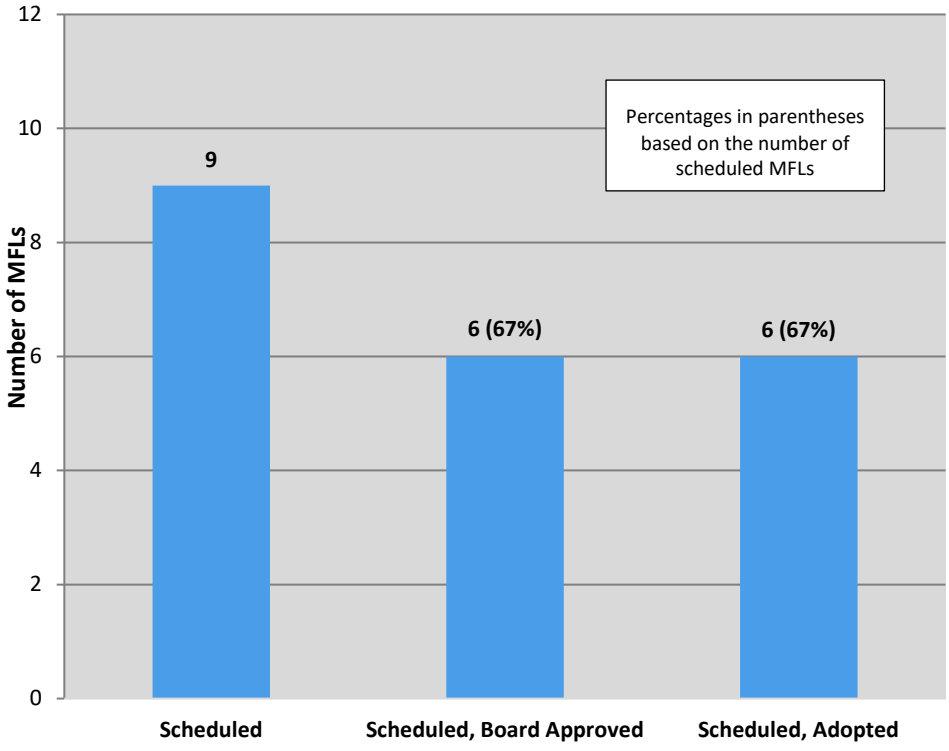
## Natural Systems Measure 1b: Percentage of MFLs and Reservations established or reevaluated in accordance with previous year's schedule.

Pursuant to Section 373, F.S., the District maintains and annually updates a "Priority List and Schedule" that identifies water bodies for which minimum flows and minimum water levels (MFLs) and reservations are to be established and reevaluated. The Priority List and Schedule is based on the importance of waters to the state or region and other factors, includes waters which are experiencing or may reasonably be expected to experience adverse impacts, and addresses water to be reserved for the protection of fish and wildlife or the public health and safety. The Priority List and Schedule is approved by the Governing Board, submitted to the DEP for approval, and subsequently included in the District's Consolidated Annual Report.

MFLs are adopted into the District's Water Levels and Rates of Flow (Chapter 40D-8, F.A.C.). Reservations are adopted into the Consumptive Use of Water (Chapter 40D-2, F.A.C.) rules. MFLs and reservations are both used for water resource regulation and water supply planning, and periodically reevaluated. The process of MFLs and reservations development includes technical analyses, scientific review, Governing Board approval, and rulemaking. These stages of development provide many opportunities for stakeholder input.

As shown in the following graphic, the 2023 priority list included 9 MFLs scheduled for establishment or reevaluation during calendar years 2023 and 2024. No reservations were included on the priority list for years 2023 and 2024.

**Scheduled MFLs for 2023 and 2024 Approved and Adopted by Rule**




*Source: District Environmental Flows and Levels Staff, 2024.*

Governing Board approval for initiation of rulemaking and rule adoption associated with the reevaluation or establishment of 6 (67%) of the 9 scheduled MFLs were completed by the end of FY2024: Lake Tulane, Lake Verona, Little Manatee River Upper Segment, Little Manatee River Lower Segment, Horse Creek, and Charlie Creek.

MFLs reevaluation or establishment for 3 (33%) of the 9 MFLs scheduled for completion in calendar years 2023 and 2024 were not completed during FY2024. Reevaluations for lakes Angelo and Denton scheduled for 2024 were delayed based on the need to develop updated lake-level methods and peer review new lake-level criteria. Reevaluation of Lake Letta is delayed to coincide with evaluation of Lake Lotela with which it shares a hydrologic connection.

**Natural Systems Measure 1c: For the previous fiscal year, the total acres of wetlands or other surface waters authorized by Environmental Resource Permit (ERP) to be impacted and the number of acres required to be created, enhanced, restored and preserved.**

The ERP Program evaluates surface water management systems for impacts to natural systems (surface water and wetlands), water quality, and water quantity (flood protection) from various development projects. Impacts to surface waters and wetlands, unless specifically exempted, must be eliminated or reduced and, if unavoidable, mitigated. The intent of mitigation is to replace the functions of the impacted natural systems, whether involving water quality treatment, flood protection, wildlife habitat or other factors. This measure addresses the extent to which natural systems are impacted, and the extent to which impacted systems are replaced.

| Wetlands | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Impacted (temporary & permanent) | 492 | 478 | 594 | 856 | 746 | 760 | 925 | 928 | 1292 | 727 | 1197 | 1113 | 1286 |
| Created/ Restored | 285 | 127 | 156 | 432 | 206 | 207 | 549 | 77 | 129 | 155 | 133 | 93 | 214 |
| Enhanced | 269 | 293 | 189 | 100 | 251 | 482 | 367 | 345 | 797 | 223 | 395 | 133 | 203 |
| Preserved | 4248 | 1809 | 2079 | 1363 | 2054 | 4046 | 4020 | 4839 | 1950 | 1465 | 449 | 1958 | 3575 |

*Source: SWFWMD Environmental Resource Permitting Database, October 2024.*

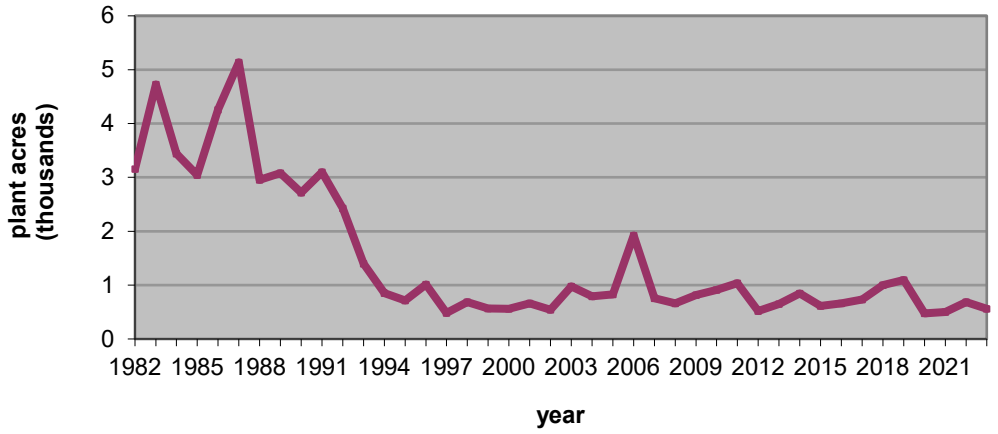
The District's ERP Program shows a strong preference for avoiding wetland impacts as the best means to retain the functions of these important systems. Although the replacement requirement for unavoidable wetland impacts is based on functional value, the combination of creating, restoring and enhancing wetlands more than offset acres impacted in year 2012.

** Acreages are rounded to whole numbers and have been adjusted from 2014 forward to match the data reported in the DEP Wetland Gain/Loss Report. In FY2012, the methodology for reporting the ERP wetland acres was adjusted to reflect only the UMAM mitigation acres needed to offset the wetland impact functional loss. Prior to FY2012, the data included acres not impacted in the "Preserved" total. The "Preserved" total now only includes acres preserved by a conservation easement that was included as part of the required mitigation. Short form modifications to mitigation banks, which are reported in earlier years, are also now excluded.*

**Natural Systems Measure 2a: Acres of invasive nonnative aquatic plants in inventoried public waters.**

The protection and management of natural surface waters cannot be accomplished without effectively managing troublesome exotic aquatic plant species that can reduce the abundance and diversity of beneficial native plant populations, negatively impact fish and wildlife habitat, hinder navigation and recreational use, degrade water quality, impede water flow and increase sedimentation rates. Aquatic plant management operations conducted by the District on publicly accessible natural waters are funded by and coordinated with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FFWCC) under the Cooperative Aquatic Plant Control Program. This measure is intended to monitor how well the District is managing invasive plant species on public waterways under its jurisdiction.

**Invasive Aquatic Plant Species on District-Managed Lakes/Rivers***




*Source: Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Invasive Plant Management Section's Annual Survey Database, 2023.*

Populations of the invasive aquatic plant species-hydrilla, water hyacinth and water lettuce-have been managed at maintenance levels on the public waters managed by the District since 1994. These are the most troublesome plants requiring management on an annual basis. In 2023, a total of 560 acres were detected on the 12,771 acres of District-managed lakes and rivers. This represents approximately four percent coverage of the aforementioned invasive species and reflects a continuation of effective maintenance control. Some variation in plant acreages is expected on a year-to-year basis since ecological conditions, such as water levels or water quality conditions may result in increased or decreased growth potential or affect planned control operations. It is not realistic to expect complete eradication. The goal is "maintenance control" where targeted plants are regularly monitored and maintained at the lowest feasible level. Additionally, the management philosophy for hydrilla has been evolving since control of the aquatic plant management program was transferred to the FFWCC. On some waters, the FFWCC supports allowing the coverage of hydrilla to increase if it will benefit the primary use of a water body such as waterfowl hunting.

**In 2020, the District returned maintenance responsibility for 11,729 acres of public waterways back to the FFWCC. This reduction in managed acres is reflected in the decreased number of plant acres surveyed compared to previous years.*

## Flood Protection Measure 1a: Percentage of District works maintained on schedule.

The District maintains a total of 84 structures, including water conservation structures, salinity barriers, pump stations and flood control structures. It is essential these facilities are maintained to optimally perform the respective functions. The information contained in the Structure Operations Five-Year Maintenance Plan serves as the guideline for scheduling maintenance on District works.

| Year | Number of Structures | Percent of Structures Maintained on Schedule* |
|---|---|---|
| 2020 | 86 | 70 |
| 2021 | 84 | 70 |
| 2022 | 84 | 72 |
| 2023 | 84 | 74 |
| 2024 | 84 | 70 |

*Source: SWFWMD Operations Staff, 2024.*

In FY2024, inspections and evaluations were completed for 23.5 percent or four of the District's 17 flood control structures. Inspections were also completed at the Lake Hancock pump station.

Inspections and evaluations of the water conservation structures were either completed in previous years or are no longer needed due to an upcoming replacement or removal. Inspections and evaluation of the remaining flood control structures were not required in FY2024 based on the District's risk-based inspection schedule.

The District uses a five-year plan to address all needed routine and preventative maintenance on District structures, including the necessary budgets to accomplish the work. Funding for necessary repairs/improvements is incorporated into the five-year plan and prioritized based on those most critically needed.

** In FY2020-2024, some structures were not maintained on schedule due to implementation of new inspection and maintenance requirements, staff work associated with hurricanes and other major storm events and District construction work at the Golf Course structure.*

Consolidated Annual Report
March 1, 2025

# 2024 Priority List and Schedule

*for the Establishment of Minimum Flows, Minimum Water Levels and Reservations*

Southwest Florida
Water Management District

# Chapter 2 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 FY2024, 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), Iola, 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 | -81.5573 | 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 |
| 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 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] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 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 (2nd 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 |
| 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 | Yes [c] | 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 (1st 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 |

[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.

Consolidated Annual Report

March 1, 2025

# 2024 Minimum Flows and Levels / Water Quality Grade for Projects

Southwest Florida Water Management District

# Chapter 3 MFL Water Quality Grade and Projects

## Overview

Section 373.036(7)(b)9., F.S., provides that the Consolidated Annual Report shall contain a "grade for each watershed, water body, or water segment in which a project listed under subparagraph 8 is located representing the level of impairment and violations of adopted minimum flow or minimum water level. The grading system must reflect the severity of the impairment of the watershed, water body, or water segment.

Table 1 lists the projects contained within the 2024 Five-Year Water Resource Development Work Program, the watershed, water body, or water segment, the project impacts, and a grade of two items: 1) the water quality level of impairment and 2) the level of violation of a minimum flow or minimum water level.

## Level of Impairment Grade

The Level of Impairment grade is represented as follows:

> **Impaired – High**: This grade is assigned if the water body is impaired for one or more parameters other than mercury and based on a consideration of other factors, including the number of impairments, presence of Outstanding Florida Waters, proximity to ongoing or planned restoration activities, ecological priority of the water for threatened and endangered species, environmental justice concerns, the amount of anthropogenic land use, and local aquifer vulnerability.
>
> **Impaired**: The grade is assigned if the water body is impaired for one or more parameters other than mercury.
>
> **Not Impaired**: This grade is assigned if the water body is not impaired for any parameters other than mercury.

The DEP provided the impairment grades based upon Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) for each Water Body ID (WBID). Projects that impact specific WBIDs were identified in Table 1 for that WBID. As an example, a project that replaced disposal of treated wastewater in a spray field or Rapid Infiltration Basin (RIB) with beneficial use of reclaimed water utilized the impairment grade associated with the WBID where the spray field or RIB were originally located. It is important to note that projects contained within a Water Resource Development Work Program are focused on water use/conservation with the exception of the projects contained in Appendix A – District Projects for Implementing Basin Management Action Plans.

## Level of Violation of Adopted MFL

Each water body with an established MFL not currently being met or projected to not be met within 20 years was evaluated based on the relative magnitude of the MFL violation and rated as close, moderately close, or not close to meeting the MFL. In evaluating this element, the District considered the magnitude of the variance from the MFL, the magnitude of the ecological impact, the time frame for recovery, and the time frame for completion of the projects.

The water body was also evaluated based on the regional significance of the water body and rated as Tier 1, Tier 2 or Tier 3 with Tier 1 being the highest rating for regional significance and Tier 3 being the lowest rating. When evaluating this element, the District considered the water body's size and geographical extent, anticipated timeframe for recovery, ecological importance, recreational uses, navigation, threatened/endangered species, wildlife utilization, aesthetics, and historical and archeological significance.

Level 0: This grade is assigned if the water body is meeting the MFL but is projected to not meet the MFL within 20 years (that is, the water body is in prevention).

Level I: This grade is assigned if the water body is close to meeting the MFL and the water body is rated as a Tier 3 or Tier 2 for regional significance; or the water body is moderately close to meeting the MFL and the water body is rated a Tier 3 for regional significance.

Level II: This grade is assigned if the water body is close to meeting the MFL and the water body is rated a Tier 1 for regional significance; or the water body is moderately close to meeting the MFL and the water body is rated a Tier 2 for regional significance; or the water body is not close to meeting the MFL and the water body is rated a Tier 3 for regional significance.

Level III: This grade is assigned if the water body is moderately close to meeting the MFL and the water body is rated a Tier 1 for regional significance; or the water body is not close to meeting the MFL and the water body is rated a Tier 2 or Tier 1 for regional significance.

The majority of the projects in the Water Resource Development Work Program will directly assist in a recovery strategy for a Water Use Caution Area (WUCA). The projects are anticipated to impact all water bodies that are included within the WUCA. As an example, the Southern Water Use Caution Area covers a 5,100 square mile area over all or parts of eight counties. There are 7 lakes that are not achieving their established minimum flow or level in this region. Because the basis for not meeting these MFLs is due to groundwater withdrawals within the confined Upper Floridan aquifer in the SWUCA, a project within this area is anticipated to impact the entire area. Therefore, all the impacted waterbodies within a WUCA have been included for each project.

## Table 1 Water Resource Development Projects

| Project Number | Water Resource Development Projects | Watershed, Water Body, Water Segment* | Level of Water Quality Impairment | Level of Violation of Adopted MFL |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1) Alternative Water Supply Feasibility Research and Pilot Projects (Programmatic Code 2.2.1.1)** | | | | |
| N855 | Southern Hillsborough Aquifer Recharge Expansion (SHARE) Phase 1 | SWUCA Water Bodies<br>Hillsborough Bay Upper 1558E and 1558D<br>Palm River 1536E<br>McKay Bay 1584B | WBID 1558E - Not Impaired<br>WBID 1536E - Impaired<br>WBID 1584B - Impaired | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 - 0 water bodies<br>Level 2 - 5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |
| P280 | Hydrogeologic Investigation of LFA in Polk County | MIA | None* | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 - 0 water bodies<br>Level 2 - 5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |
| P925 | Optical Borehole Imaging Data Collection from LFA Wells | SWUCA Water Bodies | None* | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 - 0 water bodies<br>Level 2 - 5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |
| P926 | Sources/Ages of Groundwater in LFA Wells | SWUCA Water Bodies | None* | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 - 0 water bodies<br>Level 2 - 5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |
| Q050 | City of Venice Reclaimed Water Aquifer Storage Recovery | SWUCA Water Bodies<br>Curry Creek 2009<br>Curry Creek 2009A<br>Sarasota Bay 8053 | WBID 2009B - Impaired<br>WBID 2009C - Impaired<br>WBID 8053 - Not Impaired | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 - 0 water bodies<br>Level 2 - 5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |
| Q064 | Direct Aquifer Recharge - North Hillsborough Aquifer Recharge Program Phase 2 | NTBWUCA Water Bodies<br>Old Tampa Bay 1558I<br>Old Tampa Bay 1558H | WBID 1558I - Impaired<br>WBID 1558H - Impaired | NTBWUCA water bodies<br><br>Level 1 - 1 water body<br>Level 2 - 1 water body |
| Q159 | Sarasota County - Bee Ridge Water Reclamation Facility Aquifer Recharge | SWUCA Water Bodies | None* | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 - 0 water bodies<br>Level 2 - 5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |

| 2) Facilitating Agricultural Resource Management Systems (FARMS) (Programmatic Code 2.2.1.2) | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| H798 | FARMS - P BAR R Sod Company, LLC | SWUCA Water Bodies | None* | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 - 0 water bodies<br>Level 2 - 5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |
| H802 | FARMS - Berry Patch Ridge, LLC | SWUCA Water Bodies<br>CFWI | None* | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 - 0 water bodies<br>Level 2 - 5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |
| H804 | FARMS- FD Berries USA,LLC | SWUCA Water Bodies<br>Yellow Bluff Creek | WBID 1891 - Not Impaired | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 - 0 water bodies<br>Level 2 - 5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |
| H805 | FARMS- Bay Grove- T&T Environmental Phase 1 | SWUCA Water Bodies<br>Howthorn Creek | WBID 1997 - Impaired | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 - 0 water bodies<br>Level 2 - 5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |
| H806 | FARMS- Sandhill Native Growers | SWUCA Water Bodies<br>Joshua Creek above Peace River | WBID 1950A - Impaired | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 - 0 water bodies<br>Level 2 - 5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |
| H807 | FARMS- Sizemore Group Automation | DPCWUCA Water Bodies<br>Howell Branch | WBID 1568 - Impaired | DPCWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 -0 water bodies<br>Level 2 -0 water bodies<br>Level 3 -0 water bodies |
| H813 | FARMS- Bayside Sod | SWUCA Water Bodies<br>Parrish Road Creek | WBID 1834 - Not Impaired | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 - 0 water bodies<br>Level 2 - 5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |
| H814 | FARMS - Bethel Farms, LLLP - Ph 5 | SWUCA Water Bodies<br>Buzzard Roost Branch | WBID 1944 - Not Impaired | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 - 0 water bodies<br>Level 2 - 5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |
| H815 | FARMS - Midway Farms, LLC | SWUCA Water Bodies<br>Old Town Creek | WBID 1776 - Not Impaired | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 - 0 water bodies<br>Level 2 - 5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| H816 | FARMS - Marshall Tree Farm, Inc. | Rainbow River<br>Non-contributing area | WBID 2765 - Not Impaired | None** |
| H818 | FARMS - Bay Grove - T&T Environmental, LLC Ph 2 | SWUCA Water Bodies<br>Howthorn Creek | WBID 1997 - Impaired | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 -0 water bodies<br>Level 2 -5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |
| H819 | FARMS - Spanish Trails Farming and Land Co. LLC Ph 3 | SWUCA Water Bodies<br>Cow Slough | WBID 1964 - Impaired | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 -0 water bodies<br>Level 2 -5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |
| H820 | FARMS - Wauchula Fresh, LLC | SWUCA Water Bodies<br>Thompson Branch | WBID 1844 - Impaired | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 -0 water bodies<br>Level 2 -5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |
| H822 | FARMS - Midway Farms, LLC Phase 2 | SWUCA Water Bodies<br>Old Town Creek | WBID 1776 - Not Impaired | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 -0 water bodies<br>Level 2 -5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |
| H823 | FARMS - McClure Properties, LTD | SWUCA Water Bodies<br>Peacock Branch | WBID 1828 - Not Impaired | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 -0 water bodies<br>Level 2 -5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |
| H824 | FARMS - Farm Road Port Charlotte, FL LLC - Phase 2 | SWUCA Water Bodies<br>Lee Branch | WBID 2035 - Imparied | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 -0 water bodies<br>Level 2 -5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |
| H529 | Mini-FARMS Program (H529) 3 | SWUCA Water Bodies<br>NTBWUCA Water Bodies<br>DPCWUCA Water Bodies<br>Shell Creek<br>Prairie Creek | WBID 2041 - Impaired<br>WBID 1962 - Impaired | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 -0 water bodies<br>Level 2 -5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **3) Environmental Restoration/Minimum Flows and Levels Recovery (Programmatic Code 2.2.1.3)** | | | | |
| H089 | MIA Recharge SWIMAL Recovery at Flatford Swamp | SWUCA water bodies<br>Upper Myakka 1877B | WBID 1877B - Not Impaired | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 -0 water bodies<br>Level 2 -5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |
| H404-1 | Pump Stations on Tampa Bypass Canal, Morris Bridge Sink | Lower Hillsborough River 1443E | WBID 1443E - Impaired - High | NTBWUCA water bodies<br><br>Level 1 - 1 water body<br>Level 2 - 1 water body |
| H400-7 | Third Five-Year Assessment of the Lower Hillsborough River Recovery Strategy | Lower Hillsborough River 1443E | WBID 1443E - Impaired - High | NTBWUCA water bodies<br><br>Level 1 - 1 water body<br>Level 2 - 1 water body |
| H400-13 | Lower Hillsborough River Biological Data Collection | Lower Hillsborough River 1443E | WBID 1443E - Impaired - High | NTBWUCA water bodies<br><br>Level 1 - 1 water body<br>Level 2 - 1 water body |
| **Surface Water Projects** | | | | |
| **Water Supply Development Assistance - Surface Water Projects (Programmatic Budget 2.2.2.1)** | | | | |
| Q272 | PRMRWSA - Reservoir No. 3 | SWUCA Water Bodies | None* | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 -0 water bodies<br>Level 2 -5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |
| **Regional potable Interconnects** | | | | |
| **Water Supply Development Assistance - Regional Potable Water Interconnects (Programmatic Budget 2.2.2.2)** | | | | |
| Q146 | Tampa Bay Water Southern Hillsborough County Booster Pump Station | NTB Water Bodies | None* | NTBWUCA water bodies<br><br>Level 1 - 1 water body<br>Level 2 - 1 water body |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Q216 | PRWC Regional Transmission Southeast Phase 1 | SWUCA Water Bodies | None* | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 -0 water bodies<br>Level 2 -5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |
| Q241 | TBW - Southern Hillsborough County Transmission Expansion | SWUCA Water Bodies | None* | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 -0 water bodies<br>Level 2 -5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |
| Q248 | PRMRWA - Regional Acquisition of Project Prairie Pumping and Storage Facilities | SWUCA Water Bodies | None* | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 -0 water bodies<br>Level 2 -5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |
| Q313 | PRMRWSA- Regional Integrated Loop System Ph 3C | SWUCA Water Bodies | None* | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 -0 water bodies<br>Level 2 -5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |
| Q355 | PRMRWSA- Reg Integr Loop Sys Ph 2b | SWUCA Water Bodies | None* | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 -0 water bodies<br>Level 2 -5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |
| ***H094 Polk County Partnership dollars have been redistributed to the PRWC Projects ((N882, N905, and N928) | | | | |
| **Reclaimed Water Projects** | | | | |
| **Water Supply Development Assistance - Reclaimed Water Projects (Programmatic Budget 2.2.2.3)** | | | | |
| N339 | Winter Haven #3 Reclaimed Interconnect, Storage, Pumping | SWUCA Water Bodies<br>Peace Creek Drainage Canal 1539 | WBID 1539 - Impaired - High | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 -0 water bodies<br>Level 2 -5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |
| N791 | Pasco County Starkey Ranch Reclaimed Water Transmission Phase C | NTBWUCA Water Bodies<br>Magnolia - Aripeka Springs 1391B<br>Direct Runoff to Gulf 1400 | WBID 1391B - Impaired - High<br>WBID 1400 - Not Impaired | NTBWUCA water bodies<br><br>Level 1 - 1 water body<br>Level 2 - 1 water body |
| N868 | Polk County Utilities NERUSA Ernie Caldwell Blvd Reclaimed Water Transmission | SWUCA Water Bodies<br>Big Creek East Watershed 1406 | WBID 1406 - Impaired | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 -0 water bodies<br>Level 2 -5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |

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|---|---|---|---|---|
| N898 | Haines City Reclaimed Water Tank and Pump Stations Project | SWUCA Water Bodies | None* | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 -0 water bodies<br>Level 2 -5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |
| Q057 | Zephyrhills - Zephyr Lakes and Hospital Reuse | NTBWUCA Water Bodies<br>Zephyhills Airport Run 1448<br>Hillsborough River 1443A | WBID 1448 - Not Impaired<br>WBID 1443A - Impaired | NTBWUCA water bodies<br><br>Level 1 - 1 water body<br>Level 2 - 1 water body |
| Q066 | Polk County Utilities - NERUSA Lake Wilson Road Reuse | SWUCA Water Bodies<br>Big Creek East Watershed 1406 | WBID 1406 - Impaired | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 -0 water bodies<br>Level 2 -5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |
| Q067 | Polk County Utilities - NERUSA Southeast Reuse Loop | SWUCA Water Bodies<br>Big Creek East Watershed 1406 | WBID 1406 - Impaired | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 -0 water bodies<br>Level 2 -5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |
| Q105 | Citrus County Sugarmill Woods Golf Course Reuse | Chassahowitzka River 1361<br>Baird Creek 1348D | WBID 1361 - Impaired<br>WBID 1348D - Impaired - High | None** |
| Q113 | City of Plant City McIntosh Park Indirect Potable Reuse Feasibility Study | NTBWUCA Water Bodies<br>Mill Creek 1542A<br>East Canal 1518<br>Itchepackasassa Creek 1495A<br>Blackwater Creek 1482<br>Hillsborough River 1443D | WBID 1542A - Impaired - High<br>WBID 1518 - Impaired<br>WBID 1495A - Impaired<br>WBID 1482 - Impaired - High<br>WBID 1443D - Not Impaired | NTBWUCA water bodies<br><br>Level 1 - 1 water body<br>Level 2 - 1 water body |
| Q139 | North Port Direct Potable Reuse Feasibility | SWUCA Water Bodies | None* | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 -0 water bodies<br>Level 2 -5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |
| Q160 | Sarasota County Honore Avenue Reclaimed Water Transmission | SWUCA Water Bodies | None* | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 -0 water bodies<br>Level 2 -5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |

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|---|---|---|---|---|
| Q200 | Winter Haven Direct Potable Reuse Feasiblity Study | SWUCA Water Bodies | None* | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 -0 water bodies<br>Level 2 -5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |
| Q209 | Polk County Direct Potable Reuse Feasibility and Pilot Demo | SWUCA Water Bodies | None* | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 -0 water bodies<br>Level 2 -5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |
| Q268 | Braden River Utilities Taylor Road Area Transmission | SWUCA Water Bodies | None* | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 -0 water bodies<br>Level 2 -5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |
| Q271 | Winter Haven Preserve at Lake Ashton Transmision | SWUCA Water Bodies | None* | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 -0 water bodies<br>Level 2 -5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |
| Q274 | Zephyrhills - Zephyr to Pasco Reclaimed Water Interconnect | NTBWUCA Water Bodies | None* | NTBWUCA water bodies<br><br>Level 1 - 1 water body<br>Level 2 - 1 water body |
| Q353 | Pinellas Co- Southcross RW Expan/Surface Aug Study | NTBWUCA Water Bodies | None* | NTBWUCA water bodies<br><br>Level 1 - 1 water body<br>Level 2 - 1 water body |
| **Brackish Groundwater Projects** | | | | |
| **Water Supply Development Assistance - Brackish Groundwater Development Projects (Programmatic Budget 2.2.2.4)** | | | | |
| Q184 | PRWC Southeast Wellfield Implementation | SWUCA Water Bodies | None* | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 -0 water bodies<br>Level 2 -5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |
| Q294 | PRWC Southeast Test Well No. 3 | SWUCA Water Bodies | None* | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 -0 water bodies<br>Level 2 -5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Q308 | PRWC- West Polk Wellfield | SWUCA Water Bodies | None* | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 -0 water bodies<br>Level 2 -5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |
| Q309 | PRWC- Test Prod Well #2 West Polk Wellfield | SWUCA Water Bodies | None* | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 -0 water bodies<br>Level 2 -5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |
| **Aquifer Recharge and Aquifer Storage and Recovery Projects** | | | | |
| **Water Supply Development Assistance - Aquifer Recharge & Aquifer Storage and Recovery Projects (Programmatic Budget 2.2.2.5)** | | | | |
| N435 | City of Bradenton Surface Water Aquifer Storage Recovery 2 | SWUCA Water Bodies | None* | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 -0 water bodies<br>Level 2 -5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |
| Q142 | Pinellas County Chestnut Park Aquifer Storage, Recovery & Recharge | NTBWUCA Water Bodies<br>Lake Tarpon Canal 1541A and 1541B<br>Safety Harbor 1558IA<br>Old Tampa Bay 1558F and G<br>Old Tampa Bay 1558H<br>Old Tampa Bay 1558I | WBID 1541A - Impaired<br>WBID 1541B - Not Impaired<br>WBID 1558IA - Impaired<br>WBID 1558F - Not Impaired<br>WBID 1558G - Impaired<br>WBID 1558H - Impaired<br>WBID 1558I - Impaired | NTBWUCA water bodies<br><br>Level 1 - 1 water body<br>Level 2 - 1 water body |
| **Water Conservation Projects** | | | | |
| **Water Supply Development Assistance - Conservation Rebates, Retrofits, Etc. Projects (Programmatic Budget 2.2.2.7)** | | | | |
| B015 | Water Incentives Supporting Efficient (WISE) Program | SWUCA Water Bodies<br>NTBWUCA Water Bodies | None* | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 -0 water bodies<br>Level 2 -5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |
| N973 | Winter Haven Consumption/Conservation Programs Data Management Software | SWUCA Water Bodies | None* | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 -0 water bodies<br>Level 2 -5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| N999 | Marion County Toilet Rebate Program Phase 5 | Northern District/Springs Coast | None* | None** |
| Q145 | Longboat Key Club - Advanced Irrigation System | SWUCA Water Bodies | None* | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 -0 water bodies<br>Level 2 -5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |
| Q166 | Bartow - Golf Course Advanced Irrigation System | SWUCA Water Bodies | None* | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 -0 water bodies<br>Level 2 -5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |
| Q193 | Crystal RIver - Conservation Phase 1 | Northern District/Springs Coast | None* | None** |
| Q215 | TBW - Demand Management Program Phase 2 | NTBWUCA Water Bodies | None* | NTBWUCA water bodies<br><br>Level 1 - 1 water body<br>Level 2 - 1 water body |
| Q245 | Pinellas County AMI Metering Analytics | NTBWUCA Water Bodies | None* | NTBWUCA water bodies<br><br>Level 1 - 1 water body<br>Level 2 - 1 water body |
| Q256 | St. Petersburg - Sensible Sprinkling Program - Phase 10 | NTBWUCA Water Bodies | None* | NTBWUCA water bodies<br><br>Level 1 - 1 water body<br>Level 2 - 1 water body |
| Q265 | North Port - Water Distribribution Ridgewood/ Lamplighter Area Looping | SWUCA Water Bodies | None* | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 -0 water bodies<br>Level 2 -5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |
| Q266 | Polk County - Florida Water Star Builder Reimbursement Program | SWUCA Water Bodies | None* | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 -0 water bodies<br>Level 2 -5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Q267 | PRWC- Demand Management Implementation | SWUCA Water Bodies | None* | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 -0 water bodies<br>Level 2 -5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |
| P964 | Water Use Evals for Non-Ag Users | SWUCA Water Bodies | None* | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 -0 water bodies<br>Level 2 -5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |
| Q304 | Venice Toilet Rebate and Retrofit Phase 9 | SWUCA Water Bodies | None* | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 -0 water bodies<br>Level 2 -5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |
| Q306 | WRWSA Irrigation Eval Program, phase 7 | Northern District/Springs Coast | None* | None** |
| Q311 | Bay Laurel CCDD Water Conservation Program phase 2 | Northern District/Springs Coast | None* | None** |
| Q319 | Manatee County Toilet Rebate phase 15 | SWUCA Water Bodies | None* | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 -0 water bodies<br>Level 2 -5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |
| Q320 | Citrus County Water Conservation Program phase 6 | Northern District/Springs Coast | None* | None** |
| Q371 | Polk County Irrigation System Evaluation Program, Phase 8 | SWUCA Water Bodies | None* | SWUCA water bodies<br>Level 1 -0 water bodies<br>Level 2 -5 water bodies<br>Level 3 - 2 water bodies |
| Q387 | St. Pete Sensible Sprinkling Program, Phase 11 | NTBWUCA Water Bodies | None* | NTBWUCA water bodies<br>Level 2 - 1 water body |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Water Supply Planning Projects** | | | | |
| **Water Supply Planning (Programmatic Budget 1.1.1)** | | | | |
| Q324 | WS Planning - WRWSA - Regional Water Supply Plan 2024 Update | Northern District/Springs Coast | None* | None** |
| **Appendix A. District Projects for Implementing Basin Management Action Plans** | | | | |
| **Projects for Implementing BMAPs** | | | | |
| W401 | Crystal River Preserve State Park Redfish Hole Restoration | Crystal River 1341<br>Crystal River 1341C<br>Crystal River 1341D<br>Crystal River 1341E<br>Crystai River 1341F<br>Crystal River 1341G<br>Crystal River 1341H | Crystal River 1341 - Impaired - High<br>Crystal River 1341C - Impaired - High<br>Crystal River 1341D - Impaired - High<br>Crystal River 1341E - Not Impaired<br>Crystai River 1341F - Impaired - High<br>Crystal River 1341G - Impaired - High<br>Crystal River 1341H - Impaired - High | None** |
| W432 | Citrus County Cambridge Green Septic to Sewer | Crystal River 1341<br>Crystal River 1341C<br>Crystal River 1341D<br>Crystal River 1341E<br>Crystai River 1341F<br>Crystal River 1341G<br>Crystal River 1341H | Crystal River 1341 - Impaired - High<br>Crystal River 1341C - Impaired - High<br>Crystal River 1341D - Impaired - High<br>Crystal River 1341E - Not Impaired<br>Crystai River 1341F - Impaired - High<br>Crystal River 1341G - Impaired - High<br>Crystal River 1341H - Impaired - High | None** |
| W466 | Weeki Wachee Education Campaign | None* | None* | None** |
| W466 | Chassahowitzka Education Campaign | None* | None* | None** |
| WH04 | Citrus County Old Homosassa West Septic to Sewer Project | Homosassa River 1345<br>Homosassa Springs Group 1345G | WBID 1345 - Not Impaired<br>WBID 1345G - Impaired - High | None** |
| Q134 | Citrus County Old Homosassa East Septic to Sewer Project | Homosassa River 1345<br>Homosassa Springs Group 1345G | WBID 1345 - Not Impaired<br>WBID 1345G - Impaired - High | None** |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| WS01 | Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Mapping | Homosassa River 1345<br>Homosassa Springs Group 1345G | WBID 1345 - Not Impaired<br>WBID 1345G - Impaired - High | None** |
| WS01 | Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Mapping | Homosassa River 1345<br>Homosassa Springs Group 1345G | WBID 1345 - Not Impaired<br>WBID 1345G - Impaired - High | None** |
| WS01 | Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Mapping | Homosassa River 1345<br>Homosassa Springs Group 1345G | WBID 1345 - Not Impaired<br>WBID 1345G - Impaired - High | None** |
| WS01 | Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Mapping | Weeki Wachee Spring Group 1382B<br>Weeki Wachee Spring Run 1382F<br>Weeki Wachee River 1382I | WBID 1382B - Impaired<br>WBID 1382F - Impaired - High<br>WBID 1382I - Impaired | None** |
| WS01 | Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Mapping | Crystal River 1341<br>Crystal River 1341C<br>Crystal River 1341D<br>Crystal River 1341E<br>Crystai River 1341F<br>Crystal River 1341G<br>Crystal River 1341H | Crystal River 1341 - Impaired - High<br>Crystal River 1341C - Impaired - High<br>Crystal River 1341D - Impaired - High<br>Crystal River 1341E - Not Impaired<br>Crystai River 1341F - Impaired - High<br>Crystal River 1341G - Impaired - High<br>Crystal River 1341H - Impaired - High | None** |
| WW05 | Hernando County Weeki Wachee Springshed Nitrogen Removal Stormwater Retrofit | Weeki Wachee Spring Group 1382B<br>Weeki Wachee Spring Run 1382F<br>Weeki Wachee River 1382I | WBID 1382B - Impaired<br>WBID 1382F - Impaired - High<br>WBID 1382I - Impaired | None** |

None* - Project has no water quality impact on a surface water body

None** - Project is in an area with no MFL recovery strategy and is not expected to fall below a minimum flow or level in 20 years

Note that "SWUCA Waterbodies" includes the SWUCA SWIMAL

# Consolidated Annual Report

March 1, 2025

# *Five-Year* Capital Improvements Plan

*2024-2025 through 2028-2029*


Southwest Florida Water Management District

# Chapter 4 Five-Year Capital Improvements Plan

## Introduction

The Five-Year Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) includes projected revenues and expenditures for capital improvements for FY2024-25 through FY2028-29. As directed by Section 373.536(6)(a)3, Florida Statutes (F.S.), the CIP is presented in a manner comparable to the fixed capital outlay format set forth in Section 216.043, F.S. The format for this report was jointly developed by the Executive Office of the Governor, the Department of Environmental Protection, and the water management districts. Capital improvement projects may be budgeted in three standard program categories. Those programs and their activities and sub-activities are represented below:

**1.0 Water Resource Planning and Monitoring**
- 1.1 District Water Management Planning
  - 1.1.1 Water Supply Planning
  - 1.1.2 Minimum Flows and Minimum Water Levels
  - 1.1.3 Other Water Resources Planning
- 1.2 Research, Data Collection, Analysis and Monitoring
- 1.3 Technical Assistance
- 1.4 Other Water Resources Planning and Monitoring Activities
- 1.5 Technology and Information Services

**2.0 Land Acquisition, Restoration and Public Works**
- 2.1 Land Acquisition
- 2.2 Water Source Development
  - 2.2.1 Water Resource Development Projects
  - 2.2.2 Water Supply Development Assistance
  - 2.2.3 Other Water Source Development Activities
- 2.3 Surface Water Projects
- 2.4 Other Cooperative Projects
- 2.5 Facilities Construction and Major Renovations
- 2.6 Other Acquisition and Restoration Activities
- 2.7 Technology and Information Services

**3.0 Operation and Maintenance of Works and Lands**
- 3.1 Land Management
- 3.2 Works
- 3.3 Facilities
- 3.4 Invasive Plant Control
- 3.5 Other Operation and Maintenance Activities
- 3.6 Fleet Services
- 3.7 Technology and Information Services

The activity under program 1.0 Water Resource Planning and Monitoring that may include capital improvement projects is 1.2 Research, Data Collection, Analysis and Monitoring. The activities and sub-activities under program 2.0 Land Acquisition, Restoration and Public Works that may include capital improvement projects are 2.1 Land Acquisition, 2.2.1 Water Resource Development Projects, 2.2.3 Other Water Source Development Activities, 2.3 Surface Water Projects, 2.5 Facilities Construction and Major Renovations, and 2.6 Other Acquisition and Restoration Activities. The activities under program 3.0 Operation and Maintenance of Works and Lands that may include capital improvement projects are 3.1 Land Management and 3.2 Works.

The purpose of the CIP is to project future needs and anticipated future funding requirements to meet those needs, including expenditures for basic construction costs (permits, inspections, communications requirements, utilities, outside building, site development, etc.) and other related capital project costs (land, survey, existing facility acquisition, professional services, etc.). The District uses a pay-as-you-go approach and does not incur bonded debt. The plan contains only those projects that will be owned and capitalized as fixed assets by the District.

The District's current planned capital improvement projects are budgeted under the following program activities: 1.2 Research, Data Collection, Analysis and Monitoring, 2.1 Land Acquisition, 2.3 Surface Water Projects, 2.5 Facilities Construction and Major Renovations, 3.1 Land Management, and 3.2 Works. The following standard definitions for these programs and activities are used by all five water management districts:

## 1.0 Water Resource Planning and Monitoring

This program includes all water management planning, including water supply planning, development of minimum flows and minimum water levels, and other water resources planning; research, data collection, analysis and monitoring; and technical assistance (including local and regional plan and program review).

**1.2 Research, Data Collection, Analysis and Monitoring** – Activities that support district water management planning, restoration and preservation efforts, including water quality monitoring, data collection and evaluation, and research.

## 2.0 Land Acquisition, Restoration and Public Works

This program includes the development and construction of all water resource development projects, water supply development assistance, water control projects, support and administrative facilities construction, cooperative projects, land acquisition and the restoration of lands and water bodies.

**2.1 Land Acquisition** – The acquisition of land and facilities for the protection and management of water resources. This activity does not include land acquisition components of "water resource development projects," "surface water projects" or "other cooperative projects."

**2.3 Surface Water Projects** – Those projects that restore or protect surface water quality, flood protection or surface water-related resources through the acquisition and improvement of land, construction of public works, and other activities.

**2.5 Facilities Construction and Major Renovations** – The proposed work for the facilities improvement program includes project management, permitting and conceptual, preliminary, and detailed engineering for the development and preparation of contract plans; and specifications for the construction of planned replacement, improvement or repair to the district's administrative and field station facilities.

## 3.0 Operation and Maintenance of Works and Lands

This program includes all operation and maintenance of facilities, flood control and water supply structures, lands, and other works authorized by Chapter 373, Florida Statutes.

**3.1 Land Management** – Maintenance, custodial and restoration efforts for lands acquired through federal, state and locally sponsored land acquisition programs.

**3.2 Works** – The maintenance of flood control and water supply system infrastructure, such as canals, levees and water control structures. This includes electronic communication and control activities.

# Five-Year Capital Improvements Plan Schedule

Fiscal Year 2024-25 through Fiscal Year 2028-29

## 1.0 WATER RESOURCE PLANNING AND MONITORING

### 1.2 RESEARCH, DATA COLLECTION, ANALYSIS AND MONITORING

| REVENUES | FY2024-25 | FY2025-26 | FY2026-27 | FY2027-28 | FY2028-29 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ad Valorem | $4,504,775 | $962,920 | $6,708,720 | $3,355,420 | $1,150,000 |
| **TOTAL** | **$4,504,775** | **$962,920** | **$6,708,720** | **$3,355,420** | **$1,150,000** |

| EXPENDITURES | FY2024-25 | FY2025-26 | FY2026-27 | FY2027-28 | FY2028-29 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aquifer Exploration and Monitor Well Drilling Program | $4,354,775 | $812,920 | $6,558,720 | $3,205,420 | $1,000,000 |
| Data Collection Site Acquisitions | 150,000 | 150,000 | 150,000 | 150,000 | 150,000 |
| **TOTAL** | **$4,504,775** | **$962,920** | **$6,708,720** | **$3,355,420** | **$1,150,000** |

## 2.0 LAND ACQUISITION, RESTORATION AND PUBLIC WORKS

### 2.1 LAND ACQUISITION

| REVENUES | FY2024-25 | FY2025-26 | FY2026-27 | FY2027-28 | FY2028-29 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Balance from Prior Years - District Investment Account | $18,400,000 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 |
| **TOTAL** | **$18,400,000** | **$0** | **$0** | **$0** | **$0** |

| EXPENDITURES | FY2024-25 | FY2025-26 | FY2026-27 | FY2027-28 | FY2028-29 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Florida Forever Work Plan Land Purchases | $18,400,000 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 |
| **TOTAL** | **$18,400,000** | **$0** | **$0** | **$0** | **$0** |

### 2.5 FACILITIES CONSTRUCTION AND MAJOR RENOVATIONS

| REVENUES | FY2024-25 | FY2025-26 | FY2026-27 | FY2027-28 | FY2028-29 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ad Valorem | $632,224 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 |
| **TOTAL** | **$632,224** | **$0** | **$0** | **$0** | **$0** |

| EXPENDITURES | FY2024-25 | FY2025-26 | FY2026-27 | FY2027-28 | FY2028-29 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Districtwide HVAC, Pavement and Roof Renovations | $532,224 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 |
| Sarasota Office Backup Generator | 100,000 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| **TOTAL** | **$632,224** | **$0** | **$0** | **$0** | **$0** |

## 3.0 OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF WORKS AND LANDS

### 3.1 LAND MANAGEMENT

| REVENUES | FY2024-25 | FY2025-26 | FY2026-27 | FY2027-28 | FY2028-29 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ad Valorem | $268,500 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 |
| **TOTAL** | **$268,500** | **$0** | **$0** | **$0** | **$0** |

| EXPENDITURES | FY2024-25 | FY2025-26 | FY2026-27 | FY2027-28 | FY2028-29 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Chassahowitzka Dock Replacement | $200,000 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 |
| Green Swamp West Pole Barn Construction | 35,000 | - | - | - | - |
| Establishment of Septic for Halpata Preserve Security Resident Trailer | 8,500 | - | - | - | - |
| Establishment of Campground Host Site at Serenova | 25,000 | - | - | - | - |
| **TOTAL** | **$268,500** | **$0** | **$0** | **$0** | **$0** |

### 3.2 WORKS

| REVENUES | FY2024-25 | FY2025-26 | FY2026-27 | FY2027-28 | FY2028-29 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ad Valorem | $10,640,000 | $1,150,000 | $4,710,000 | $2,410,000 | $2,900,000 |
| **TOTAL** | **$10,640,000** | **$1,150,000** | **$4,710,000** | **$2,410,000** | **$2,900,000** |

| EXPENDITURES | FY2024-25 | FY2025-26 | FY2026-27 | FY2027-28 | FY2028-29 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Flood Control Structure Gate Replacement and Drum & Cable Conversions | $7,640,000 | $0 | $4,710,000 | $2,410,000 | $2,900,000 |
| Water Control Structure Control System Replacements | 1,000,000 | 1,150,000 | - | - | - |
| WC-2 Flood Control Structure Replacement | 2,000,000 | - | - | - | - |
| **TOTAL** | **$10,640,000** | **$1,150,000** | **$4,710,000** | **$2,410,000** | **$2,900,000** |

| TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURES | FY2024-25 | FY2025-26 | FY2026-27 | FY2027-28 | FY2028-29 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **$34,445,499** | **$2,112,920** | **$11,418,720** | **$5,765,420** | **$4,050,000** |

## Project Descriptions

**Program:** Water Resource Planning and Monitoring

**Activity:** Research, Data Collection, Analysis and Monitoring

**Project Title:** Aquifer Exploration and Monitor Well Drilling Program

**Type:** Monitor Well Construction and Associated Activities

**Physical Location:** District's 16-County Region

**Square Footage/Physical Description:** Monitor Wells

**Expected Completion Date:** Ongoing

**Historical Background/Need for Project:** This is an ongoing program for coring, drilling, testing, and construction of monitor wells at Regional Observation and Monitor well Program (ROMP) sites and special project sites including the Central Florida Water Initiative (CFWI) region. The ROMP was established in 1974 to construct a Districtwide network of groundwater monitoring wells to provide key information concerning existing hydrologic conditions of groundwater sources (Section 373.145 Florida Statutes). In recent years, the ROMP has expanded to include the drilling and construction (and associated data collection activities) of numerous wells associated with key special projects such as the Northern Water Resources Assessment Project, the Southern Water Use Caution Area and the CFWI. Exploratory drilling and intensive data collection efforts are performed by District staff and well construction is generally performed under contract with private sector drilling firms. Drilling and testing will be performed at key well sites to characterize the hydrogeology from land surface to the saltwater interface or base of the potable aquifer zone within the Upper Floridan aquifer. Certain sites will also include exploratory data collection activities to characterize the middle confining units and Lower Floridan aquifers. Each well site will have permanent monitor wells installed into the surficial, intermediate, Upper Floridan and Lower Floridan aquifers, as needed. In addition, most well sites will have temporary observation wells installed for conducting aquifer performance tests. The data collected during construction of the well sites will be used in numerous District projects including models for water supply development, rulemaking for minimum flows and levels, and long-term water level and water quality monitoring.

**Plan Linkages:** Strategic Plan, CFWI Data Management and Investigations Team (DMIT) Hydrologic Data Section Work Plan, Water Quality Monitoring Program Section Work Plan, and the Geohydrologic Data Section Work Plan.

**Area(s) of Responsibility:** Water Supply, Water Quality and Natural Systems

**Alternative(s):** Impact: Hydrogeologic Data necessary for supporting groundwater modeling efforts, monitoring saltwater intrusion, establishing minimum flows and levels will not be collected. Alternative: The monitor wells are currently constructed by private sector well drilling companies. The District would have to purchase well drilling drill rigs to perform the well construction in-house.

**Basic Construction Costs (include permits, inspections, communications requirements, utilities, outside building, site development, other):** The FY2025 funding request of $4,354,775 is for construction of monitor wells at ROMP sites and special project sites including the CFWI region. Funding for future years pending Governing Board approval through the annual budget process.

**Other Project Costs (include land, survey, existing facility acquisition, professional services, other):** No other project costs associated with this request have been identified.

**Anticipated Additional Operating Costs/Initial (include salaries, benefits, equipment, furniture, expenses):** FY2025: Monitor Well Water Level Instrumentation Initial Cost

- Equipment and Supplies: $29,223
- Installation Labor: $1,085

**Anticipated Additional Operating Costs/Continuing:** Monitor Well Water Level Instrumentation Continuing Cost:

- Annual O&M Labor: $823

| FY2024-25 | FY2025-26 | FY2026-27 | FY2027-28 | FY2028-29 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **$4,354,775** | **$812,920** | **$6,558,720** | **$3,205,420** | **$1,000,000** |

**Program:** Water Resource Planning and Monitoring

**Activity:** Research, Data Collection, Analysis and Monitoring

**Project Title:** Data Collection Site Acquisitions

**Type:** Land and Interests in Land Acquired for Data Collection Sites

**Physical Location:** District's 16-County Region

**Square Footage/Physical Description:** To Be Determined

**Expected Completion Date:** Ongoing

**Historical Background/Need for Project:** The District acquires perpetual easements for sites necessary to assess groundwater sustainability and development of water supply solutions and to preserve existing sites necessary to construct a Districtwide network of groundwater monitoring wells. The District relies upon a network of groundwater monitor wells to provide information on water levels and water quality of various aquifer systems. The data obtained from these wells is utilized for a large variety of tasks including potentiometric surface map construction, saltwater intrusion and other contaminant status reporting site-specific project work to establish and modify minimum levels, and assessment of current water supplies. Regulation of the Floridan and the intermediate aquifers depend on the data collected from these sites. District computer models also rely heavily on water level information.

**Plan Linkages:** Strategic Plan; Watershed Management Plans; Southern Water Use Caution Area; Regional Water Supply Plan; Five-Year Water Resource Development Work Program

**Area(s) of Responsibility:** Water Supply and Water Quality

**Alternative(s):** An alternative to obtaining permanent easement for key well sites that are used for minimum flows and minimum water levels (MFLs) and having an extensive history of data collection critical for performance monitoring of the MFLs program, as well as other District initiatives would be to obtain new sites. The cost to obtain a permanent easement on an existing well site is generally lower than the cost to replace that well site because the new site will still need to have some form of title interest, including well construction costs to replace the wells. In addition, the heterogeneity of the aquifer systems might impact the new well location and not allow for a good comparison of data from a destroyed well site to the new well site.

**Basic Construction Costs (include permits, inspections, communications requirements, utilities, outside building, site development, other):** The cost of well construction and related activities associated with upper and lower Floridan aquifers, wetland and lake monitoring is budgeted separately under Aquifer Exploration and Monitor Well Drilling Program. It includes contracted well construction of permanent and temporary wells and associated materials such as casings and cement.

**Other Project Costs (include land, survey, existing facility acquisition, professional services, other):** The FY2025 funding request of $150,000 is for acquisition of perpetual easements in support of the District's network of groundwater monitoring wells. This includes the purchase of perpetual easements and associated ancillary costs such as surveys, appraisals, title insurance, environmental site assessments, and documentary stamps. It is projected that $150,000 will be required annually from

FY2026 through FY2029 based on background information that has been acquired for the sites. Funding for future years pending Governing Board approval through the annual budget process.

**Anticipated Additional Operating Costs/Initial (include salaries, benefits, equipment, furniture, expenses):** District staff time and travel costs associated with this project are to be determined and are excluded from the amounts referenced.

**Anticipated Additional Operating Costs/Continuing:** There are no additional recurring operating costs anticipated at this time.

| FY2024-25 | FY2025-26 | FY2026-27 | FY2027-28 | FY2028-29 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| $150,000 | $150,000 | $150,000 | $150,000 | $150,000 |

**Program:** Land Acquisition, Restoration and Public Works

**Activity:** Land Acquisition

**Project Title:** Florida Forever Work Plan Land Purchases

**Type:** Lands Acquired through the Florida Forever Program

**Physical Location:** District's 16-County Region

**Square Footage/Physical Description:** To Be Determined

**Expected Completion Date:** Ongoing

**Historical Background/Need for Project:** The District has recognized land acquisition as one of its primary tools for achieving its statutory responsibilities. Section 373.139, Florida Statutes, authorizes the District to acquire fee-simple or less-than-fee interests to the lands necessary for flood control, water storage, water management, conservation and protection of water resources, aquifer recharge, water resource and water supply development, and preservation of wetlands, streams and lakes. The District purchases land and interests in land through fee simple land acquisition and acquisition of less-than-fee simply interests (e.g., conservation easements) under the state's Florida Forever program. This program provides funding for land acquisition and capital improvements to state agencies, the water management districts, and local governments.

**Plan Linkages:** Strategic Plan; Watershed Management Plans; SWIM Plans; Southern Water Use Caution Area

**Area(s) of Responsibility:** Natural Systems

**Alternative(s):** The alternatives to purchasing necessary land or interests to achieve statutory responsibilities would be to place additional regulations and restrictions on lands requiring protection. Many of these alternatives are not within the District's authority.

**Basic Construction Costs (include permits, inspections, communications requirements, utilities, outside building, site development, other):** No construction costs are associated with this request.

**Other Project Costs (include land, survey, existing facility acquisition, professional services, other):** It is projected that the District will have an estimated $18,433,469 available in prior year funds generated from the sale of land or real estate interests.

For FY2025, $18,400,000 is budgeted for land acquired through the Florida Forever Work Plan. This includes funds for land acquisition and associated ancillary costs such as surveys, appraisals, title insurance, environmental site assessments, and documentary stamps. No funding is currently projected for land acquisition and associated ancillary costs from FY2026 through FY2029.

**Anticipated Additional Operating Costs/Initial (include salaries, benefits, equipment, furniture, expenses):** District staff time and travel costs associated with this project are to be determined and are excluded from the amounts referenced.

**Anticipated Additional Operating Costs/Continuing:** The District acquires real estate interests for projects that would enhance its existing ownership responsibilities or provide management benefits. Depending on the size of the property, location and interest acquired, the operating costs may increase and are evaluated at the time of acquisition.

| FY2024-25 | FY2025-26 | FY2026-27 | FY2027-28 | FY2028-29 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **$18,400,000** | **$0** | **$0** | **$0** | **$0** |

**Program:** Land Acquisition, Restoration and Public Works

**Activity:** Facilities Construction and Major Renovations

**Project Title:** Districtwide HVAC, Pavement and Roof Renovations

**Type:** Facility Renovations

**Physical Location:** Brooksville, Tampa, Sarasota and Lake Hancock Offices

**Square Footage/Physical Description:** HVAC, Pavement and Roof Renovations as Required

**Expected Completion Date:** Ongoing

**Historical Background/Need for Project:** The District currently owns and maintains three public offices in Brooksville, Tampa, and Sarasota and one field office in Bartow at Lake Hancock. These facilities consist of approximately 70 acres with a total of 261,799 square feet of buildings under roof and 725,408 square feet of paved parking and driveways. Some of the construction dates back more than 50 years. This ongoing program was created to proactively maintain District assets and provide a safe and healthy environment for staff and the public. Heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems (HVAC), pavement, and roof renovations are planned and budgeted according to a multi-year schedule that minimizes the opportunity for building damage and loss of staff productivity. Renovations do not change the function of existing facilities; they simply maintain them in the state of their intended use.

**Plan Linkages:** Strategic Plan

**Area(s) of Responsibility:** Water Supply, Water Quality, Flood Protection and Natural Systems

**Alternative(s):** If the Districtwide HVAC, pavement and roof renovations are not funded, the facilities maintenance costs are expected to increase significantly as additional maintenance activities are required to keep facilities in a safe and operational order. Not funding the projects would allow for degraded and deteriorated conditions requiring extensive restoration, such as moisture damage to buildings and expanded pavement cracks, resulting in higher costs than currently proposed. These projects are prioritized in a proactive effort to avoid damage and unnecessary costs while maximizing the life of the equipment, structures and grounds.

**Basic Construction Costs (include permits, inspections, communications requirements, utilities, outside building, site development, other):** Funding for future years pending Governing Board approval through the annual budget process.

FY2025

- Tampa Building 2 Chiller, 2 Units (Replacement): $282,224
- Brooksville Building 2 Roof (Replacement): $250,000

A facilities assessment will be completed this year and will provide guidance on projects for FY2026 through FY2029.

**Other Project Costs (include land, survey, existing facility acquisition, professional services, other):** There are no other additional project costs anticipated at this time.

**Anticipated Additional Operating Costs/Initial (include salaries, benefits, equipment, furniture, expenses):** A 10-year warranty and service agreement for $117,776 is included in the Operating Expenses budget for the two Tampa chiller replacements. These costs are excluded from the funding table below.

**Anticipated Additional Operating Costs/Continuing:** There are unforeseen operating costs/savings that cannot be identified at this time.

| FY2024-25 | FY2025-26 | FY2026-27 | FY2027-28 | FY2028-29 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **$532,224** | **$0** | **$0** | **$0** | **$0** |

**Program:** Land Acquisition, Restoration and Public Works

**Activity:** Facilities Construction and Major Renovations

**Project Title:** Sarasota Office Backup Generator

**Type:** Facility Construction

**Physical Location:** Sarasota Office

**Square Footage/Physical Description:** Installation of Generator at Sarasota Office

**Expected Completion Date:** 07/2025

**Historical Background/Need for Project:** Request funds for the purchase of a standby generator and automatic transfer switch for the Sarasota Service Office. Areas prone to natural disasters such as hurricanes, wildfires or severe storms are more likely to experience power outages. A standby generator ensures that essential services can continue during these emergencies and aids in disaster recovery efforts.

**Plan Linkages:** Strategic Plan

**Area(s) of Responsibility:** Water Supply, Water Quality, Flood Protection and Natural Systems

**Alternative(s):** Continue with current business practices and associated risks.

**Basic Construction Costs (include permits, inspections, communications requirements, utilities, outside building, site development, other):** For FY2025, $100,000 is budgeted for the generator. Costs include all preparation, materials and installation.

**Other Project Costs (include land, survey, existing facility acquisition, professional services, other):** There are no other additional project costs anticipated at this time.

**Anticipated Additional Operating Costs/Initial (include salaries, benefits, equipment, furniture, expenses):** There are no additional initial operating costs with this request.

**Anticipated Additional Operating Costs/Continuing:** All District generators are serviced twice annually. The average annual cost of service is approximately $1,000.

| FY2024-25 | FY2025-26 | FY2026-27 | FY2027-28 | FY2028-29 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **$100,000** | **$0** | **$0** | **$0** | **$0** |

**Program:** Operation and Maintenance of Works and Lands

**Activity:** Land Management

**Project Title:** Chassahowitzka Dock Replacement

**Type:** Land Enhancement

**Physical Location:** Chassahowitzka Boat Ramp and Campground - 8600 West Miss Maggie Drive, Chassahowitzka, FL

**Square Footage/Physical Description:** Approximately 2,600 square feet of dock and including pilings

**Expected Completion Date:** 09/2025

**Historical Background/Need for Project:** The existing dock has been in place since the District's acquisition of the property in 1990. Applicable repairs have been made over time, and the dock is now at end of useful life. It is highly used and necessary for the continued operation of the campground boat ramp located on the property.

Removal of the existing and construction of a replacement dock will be contracted and completed to all applicable federal/state permitting guidelines.

**Plan Linkages:** Strategic Plan

**Area(s) of Responsibility:** Natural Systems

**Alternative(s):** Alternatives to this project would be continued maintenance which is cost prohibitive.

**Basic Construction Costs (include permits, inspections, communications requirements, utilities, outside building, site development, other):** For FY2025, $200,000 is budgeted for demolition, construction, and permitting.

**Other Project Costs (include land, survey, existing facility acquisition, professional services, other):** There are no other additional project costs anticipated with this request.

**Anticipated Additional Operating Costs/Initial (include salaries, benefits, equipment, furniture, expenses):** There are no additional initial operating costs with this request.

**Anticipated Additional Operating Costs/Continuing:** There are no significant additional recurring operating costs with this request.

| FY2024-25 | FY2025-26 | FY2026-27 | FY2027-28 | FY2028-29 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| $200,000 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 |

**Program:** Operation and Maintenance of Works and Lands

**Activity:** Land Management

**Project Title:** Green Swamp West Pole Barn Construction

**Type:** Pole Barn Construction

**Physical Location:** Green Swamp West adjacent to the well and wash rack where heavy equipment is currently stored without cover.

**Square Footage/Physical Description:** A 40x96x16 open pole barn with (1) 24' Header Truss, 29ga Galvalume roofing (3,840 sq ft), and 8x8x22 posts with rebar.

**Expected Completion Date:** 04/2025

**Historical Background/Need for Project:** The purpose of this pole barn is to protect District heavy equipment from the elements when not in use. There will be up to 7-bays for storage of skidders, tractors, grader, dozer plow units, and transports. This barn will also provide staff with an area under cover to perform routine maintenance and repair activities. Protecting the equipment utilized to maintain District lands is a strategy to continue efficient management of conservation lands while protecting the public's investment.

**Plan Linkages:** Strategic Plan

**Area(s) of Responsibility:** Natural Systems

**Alternative(s):** If this pole barn is not constructed the heavy equipment will remain parked out in the elements and there is nowhere to get out of the weather to maintain and repair this equipment which requires daily maintenance.

**Basic Construction Costs (include permits, inspections, communications requirements, utilities, outside building, site development, other):** For FY2025, $35,000 is budgeted for the construction of the pole barn.

Costs of $9.11 per sq-ft. include all preparation, materials, and construction.

**Other Project Costs (include land, survey, existing facility acquisition, professional services, other):** There are no other project costs anticipated with this request.

**Anticipated Additional Operating Costs/Initial (include salaries, benefits, equipment, furniture, expenses):** There are no additional initial operating costs with this request.

**Anticipated Additional Operating Costs/Continuing:** There are no additional recurring operating costs with this request.

| FY2024-25 | FY2025-26 | FY2026-27 | FY2027-28 | FY2028-29 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| $35,000 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 |

**Program:** Operation and Maintenance of Works and Lands

**Activity:** Land Management

**Project Title:** Establishment of Septic for Halpata Preserve Security Resident Trailer

**Type:** Land Enhancement

**Physical Location:** Halpata Preserve - 15430 SW CR 484, Dunnellon

**Square Footage/Physical Description:** Septic tank and drain field to service a resident security site.

**Expected Completion Date:** 05/2025

**Historical Background/Need for Project:** As outlined in 373.1391, F.S., District lands shall be maintained to ensure a balance between public access, public recreation, and protection and restoration of their natural state and condition. The purpose of this septic system is to establish a security host site for an officer to enforce District Land Use Rules and help oversee recreation. Having an onsite officer will provide a presence to help minimize nefarious activities as well as improve overall recreational opportunities without taking staff away from their other land management responsibilities. There is a barn, well, and power drop in place at this site from the previous landowner.

**Plan Linkages:** Strategic Plan

**Area(s) of Responsibility:** Natural Systems

**Alternative(s):** If this site is not developed the District will have to continue to operate as is and rely on Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission officers when they have the time to patrol the preserve.

**Basic Construction Costs (include permits, inspections, communications requirements, utilities, outside building, site development, other):** For FY2025, $8,500 is budgeted for the septic system. Costs include all preparation, materials, and installation.

**Other Project Costs (include land, survey, existing facility acquisition, professional services, other):** The only additional project costs are associated with the utility fees and hook up of a new power box.

**Anticipated Additional Operating Costs/Initial (include salaries, benefits, equipment, furniture, expenses):** Permitting and staff time to oversee installation of the septic system.

**Anticipated Additional Operating Costs/Continuing:** Since this is simply a septic system, operating costs less than $100/month on average are expected. These costs will include periodic maintenance and monthly utility fees associated with the camp host electricity usage.

| FY2024-25 | FY2025-26 | FY2026-27 | FY2027-28 | FY2028-29 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| $8,500 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 |

**Program:** Operation and Maintenance of Works and Lands

**Activity:** Land Management

**Project Title:** Establishment of Campground Host Site at Serenova

**Type:** Installation of a new a septic system and placement of a carport.

**Physical Location:** Serenova Tract of Starkey Preserve, 14900 State Road 52, Land O'Lakes

**Square Footage/Physical Description:** One 30x35x12 carport with (1,050 sq-ft) 26ga Galvalume roofing and one septic tank and drain field to service a volunteer camp host site.

**Expected Completion Date:** 05/2025

**Historical Background/Need for Project:** As outlined in 373.1391, F.S., District lands shall be maintained to ensure a balance between public access, public recreation, and protection and restoration of their natural state and condition. The purpose of this carport and septic system is to create a campground host site for a volunteer to oversee and maintain the campgrounds at Serenova. Having an onsite camp host will provide a presence to help minimize nefarious activities as well as improve overall appearance of the campgrounds through an improved maintenance schedule without taking staff away from their other land management responsibilities.

**Plan Linkages:** Strategic Plan

**Area(s) of Responsibility:** Natural Systems

**Alternative(s):** If this site is not developed the District will have to continue to operate as is and be a presence in the campgrounds when time allows.

**Basic Construction Costs (include permits, inspections, communications requirements, utilities, outside building, site development, other):** For FY2025, $25,000 is budgeted for the septic system and carport. Costs include all preparation, materials, and installation.

**Other Project Costs (include land, survey, existing facility acquisition, professional services, other):** No additional project costs are expected.

**Anticipated Additional Operating Costs/Initial (include salaries, benefits, equipment, furniture, expenses):** Permitting and staff time to oversee installation of the septic system.

**Anticipated Additional Operating Costs/Continuing:** Since this is simply a septic system, operating costs are expected to be less than $100/month. These costs will include periodic maintenance and monthly utility fees associated with the camp host electricity usage.

| FY2024-25 | FY2025-26 | FY2026-27 | FY2027-28 | FY2028-29 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| $25,000 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 |

**Program:** Operation and Maintenance of Works and Lands

**Activity:** Works

**Project Title:** Flood Control Structure Gate Replacement and Drum & Cable Conversions

**Type:** Structure Refurbishment/Modification

**Physical Location:** Districtwide

**Square Footage/Physical Description:** Structure Gates and Lifting Systems

**Expected Completion Date:** 09/2028

**Historical Background/Need for Project:** The District owns 15 flood control structures, most of which are associated with the Four River Basins Federal project. Five of the owned flood control structures are classified as High Hazard Potential Facilities, meaning that a failure has the potential to result in loss of human life and significant property destruction. Failure of any of these flood control structures has the potential to cause public health and safety, property, financial, environmental, and functional impacts.

There are a total of 39 water control gates of various types and sizes associated with the 15 District-owned flood control structures. There are 28 gates with hydraulic lift systems that are aging which are the focus of this project. Fourteen of the 28 gates and hydraulic lift systems are over 50 years old. This project is for the replacement, where needed, of the existing carbon steel gates with stainless steel gates. The stainless-steel gates will not require routine recoating, like carbon steel gates, greatly reducing future maintenance costs. Recoating of a carbon steel gate can cost as much as $400,000 per gate each time it is needed (12- to 15-year cycles). This project also includes converting the existing hydraulic lift systems with electric drum and cable lift systems. These drum and cable systems will require less maintenance and are more reliable than the existing hydraulic systems. While this project will replace existing gates and lift systems that have reached the end of their useful life based on age and condition, it will not change the function of the 15 flood control structures.

**Plan Linkages:** Strategic Plan

**Area(s) of Responsibility:** Flood Protection

**Alternative(s):** If the District does not replace the aging water control gates and associated hydraulic lift systems, maintenance costs will continue to increase, and the reliability of these critical flood control structures will decrease resulting in increased risk of failures.

**Basic Construction Costs (include permits, inspections, communications requirements, utilities, outside building, site development, other):** In FY2024, $7,250,000 was budgeted to start the construction phase of the project. The total cost for engineering and construction services for the gate replacements and lift system conversions is $25,250,000*.

- Total engineering services for design and construction oversight: $1,690,000
- Total construction: $23,560,000

| Structure | No. of Gates | Gate Replacements | Lift System Conversions | Total Cost per Structure |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| S-160 | 6 | $3,300,000 | $3,300,000 | $6,600,000 |
| S-162 | 7 | $3,710,000 | $3,710,000 | $7,420,000 |
| S-551 | 4 | $2,190,000 | $2,190,000 | $4,380,000 |
| S-161 | 2 | $1,130,000 | $1,130,000 | $2,260,000 |
| S-155 | 2 | N/A | $1,160,000 | $1,160,000 |
| S-159u | 2 | N/A | $1,740,000 | $1,740,000 |

* Funding began in FY2021, with a total of $340,000 through FY2023. Funding schedule is based on known information at this time. Future funding amounts and timing have the potential to change based on unforeseeable circumstances and subject to future Governing Board approval.

**Other Project Costs (include land, survey, existing facility acquisition, professional services, other):** There are no other project costs anticipated at this time.

**Anticipated Additional Operating Costs/Initial (include salaries, benefits, equipment, furniture, expenses):** District staff time and travel costs associated with this project are to be determined and are excluded from the amounts referenced.

**Anticipated Additional Operating Costs/Continuing:** There are no additional recurring operating costs anticipated at this time.

| FY2024-25 | FY2025-26 | FY2026-27 | FY2027-28 | FY2028-29 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **$7,640,000** | **$0** | **$4,710,000** | **$2,410,000** | **$2,900,000** |

**Program:** Operation and Maintenance of Works and Lands

**Activity:** Works

**Project Title:** Water Control Structure Control System Replacements

**Type:** Structure Enhancement

**Physical Location:** District Structures

**Square Footage/Physical Description:** Up to 43 Water Control Structures

**Expected Completion Date:** 09/2027

**Historical Background/Need for Project:** Previously, remote operability was added to structures without standardization of equipment, wiring, and routing, as well as lacking wiring diagrams. Additionally, the main components associated with the remote operability have reached or exceeded their useful life. The remote operability of the District's water control structures is critical to protecting life and property within the region.

**Plan Linkages:** Strategic Plan

**Area(s) of Responsibility:** Flood Protection, Natural Systems, Water Supply

**Alternative(s):** If not funded, the remote operability of the District's most critical water control structures would be increasingly unreliable and unexpected failures would increase. These structures protect life and property, so failure presents a significant risk. Additionally, the increasing number of failures will increase maintenance and repair costs.

**Basic Construction Costs (include permits, inspections, communications requirements, utilities, outside building, site development, other):** Design will begin in FY2024 to replace the control system of up to 43 of the District's remotely operated structures. Construction is planned for FY2025, and costs are anticipated to be $2,150,000 with implementation occurring over three years. Funding for future years pending Governing Board approval through the annual budget process.

**Other Project Costs (include land, survey, existing facility acquisition, professional services, other):** There are no other additional costs anticipated.

**Anticipated Additional Operating Costs/Initial (include salaries, benefits, equipment, furniture, expenses):** There are no additional initial operating costs.

**Anticipated Additional Operating Costs/Continuing:** There are no additional ongoing operating costs.

| FY2024-25 | FY2025-26 | FY2026-27 | FY2027-28 | FY2028-29 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| $1,000,000 | $1,150,000 | $0 | $0 | $0 |

**Program:** Operation and Maintenance of Works and Lands

**Activity:** Works

**Project Title:** WC-2 Flood Control Structure Replacement

**Type:** Structure Replacement

**Physical Location:** The structure is located on the Gant Lake Canal; 3.4 miles downstream from S-11 and 0.2 miles east-northeast of the Little Withlacoochee River.

**Square Footage/Physical Description:** The existing structure is a gated four-bay, reinforced concrete structure with four 8ft wide x 5ft high steel, radial-arm, manually operated gates to be replaced with a fixed concrete weir system.

**Expected Completion Date:** 09/2026

**Historical Background/Need for Project:** The WC-2 structure was built in 1967 and transferred to the District in 1970 to provide flood protection to local farmlands and maintain optimum water surface elevations in Gant Lake Canal for local agricultural use. The structure's four gates are manually operated by means of hoists consisting of a hand-wheel, open-gears, driveshaft resting on a trunnion, and wire ropes. These gates are currently inoperable and have been set at a fixed elevation, essentially functioning as a fixed weir allowing water to flow through the structure once the water elevation reaches the top of the gates. Rather than repairing the gates, replacing the existing structure with a permanent fixed weir system would be more efficient and cost-effective by eliminating the need to send an operator to the remote site to operate as needed, as well as reduce maintenance requirements.

**Plan Linkages:** Strategic Plan

**Area(s) of Responsibility:** Flood Protection

**Alternative(s):** One alternative is to replace the inoperable gate systems with in-kind design. For time, safety, and recurring maintenance cost measures it is not the preferred solution. The other alternative is to not fund the request. The structure would continue to be inoperable and further deteriorate. More maintenance would be required with increased costs for maintenance and repairs.

**Basic Construction Costs (include permits, inspections, communications requirements, utilities, outside building, site development, other):** Design is anticipated to be complete in FY2024. Construction is budgeted at $2,000,000 in FY2025.

**Other Project Costs (include land, survey, existing facility acquisition, professional services, other):** There are no other additional costs anticipated.

**Anticipated Additional Operating Costs/Initial (include salaries, benefits, equipment, furniture, expenses):** There are no additional initial operating costs.

**Anticipated Additional Operating Costs/Continuing:** There are no additional ongoing operating costs.

| FY2024-25 | FY2025-26 | FY2026-27 | FY2027-28 | FY2028-29 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| $2,000,000 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 |

Consolidated Annual Report
March 1, 2025

# 2025 Alternative Water Supplies Annual Report

Southwest Florida
Water Management District

# Chapter 5 Alternative Water Supplies

## Introduction

Section 373.707(2), Florida Statutes (F.S.), requires the governing boards of the water management districts to include funding in their annual budgets for development of alternative water supply projects where Water Resource Caution Areas have been designated. The section, as well as 2005 legislation related to the Water Protection and Sustainability Program Trust Fund (Subsection 373.707(8)(n), F.S.), further requires each district to submit an annual alternative water supply report to the Governor, President of the Senate, and Speaker of the House of Representatives by March 1 of each year. This report identifies all currently funded projects and accounts for funds provided through grants, matching grants, revolving loans, and use of Southwest Florida Water Management District (District) lands or facilities. As the District has designated Water Resource Caution Areas and implemented alternative water supply funding, this report is submitted pursuant to the requirements of Florida Statutes (Sections 373.707, 373.036, and 403.890, F.S.).

The District has funded regional water resource-related projects since its creation in 1961. Originally focused on flood control projects, District priorities began to shift in the late 1980s to include projects related to water conservation and development of alternative water sources. To support growing water supply needs of local governments, the District adopted a more proactive role and structured approach in addressing local non-regulatory water issues. The District's Cooperative Funding Initiative (CFI) was subsequently established in response to the need for a set system for receiving project assistance requests and criteria regarding timing, project eligibility, funding and other conditions for participation.

In addition to the CFI, the District is involved in other programs and initiatives besides those specifically defined in the statute, which are also saving significant amounts of water. Examples include assistance on leak detection, drought tolerant landscaping, ultra low-flow toilet rebates, water saving ordinance development, industrial and residential water audits, landscape irrigation system efficiency, the Facilitating Agricultural Resource Management Systems (FARMS) Program, and many others, including major public education efforts.

The District is committed to solving the region's water resource issues through cooperative programs, primarily through the CFI which has been in place since 1988. These efforts have been highly successful resulting in a combined investment (District and its cooperators) of more than $4 billion in incentive-based funding assistance for a variety of water projects addressing its four areas of responsibility: water supply, natural systems, flood protection, and water quality.

## FY2025 Annual Report Information

As defined in Florida Statutes, alternative water supplies include "salt water; brackish surface and groundwater; surface water captured predominately during wet-weather flows; sources made available through the addition of new storage capacity for surface or groundwater; water that has been reclaimed after one or more public supply, municipal, industrial, commercial, or agricultural uses; the downstream augmentation of water bodies with reclaimed water; stormwater; and any other water source that is designated as nontraditional for a water supply planning region in the applicable regional water supply plan." Table 1 lists FY2025 District budgeted alternative water supply projects and their associated funding pursuant to statutory requirements. It should be

noted, however, that funding of projects requiring large capital investments and multi-year construction often occurs over several fiscal years to maximize annual funding availability for multiple regional projects and cooperators. The funding totals presented in Table 1 are based on the FY2025 Adopted Budget and may reflect updates to project costs from previous years. Funding totals are provided per Board approved budgets and do not include District project management expenses. The Appendix of this report provides a short description of each project.

## Table 1. Summary of FY2025 Budgeted Alternative Water Supply Projects

| Project Name | Project Type | Quantity of Water Made Available upon Completion (MGD) | Reuse Flow Made Available upon Project Completion (MGD) | Storage Capacity Created (MG) | Use of District Lands or Facilities | Total Budgeted Funding FY 2025 | Project Totals | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | District Funding | Cooperator Funding | State/Federal Funding (2) | Revolving Loans (2) |
| TBW Southern Hillsborough Transmission Expansion (Q241) | Surface Water Transmission | 0 | 0 | 0 | No | $3,500,000 | $145,054,000 | $278,046,000 | $2,900,000 | $0 |
| PRMRWSA Peace River Regional Reservoir No. 3 (Q272) | Surface Water Storage | 0 | 0 | 9,000 | Yes | $14,000,000 | $115,700,000 | $428,705,000 | $10,050,000 | $0 |
| PRMRWSA Southern Regional Phase 2B Loop System (Q355) | Surface Water Transmission | 0 | 0 | 0 | Yes | $10,350,000 | $36,150,000 | $35,750,000 | $1,500,000 | $0 |
| PRMRWSA Phase 3C Integrated Loop System (Q313) | Surface Water Transmission | 0 | 0 | 0 | No | $13,305,861 | $26,550,000 | $38,550,000 | $2,500,000 | $0 |
| PRWC Southeast Wellfield (Q184) | Brackish Groundwater | 12.5 | 0 | 0 | No | $14,500,000(1) | $110,940,000 | $121,050,013 | $17,509,987 | $0 |
| PRWC Southeast Transmission Phase 1 (Q216) | Brackish Groundwater Transmission | 0 | 0 | 0 | No | $9,723,285(1) | $76,013,000 | $86,298,513 | $8,388,487 | $0 |
| PRWC West Polk Wellfield (Q308) | Brackish Groundwater | 10.0 | 0 | 0 | No | $651,190(1) | $107,052,000 | $129,283,692 | $1,064,308 | $0 |
| **Totals:** | | **22.5** | **0** | **9,000** | | **$66,030,336** | **$617,459,000** | **$1,117,683,218** | **$43,912,782** | **$0** |

Notes: (1) H094 is a funding source for Polk Regional Water Cooperative (PRWC) water supply projects. Total Budgeted Funding FY2025 for the listed PRWC projects in Table 1 include $8,817,591 transferred from H094 that were not included in the FY2025 Adopted Budget. Previously budgeted funds to H094 have been a funding source for PRWC water supply projects for a total of $65,000,000 (FY2015 – FY2023). Through FY2024, $65,000,000 has been transferred to PRWC water supply projects with $0 currently remaining for future project funding.
(2) Reflects only pass-through funding administered by the District.

## Conclusion

The District's alternative water supply development program has been developed through efficient utilization of resources available to its Governing Board and those provided by the Florida Legislature. These efforts have included a long history of commitment to cooperative efforts with state and local governments, regional entities, private industry, and the public through sponsored research, conservation, natural system and water quality improvements, and a special emphasis on development of alternative water supplies. The District is confident in its continued mission to identify and maintain adequate and ecologically sustainable water supplies within its boundaries.

## Appendix (Projects with FY2025 Funding)

**Project Name:** Polk County Partnership (H094)
**Type of Alternative Supply:** Brackish
**Cooperator:** Polk Regional Water Cooperative
**Locale:** Polk County
**Project Description:** This project includes support of regional cooperation within Polk County and the development of regional AWS projects that can achieve 30 mgd of base supply. The District Governing Board adopted Resolution No. 15-07 and 18-06 providing timing and guidance for this project. The resolutions tie incentive funding for AWS development to achievement of certain milestones.

**Project Name:** Tampa Bay Water Southern Hillsborough Co. Transmission (Q241)
**Type of Alternative Supply:** Surface Water
**Cooperator:** Tampa Bay Water
**Locale:** Hillsborough County
**Project Description**: New AWS 26-mile potable water pipeline to supply alternative water from TBW's High Surface Pump Station to Hillsborough County. It is expected to deliver 65 MGD nominal capacity.

**Project Name:** Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority – Reservoir No. 3 (Q272)
**Type of Alternative Supply:** Surface Water
**Cooperator:** Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority
**Locale:** Desoto County
**Project Description:** The final design, permitting, and construction of Reservoir No. 3 to provide 9.0 billion gallons of regional surface water storage.

**Project Name:** PRMRWSA Southern Regional Loop Phase 2B (Q355)
**Type of Alternative Supply:** Surface Water
**Cooperator:** Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority
**Locale:** Charlotte & Sarasota County
**Project Description**: New transmission, pumping and chemical addition facility and any infrastructure requirements that will enable installation of the southern loop between the Authority's regional transmission system at Serris Boulevard in Charlotte County and the Carlton Water Treatment Facility in Sarasota County.

**Project Name:** PRMRWSA Phase 3C Integrated Loop System (Q313)
**Type of Alternative Supply:** Surface Water
**Cooperator:** Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority
**Locale:** Manatee & Sarasota County
**Project Description**: New transmission pipeline, infrastructure requirements extending regional potable water transmission system from Sarasota County to Manatee County.

**Project Name:** Polk Regional Water Cooperative Southeast Wellfield Water Treatment Facility (Q184)
**Type of Alternative Supply:** Brackish Groundwater
**Cooperator:** Polk Regional Water Cooperative
**Locale:** Polk County
**Project Description:** The final design, permitting, and construction of the Southeast Wellfield Water Treatment Facility. It is expected to provide 12.5 mgd of regional water supply.

**Project Name:** Polk Regional Water Cooperative Regional Transmission Southeast (Q216)
**Type of Alternative Supply:** Regional Transmission System.
**Cooperator:** Polk Regional Water Cooperative
**Locale:** Polk County
**Project Description:** The final design, permitting, and construction of the Southeast Wellfield's Regional Transmission System. It is expected to interconnect and deliver alternative water supplies from the Southeast Wellfield to 11 municipal and county service areas.

**Project Name:** Polk Regional Water Cooperative West Polk Wellfield Water Treatment Facility (Q308)
**Type of Alternative Supply:** Brackish Groundwater
**Cooperator:** Polk Regional Water Cooperative
**Locale:** Polk County
**Project Description:** The final design, permitting, and construction of the West Polk Wellfield Water Treatment Facility. It is expected to provide 10.0 mgd of regional water supply.

Consolidated Annual Report

*March 1, 2025*

# 2025 Five-Year Water Resource Development Work Program

Southwest Florida
*Water Management District*

# Chapter 6 Five-Year Resources Development Work Program

## Introduction/Purpose

The Water Management Districts are required to prepare a Five-Year Water Resource Development Work Program (Work Program) as a part of their annual budget reporting process. The Work Program describes the District's implementation strategy relating to water resource development (WRD) and water supply development (including alternative water supply development) components over the next five years. The Work Program must be submitted annually to the Governor, the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, the chairs of all legislative committees and subcommittees having substantive or fiscal jurisdiction over the Districts, the Secretary of the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), and the governing board of each county. Pursuant to Subsection 373.536(6)(a)4, Florida Statutes (F.S.), the Work Program must:

- Address all the elements of the WRD component in the District's approved Regional Water Supply Plans (RWSPs), as well as the water supply projects proposed for District funding and assistance;
- Identify both anticipated available District funding and additional funding needs for the second through fifth years of the funding plan;
- Identify projects in the Work Program which will provide water;
- Explain how each water resource and water supply project will produce additional water available for consumptive uses;
- Estimate the quantity of water to be produced by each project;
- Provide an assessment of the contribution of the District's RWSPs in supporting the implementation of minimum flows and minimum water levels (MFLs) and water reservations; and
- Ensure sufficient water is available to timely meet the water supply needs of existing and future reasonable-beneficial uses for a 1-in-10-year drought event and to avoid the adverse effects of competition for water supplies.

This report represents the District's 24th Work Program and covers the period from fiscal year (FY) 2025 through FY2029. In July of 2023 the DEP provided a guidance document and template spreadsheets to improve the consistency among the Water Management Districts' Work Program submittals. This Work Program is consistent with the planning strategies of the Central Florida Water Initiative 2020 Regional Water Supply Plan (CFWI RWSP) and the District's 2020 Regional Water Supply Plan (RWSP) which can be found at: https://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/resources/plans-reports/rwsp

The water resource and water supply development components of the District's Work Program are presented in three sections:

- WRD Data Collection and Analysis Activities that include routinely funded programmatic efforts by the District to monitor and support the health of natural systems, evaluate and establish MFLs, conduct watershed management planning, and improve water quality and stormwater storage and conveyance.

- WRD Projects that are undertaken by the District and/or partnering entities for evaluating aquifer storage and recovery (ASR) feasibility, the Facilitating Agricultural Resource Management Systems (FARMS) projects to reduce groundwater withdrawals and improve natural systems, and environmental restoration efforts including MFL recovery projects.
- Water Supply Development Projects, which are usually led by other entities with District funding assistance, to develop and deliver new alternative potable water supplies, reclaimed water and reuse, aquifer storage and recovery and aquifer recharge systems, and numerous conservation projects to help manage water needs.

Also included is an overview of funding mechanisms, a summary of the adequacy of District expenditures to ensure the availability of water for reasonable-beneficial uses and natural systems, and an appendix listing projects funded by the District to implement projects identified in the Basin Management Action Plans (BMAPs).

## Water Resource Development

Water resource development is defined in Section 373.019(24), F.S., as "*the formulation and implementation of regional water resource management strategies, including the collection and evaluation of surface water and groundwater data; structural and nonstructural programs to protect and manage water resources; the development of regional water resource implementation programs; the construction, operation, and maintenance of major public works facilities to provide for flood control, surface and underground water storage, and groundwater recharge augmentation; and related technical assistance to local governments, government-owned and privately owned water utilities, and self-suppliers to the extent assistance to self-suppliers promotes the policies as set forth in s. 373.016.*"

The intent of WRD activities and WRD projects is to enhance the amount of water available for reasonable-beneficial uses and for natural systems. The District is primarily responsible for implementing WRD activities and projects; however, additional funding and technical support may come from state, federal, and local entities.

### WRD Data Collection and Analysis Activities

Data collection and analysis activities are a critical part of the water resource development component implemented by the District. The District has budgeted approximately $24.5 million in FY2025 to implement and continue activities to collect scientific data necessary to manage water resources and evaluate new water supplies, support the evaluation and establishment of MFLs, conduct watershed management plans, improve groundwater quality, estimate water supply needs using population and demand modeling, and implement best management practices (BMPs) for stormwater storage and conveyance. These activities are summarized in **Table 1**.

Funding for these activities is primarily from the District's Governing Board; in some cases, additional funding that supports these efforts comes from water supply authorities, local governments, and the United States Geological Survey (USGS). Each item was included in the District's Tentative Budget Submission Appendix C and can be referenced by the sub-activity code. Each activity is further described below.

### *Scientific Data Collection*

The District has a comprehensive scientific data monitoring program that includes the assembly of information on key indicators such as rainfall, surface water and groundwater levels, water quality, hydrogeology, and stream flows. The program includes data collected by District staff as well as data collected as part of the District's cooperative funding program with the USGS. Data collected allows the District to gage changes in the health of water resources, monitor trends in conditions, identify and analyze existing or potential resource problems, and develop programs to correct existing problems and prevent future problems from occurring. The data collection activities support District structure operations, water use and environmental resource permitting and compliance, MFLs evaluation and status assessments, the Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) program, the Northern Tampa Bay Water Use Caution Area (NTBWUCA), the Southern Water Use Caution Area (SWUCA), and the Dover/Plant City Water Use Caution Area (DPCWUCA), water supply planning in the District and CFWI regions, modeling of surface water and groundwater systems, cooperative and district initiative project development and monitoring, and many resource evaluations and reports.

The categories of hydrologic data that are collected and monitored by District staff are discussed below. In addition to data collection completed or contracted by the District, hydrologic data submitted by Water Use Permit (WUP) holders are also considered to assess compliance with permit conditions.

a) Surface Water Flows and Levels. Funding supports data collection at the District's approximately 798 surface water level gauging sites, and cooperative funding with the USGS for discharge and water-level data collection at 131 river, stream, and canal sites. The USGS data are available to District staff and the public through the District's Environmental Data Portal (EDP) and through the USGS National Water Dashboard.

b) Hydrogeologic Data. The Geohydrologic Data Section (GEO) collects hydrogeologic data and oversees monitor well construction activities for the District. Lithologic, hydraulic, and water quality data are collected during exploratory coring and testing and during the construction of monitor wells. Projects supported by these geohydrologic activities include the Central Florida Water Initiative (CFWI), Water Resource Assessment Projects (WRAPs), MFLs, sea level rise and development of alternative water supplies. The Regional Observation and Monitor Well Program (ROMP) has been the District's primary source of hydrogeologic data since the program was established in 1974.

c) Meteorologic Data. The meteorologic data monitoring program consists of measuring rainfall totals at 171 rain gauges, all of which provide near real-time data. The funding is for costs associated with measurement of rainfall including sensors, maintenance, repair, and replacement of equipment. Funding allows for the operation of one District evapotranspiration (ET) station for reference near Lake Hancock, and for District participation in a cooperative effort between the USGS and all five Florida water management districts to map statewide potential and reference ET using data measured from the Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellites (GOES). Funding also includes a collaborative effort between the five districts to provide high-resolution gauge adjusted radar rainfall data that are used for hydrologic conditions reporting and modeling purposes.

d) Water Quality Data. The District collects data from water quality monitoring networks for springs, streams, lakes, wells, and coastal and inland rivers. The well monitoring networks include the Coastal Groundwater Quality Monitoring Network (CGWQMN), Inland Floridan Aquifer System Monitoring Network (IFASMN), and the Upper Floridan Aquifer Nutrient Monitoring Network (UFANMN). Data from monitor well sites are used to evaluate seasonal and long-term changes in groundwater levels and quality, as well as the interaction and connectivity between groundwater and surface water bodies. The Coastal Groundwater Quality Monitoring Network, which involves sample collection and analysis from approximately 380 wells across the District, monitors saltwater intrusion and/or the upwelling of mineralized waters into potable aquifers. The USGS collects water quality data at 17 sites, which is available from their website.

e) Groundwater Levels. The funding provides for the maintenance and support of about 1,655 monitor wells in the data collection network. Data may be collected in 15-minute intervals, hourly, daily, or monthly. The District also uses funding to contract with the USGS to obtain continuous and monthly water levels at 15 sites. The data are available to the public through the District and USGS websites.

## Table 1. FY2025 - FY2029 Water Resource Development Data Collection and Analysis Activities

| WRD Data Collection and Analysis Activities | Budget Reference[1] | FY2025 Costs ($) | FY2026 Costs ($) | FY2027 Costs ($) | FY2028 Costs ($) | FY2029 Costs ($) | Total Costs ($) | Funding Source[2] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1) Research, Data Collection, Analysis & Monitoring | 1.2.1, p.62 | | | | | | | District, Local Cooperators, USGS |
| a) Surface Water Flows & Levels Data | | $4,616,759 | $4,616,759 | $4,616,759 | $4,616,759 | $4,616,759 | $23,083,795 | |
| b) Geologic (includes ROMP) Data | | $5,682,667 | $5,682,667 | $5,682,667 | $5,682,667 | $5,682,667 | $28,413,335 | |
| c) Meteorologic Data | | $269,204 | $269,204 | $269,204 | $269,204 | $269,204 | $1,346,020 | |
| d) Water Quality Data | | $791,634 | $791,634 | $791,634 | $791,634 | $791,634 | $3,958,170 | |
| e) Groundwater Levels Data | | $990,812 | $990,812 | $990,812 | $990,812 | $990,812 | $4,954,060 | |
| f) Biologic Data | | $1,051,788 | $1,051,788 | $1,051,788 | $1,051,788 | $1,051,788 | $5,258,940 | |
| g) Data Support | | $4,683,423 | $4,683,423 | $4,683,423 | $4,683,423 | $4,683,423 | $23,417,115 | |
| 2) Minimum Flows and Levels Program | 1.1.2, p.58 | | | | | | | District |
| a) Technical Support | | $931,421 | $931,421 | $931,421 | $931,421 | $931,421 | $4,657,105 | |
| b) MFL Establishment/ Evaluation | | $655,827 | $655,827 | $655,827 | $655,827 | $655,827 | $3,279,135 | |
| 3) Watershed Management Planning | 1.1.3.2, p.60 | $3,586,610 | $2,000,000 | $2,000,000 | $2,000,000 | $2,000,000 | $11,586,610 | District, Local Cooperators, DEP |
| 4) Quality of Water Improvement Program | 2.2.3, p.86 | $808,604 | $808,604 | $808,604 | $808,604 | $808,604 | $4,043,020 | District |
| 5) Stormwater Improvement-Implementation of Storage and Conveyance BMPs | 2.3.1, p.88 | $404,421 | $3,500,000 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $3,904,421 | District |
| **Totals** | | **$24,473,170** | **$25,982,139** | **$22,482,139** | **$22,482,139** | **$22,482,139** | **$117,901,726** | |

Source: SWFWMD FY2025 Tentative Budget Submission.

[1] The Program Activity/Sub-Activity and page number in the Tentative Budget Submission is where the WRD Data Collection and Analysis Activities reside. The funding amount within this table are subsets of the referenced Program Activity/Sub-Activity.

[2] Acronyms: BMPs - Best Management Practices, DEP - Florida Department of Environmental Protection, MFL - Minimum Flows and Minimum Water Levels, ROMP - District Regional Observation and Monitor-well

f) Biologic Data. The District monitors ecological conditions as they relate to both potential water use impacts and changes in hydrologic conditions. Funding for biologic data collection includes support for routine monitoring of approximately 150 wetlands annually and a five-year assessment of almost 400 wetlands to document changes in wetland health and assess level of recovery in impacted wetlands. Funding also supports SWIM Program efforts for mapping of seagrasses every two years along the Suncoast (Tampa Bay south to Charlotte Harbor), and every four years along the Springs Coast (Anclote Key to Waccasassa Bay).

g) Data Support. This item provides administrative and management staff support for the hydrologic, water quality, meteorologic and hydrogeologic data programs as well as the chemistry laboratory, surveying, and the District's LoggerNet data acquisition system and Kister's Water Information System (WISKI) and associated Environmental Data Portal used for database management, storage and reporting.

### *Minimum Flows and Levels Program*

Section 373.042, F.S., requires the state water management districts or the DEP to establish minimum flows and minimum water levels (MFLs) for aquifers, surface watercourses, and other surface water bodies to identify the water level or limit at which further withdrawals would be significantly harmful to the water resources or ecology of the area. Minimum flows for rivers, streams, estuaries, and springs, and minimum water levels for lakes, wetlands and aquifers are adopted into the District's Water Levels and Rates of Flow rules, Chapter 40D-8, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), and are used in the District's water use permitting and water supply planning programs.

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. Reservations are adopted into the District Consumptive Use of Water rules, Chapter 40D-2, F.A.C., pursuant to Section 373.223, F.S., and are also used for water use permitting and water supply planning.

The District's processes for establishing MFLs and reservations include opportunities for interested stakeholders to review and comment on proposed MFLs or reservations and participate in public meetings. A publicly noticed independent scientific peer review process is used to support establishment of MFLs for flowing systems and aquifers, for establishing MFLs for other system types that are based on methods that have not previously been subjected to peer review, and for establishing reservations. Stakeholder input and peer review findings are considered by the Governing Board when deciding whether to adopt proposed MFLs and reservations. District monitoring programs provide data for evaluating compliance with the adopted MFLs and reservations, determining the need for MFLs recovery or prevention strategies, assessing the recovery of water bodies where significant harm has occurred, and also support MFL's and reservation reevaluations.

As of June 2024, the District has planned to monitor and assess the status of 207 adopted MFLs, including MFLs for 28 river segments, 10 springs or spring groups, 126 lakes, 34 wetlands, 9 aquifer sites including 7 Upper Floridan Aquifer (UFA) wells in the NTBWUCA, and the UFA in the Most Impacted Area (MIA) of the SWUCA and the UFA in the DPCWUCA. The District also plans to monitor and assess the status of 2 adopted reservations, including a reservation for water stored in Lake Hancock and released to Lower Saddle Creek for recovery of MFLs adopted for the Upper Peace River, and a reservation for water from Morris Bridge Sink for recovery of MFLs adopted for the Lower Hillsborough River. In addition, the District is scheduling the establishment or reevaluation of 26 MFLs and 1 reservation through calendar year 2027.

The District's annual MFLs Priority List and Schedule and Reservations List and Schedule is approved by the Governing Board in October, submitted to FDEP for review in November, and published in the Consolidated Annual Report the following March. The currently approved and proposed priority lists and schedules are also posted on the District's Minimum Flows and Levels Documents and Reports webpage at: https://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/projects/mfl/documents-and- reports.

### *Watershed Management Planning*

The District addresses flooding problems in existing areas by preparing and implementing Watershed Management Plans (WMPs) in cooperation with local governments. The WMPs define flood conditions, identify flood level of service deficiencies, and evaluate BMPs to address those deficiencies. The WMPs include consideration of the capacity of a watershed to protect, enhance, and restore water quality and natural systems while achieving flood protection. The plans identify effective watershed management strategies and culminate in defining floodplain delineations and constructing selected BMPs.

Local governments and the District combine their resources and exchange watershed data to implement the WMPs. Funding for local elements of the WMPs is provided through local governments' capital improvement plans and the District's Cooperative Funding Initiative.
Additionally, flood hazard information generated by the WMPs is used by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to revise flood insurance rate maps. This helps to better define flood risk and is used extensively for land use planning by local governments and property owners. Since the WMPs may change based on growth and shifting priorities, the District also cooperates with local governments to update the WMPs when necessary, giving decision-makers opportunities throughout the program to determine when and where funds are needed.

### *Quality of Water Improvement Program (QWIP)*

The QWIP was established in 1974 through Chapter 373, F.S. to restore groundwater conditions altered by well drilling activities for domestic supply, agriculture, and other uses. The Program's primary goal is to preserve groundwater and surface water resources by reimbursing landowners for the cost to properly plug abandoned or deteriorating artesian wells on their property. Thousands of wells constructed prior to current well construction standards were often deficient in casing, which interconnected aquifers and enabled poor-quality mineralized water to migrate into aquifers containing potable-quality water. Plugging abandoned artesian wells eliminates the waste of water at the surface and prevents mineralized groundwater from contaminating other aquifers and surface water bodies. Historically, the Program has proven to be a cost-effective method to promote the plugging of such wells.

The region of emphasis for the Program is the Southern Water Use Caution Area (SWUCA) where the upper Floridan aquifer is confined. Plugging abandoned wells, which involves filling them from the bottom to the top with cement and/or bentonite, re-establishes the natural isolation between aquifers, preventing the mixing of varying water qualities and the free flow of water at the surface. Before an abandoned well is plugged, QWIP staff collect geophysical logs that measure several hydrologic and geologic properties for inclusion in the District's database. While this is done primarily to determine the eligible reimbursement, the data can also be utilized to ensure the appropriate amount of material is used to properly plug the well. The Program benefits landowners, water well contractors, and the water resources of the District.

### *Stormwater Improvements - Implementation of Storage and Conveyance BMPs*

The District's WMPs and SWIM programs implement stormwater and conveyance BMPs for preventative flood protection and to improve surface water quality, particularly in urban areas, and to enhance surface and groundwater resources. The BMPs involve construction of improvements identified and prioritized in the development of watershed management plans. Most of the activities are developed through cooperative funding with a local government entity, DEP, or other state funding. As stormwater is a primary contributor of water quality degradation in older urban areas, the District seeks opportunities to work with local cooperators to retrofit or improve these systems to reduce impacts to receiving waters.

## WRD Projects

The District has budgeted for 29 WRD projects that are ongoing. At the start of FY2025 (October 1, 2024), the District has allocated approximately $4.7 million in the budget for 4 of these projects. If a project received funding in prior years and is still ongoing it remains in the Work Program until completion. District funding for a number of the projects is matched to varying degrees by local cooperators including municipalities, state agencies, private agricultural operations, and others.

The total cost of these projects, including the cooperator shares, is approximately $47.85 million. It's estimated that approximately 50.68 million gallons per day (mgd) of additional water supply will be produced or conserved. The projects are listed in **Table 2** and are consistent with Programmatic Code 2.2.1 in the District's FY2025 budget. The WRD projects are organized into three groups:

### *Aquifer Storage and Recovery Feasibility and Pilot Testing*

These projects are research and/or pilot projects designed to further the development of the innovative alternative water sources described in the RWSP. The projects for investigation of the Lower Floridan aquifer are primarily District-led initiatives. The ASR and Aquifer Recharge projects may involve both technical and financial assistance from the District.

### *Facilitating Agricultural Resource Management Systems (FARMS)*

The FARMS Program is an agricultural BMP cost-share reimbursement program. The program is a public/private partnership developed by the District and the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS). The program provides incentives to the agricultural community within the District to implement agricultural BMPs that will provide resource benefits including the reduction of groundwater withdrawals from the Upper Floridan aquifer, improvement of ground and surface water quality impacted by groundwater withdrawals, and improvement of natural-system functions within wetlands and priority watersheds.

The FARMS Program operates under District Governing Board Policy to fund projects that provide these benefits while assisting in the implementation of the District's RWSP. This plan identifies strategic initiatives and regional priorities to meet the District's water management goals. These goals are based on improving and/or maintaining the water resource conditions of several regions within the District. Five primary goals for the FARMS Program are to:

1. Improve surface water quality which has been impacted by groundwater withdrawals with a priority given to projects in the Shell, Prairie, and Joshua Creek, or Horse Creek watersheds;
2. Conserve, restore or augment the water resources and natural systems in the Upper Myakka River Watershed;
3. Reduce groundwater use in the SWUCA;
4. Reduce groundwater use for Frost/Freeze Protection within the DPCWUCA;
5. Reduce Upper Floridan aquifer groundwater use and nutrient loading impacts in the Northern District.

The FARMS projects implement FDACS-approved BMPs that offset groundwater use with surface water and/or increase the overall efficiency of irrigation water use. Many projects have the added benefit of reducing agricultural impacts to surface water features. Properly implemented BMPs protect and conserve water resources and may increase crop production.

### *Environmental Restoration and MFL Recovery Projects*

These projects include MFL recovery projects for the Hillsborough River Recovery Strategy, and for the upper Peace River, and SWUCA Saltwater Intrusion Minimum Aquifer Level (SWIMAL) in support of the SWUCA Recovery Strategy.

At the DEP's guidance, additional project details are available in spreadsheet format. The DEP will present Work Program project data from each of the water management districts on their website for public review, in accordance with Section 373.536(6)(b), F.S. The detailed spreadsheet includes project descriptions, schedules, cooperator and state funding levels, and the water bodies and planning regions supported. The District's proposed Work Program spreadsheet is available online at: https://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/resources/plans-reports/water-resource-development-work- program

## Table 2. FY2025 - FY2029 District Funding and Total Project Cost for Water Resource Development Projects

| Project Number | WRD Projects [1] | Total Prior District Funding | FY2025 District Cost | FY2026 District Cost | FY2027 District Cost | FY2028 District Cost | FY2029 District Cost | Total Cost District + Cooperator | Funding Source [2] | Quantity developed or conserved[1] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1) Aquifer Storage and Recovery Feasibility and Pilot Testing (Programmatic Code 2.2.1.1)** | | | | | | | | | | |
| N855 | Southern Hillsborough Aquifer Recharge Program (SHARP) Phase 2 | $4,800,000 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $9,700,000 | District, Hillsborough County | 4.0 |
| P280 | Hydrogeologic Investigation of LFA in Polk County | $12,000,000 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $12,000,000 | District | NA |
| P925 | Optical Borehole Imaging Data Collection from LFA Wells | $100,200 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $167,000 | District, USGS | NA |
| P926 | Sources/Ages of Groundwater in LFA Wells | $368,300 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $736,600 | District, USGS | NA |
| Q050 | City of Venice Reclaimed Water Aquifer Storage Recovery | $2,744,876 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $5,489,752 | District, City of Venice | Storage |
| Q064 | Direct Aquifer Recharge -North Hillsborough Aquifer Recharge Program Phase 2 | $750,000 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $1,500,000 | District, Hillsborough County | Study |
| Q159 | Sarasota County - Bee Ridge Water Reclamation Facility Aquifer Recharge | $915,511 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $1,831,022 | District, Sarasota County | 5.0 |
| **2) Facilitating Agricultural Resource Management Systems (FARMS) (Programmatic Code 2.2.1.2)** | | | | | | | | | | |
| H017 | FARMS Projects (H017) 3 | Annual Request | $4,000,000 | $4,000,000 | $4,000,000 | $4,000,000 | $4,000,000 | Annual Request | District | 32.339 |
| H798 | FARMS - P BAR R Sod Company, LLC | $293,187 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $390,916 | District, BAR R Sod Company, LLC | 0.08 |
| H802 | FARMS - Berry Patch Ridge, LLC | $241,572 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $322,096 | District, Berry Patch Ridge, LLC | 0.04 |
| H804 | FARMS- FD Berries USA, LLC | $112,611 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $150,149 | District, FD Berries USA, LLC | 0.225 |
| H805 | FARMS- Bay Grove- T&T Environmental Phase 1 | $773,364 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $1,138,792 | District, Bay Grove- T&T Environmental | 0.12 |
| H806 | FARMS- Sandhill Native Growers | $303,507 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $404,677 | District, Sandhill Native Growers | 0.08 |
| H807 | FARMS- Sizemore Group Automation | $182,857 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $243,809 | District, Sizemore Group Automation | 0.0307 |

| Project Number | WRD Projects [1] | Total Prior District Funding | FY2025 District Cost | FY2026 District Cost | FY2027 District Cost | FY2028 District Cost | FY2029 District Cost | Total Cost District + Cooperator | Funding Source [2] | Quantity developed or conserved[1] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| H813 | FARMS- Bayside Sod | $378,829 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $528,210 | District, Bayside Sod | 0.085 |
| H814 | FARMS - Bethel Farms, LLLP - Ph 5 | $296,023 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $479,494 | District, Bethel Farms, LLLP - | 0.073 |
| H815 | FARMS - Midway Farms, LLC | $234,019 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $312,025 | District, Midway Farms | 0.1 |
| H816 | FARMS - Marshall Tree Farm, Inc. | $31,707 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $63,414 | District, Marshall Tree Farm, Inc. | 0.0902 |
| H818 | FARMS - Bay Grove - T&T Environmental, LLC Ph 2 | $350,540 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $684,540 | District, Bay Grove - T&T Environmental, LLC | 0.078 |
| H819 | FARMS - Spanish Trails Farming and Land Co. LLC Ph 3 | $542,000 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $748,000 | District, Spanish Trails Farming and Land Co. LLC | 0.14 |
| H820 | FARMS - Wauchula Fresh, LLC | $541,701 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $800,319 | District, Wauchula Fresh, LLC | 0.115 |
| H822 | FARMS - Midway Farms, LLC Phase 2 | $121,810 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $162,414 | District, Midway Farms, LLC | 0.04 |
| H823 | FARMS - McClure Properties, LTD | $215,162 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $286,883 | District, McClure Properties, LTD | 0.045 |
| H824 | FARMS - Farm Road Port Charlotte, FL LLC - Phase 2 | $554,200 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $746,500 | District, Farm Road Port Charlotte, FL LLC | 0.1 |
| H529 | Mini-FARMS Program 3 | Annual Request | $500,000 | $500,000 | $500,000 | $500,000 | $500,000 | Annual Request | District | 2.0 |
| **3) Minimum Flows and Minimum Water Levels Recovery [4] (Programmatic Code 2.2.1.3)** | | | | | | | | | | |
| H089 | MIA Recharge SWIMAL Recovery at Flatford Swamp | $6,635,702 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $6,635,702 | District | 2.0 |
| H404-1 | Lower Hillsborough River Recovery Strategy Morris Bridge Sink | $ 1,174,982 | $ 155,000.00 | $ 165,000.00 | $ 165,000.00 | $ 165,000.00 | $ 200,000.00 | $ 2,024,982 | District | 3.90 |
| H400-7 | Third Five-Year Assessment of the Lower Hillsborough River Recovery Strategy | $234,068 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | District | NA |
| H400-13 | Biological Data Collection 2024 | $0 | $40,000 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | District | NA |
| **Water Resource Development Project Totals** | | **$34,926,604** | **$4,695,000** | **$4,665,000** | **$4,665,000** | **$4,665,000** | **$4,700,000** | **$47,851,240** | | **50.68** |

1. Acronyms: TBD - to be determined, NA - not applicable, mgd - million gallons per day, MIA - Most Impacted Area of the SWUCA, SWIMAL - Salt Water Intrusion Minimum Aquifer Level, USGS - United States Geological Survey, ASR – Aquifer Storage Recovery, LFA – Lower Floridan Aquifer.
2. Future funding budget estimates for which specific time frames are not yet determined are distributed evenly over future years.
3. The FARMS lead program (H017) have saved 32.2 mgd to date. Sub-projects list active project savings as of June 2024.
4. H400 and H404 consists of many sub projects. IWRDWP only represents ongoing efforts to align with STAR reporting.

## Water Supply Development Assistance

Water supply development is defined as the planning, design, construction, operation, and maintenance of public or private facilities for water collection, production, treatment, transmission, or distribution for sale, resale, or end use (Section 373.019(26), F.S). Regional water supply authorities, local governments, and public and privately-owned water utilities typically have the lead role in implementing water supply development projects (Section 373.705, F.S.). The District provides funding assistance to these entities for projects that are consistent with the District's Strategic Plan, Water Management Plans, Surface Water Improvement and Management Plans, and the District and CFWI RWSPs. Final decisions regarding the funding of projects are the exclusive responsibility of the District's Governing Board. The District's primary funding mechanism for water supply development assistance is the Cooperative Funding Initiative (CFI) Program, which is described in the Funding Sources section of this Work Program.
The District has 50 budgeted or ongoing water supply development projects in FY2025, including 1 water supply planning projects that support water supply development. As shown in **Table 3-h**, the District is funding approximately $66.2 million in FY2025 for 8 projects that achieve water supply development assistance. The project budgets shown are consistent with the District's Programmatic Budget under activity codes 2.2.2 (water supply development) and 1.1.1 (water supply planning). The water supply projects are listed in **Table 3-a** to **3-g**, grouped by the following budget sub-categories and sorted by project code number:

- Surface Water Projects
- Regional Potable Water Interconnect Projects
- Reclaimed Water Projects
- Brackish Groundwater Development Projects
- ASR and Aquifer Recharge Projects
- Conservation Projects
- Water Supply Planning Projects

Most water supply development projects are funded within one year, but large projects may have construction budgets over multiple years to coincide with each year's predicted expenses. Since the District budget is adopted on an annual basis, the future funding for ongoing projects is estimated based on projected costs and schedules. Additional future funding will be needed for new projects that aren't yet proposed through the CFI Program. The District anticipates new reclaimed water and conservation projects will require funding levels less than previous years. The amount needed for new regional interconnects and water treatment facilities can vary greatly from year to year, peaking as large infrastructure projects move from design to construction phases.

Significant new funding has been proposed in the FY2025-29 timeframe for expansions of the PRMRWSA Regional Loop System, next phases of the PRWC's Southeast and West Polk Lower Floridan Aquifer Wellfields, and Tampa Bay Water's Southern Hillsborough County Transmission Expansion.

The listed projects that have no FY2025 or future funding are ongoing with prior year funding. Projects are omitted from the Work Program when they are completed, and final reimbursement is provided.

## Table 3-a. Surface Water Projects

| Project Number | Water Supply Development Assistance - Surface Water Projects (Programmatic Budget 2.2.2.1) | Prior District Funding | FY2025 Funding | FY2026 Funding | FY2027 Funding | FY2028 Funding | FY2029 Funding | Total Project Cost | Supply (mgd) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Q272 | PRMRWSA - Reservoir No. 3 | $18,682,867 | $14,000,000 | $14,000,000 | $14,000,000 | $14,000,000 | $14,000,000 | $358,250,000 | NA |
| **Total Surface Water Projects** | | **$18,682,867** | **$14,000,000** | **$14,000,000** | **$14,000,000** | **$14,000,000** | **$14,000,000** | **$358,250,000** | 0.000 |

## Table 3-b. Regional Potable Water Interconnect Projects

| Project Number | Water Supply Development Assistance - Regional Potable Water Interconnects (Programmatic Budget 2.2.2.2) | Prior District Funding | FY2025 Funding | FY2026 Funding | FY2027 Funding | FY2028 Funding | FY2029 Funding | Total Project Cost | Supply (mgd) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Q146 | Tampa Bay Water Southern Hillsborough County Booster Pump Station | $1,775,000 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $12,686,049 | 6 |
| Q216 | PRWC Regional Transmission Southeast Phase 1 | $24,031,077 | $9,723,285 | $27,800,000 | $14,458,638 | $0 | $0 | $174,100,600 | NA |
| Q241 | TBW - Southern Hillsborough County Transmission Expansion | $12,359,207 | $3,500,000 | $33,173,698 | $33,173,698 | $33,173,698 | $29,673,699 | $425,424,130 | NA |
| Q248 | PRMRWA - Regional Acquisition of Project Prairie Pumping and Storage Facilities | $637,500 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $2,030,032 | NA |
| Q313 | PRMRWSA- Regional Integrated Loop System Ph 3C | $13,244,319 | $13,305,681 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $63,850,000 | NA |
| Q355 | PRMRWSA- Regional Integrated Loop System Ph 2b | $15,396,094 | $10,350,000 | $10,403,906 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $87,440,545 | NA |
| **Total Regional Potable Water Interconnect Projects** | | **$67,443,197** | **$36,878,966** | **$71,377,604** | **$47,632,336** | **$33,173,698** | **$29,673,699** | **$765,531,356** | 6 |

## Table 3-c. Reclaimed Water Projects

| Project Number | Water Supply Development Assistance - Reclaimed Water Projects (Programmatic Budget 2.2.2.3) | Prior District Funding | FY2025 Funding | FY2026 Funding | FY2027 Funding | FY2028 Funding | FY2029 Funding | Total Project Cost | Benefit (mgd) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| N339 | Winter Haven #3 Reclaimed Interconnect, Storage, and Pumping | $2,750,000 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $9,466,000 | 0.3 |
| N791 | Pasco County Starkey Ranch Reclaimed Water Transmission Phase C | $456,800 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $913,600 | 0.29 |
| N868 | Polk County Utilities NERUSA Ernie Caldwell Blvd Reclaimed Water Transmission | $1,056,500 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $2,113,000 | 0.414 |
| N898 | Haines City Reclaimed Water Tank and Pump Stations Project | $4,620,000 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $6,800,000 | Storage |
| Q057 | Zephyrhills - Zephyr Lakes & Hospital Reuse | $710,650 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $1,421,300 | 0.33 |
| Q066 | Polk County Utilities- NERUSA Lake Wilson Road Reuse | $262,750 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $525,500 | 0.18 |
| Q067 | Polk County Utilities-NERUSA Southeast Reuse Loop | $2,186,750 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $4,373,500 | 0.522 |
| Q105 | Citrus County Sugarmill Woods Golf Course Reuse | $1,834,000 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $3,918,000 | 0.5 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Q113 | City of Plant City McIntosh Park Indirect Potable Reuse Feasability Study | $300,000 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $600,000 | Study |
| Q139 | North Port Direct Potable Reuse Feasibility | $125,000 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $250,000 | Study |
| Q160 | Sarasota County Honore Avenue Reclaimed Water Transmission | $1,500,000 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $3,000,000 | 0.533 |

## Table 3-c. Reclaimed Water Projects (continued)

| Project Number | Water Supply Development Assistance - Reclaimed Water Projects (Programmatic Budget 2.2.2.3) | Prior District Funding | FY2025 Funding | FY2026 Funding | FY2027 Funding | FY2028 Funding | FY2029 Funding | Total Project Cost | Benefit (mgd) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Q200 | Winter Haven Direct Potable Reuse Feasibility Study | $100,000 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $200,000 | Study |
| Q209 | Polk County Direct Potable Reuse Feasibility and Pilot Demo | $795,000 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $2,591,582 | Study |
| Q268 | Braden River Utilities Taylor Road Area Transmission | $3,550,000 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $7,100,000 | 1.57 |
| Q271 | Winter Haven Preserve at Lake Ashton Transmission | $1,410,000 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $2,820,000 | 0.59 |
| Q274 | Zephyrhills - Zephyr to Pasco Reclaimed Water Interconnect | $880,000 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $1,760,000 | NA |
| Q353 | Pinellas Co- Southcross RW Expand/Surface Aug Study | $200,000 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $400,000 | Study |
| | **Total Reclaimed Water Projects** | **$22,737,450** | **$0** | **$0** | **$0** | **$0** | **$0** | **$48,252,482** | **5.229** |

## Table 3-d Brackish Groundwater Projects

| Project Number | Water Supply Development Assistance - Brackish Groundwater Development Projects (Programmatic Budget 2.2.2.4) | Prior District Funding | FY2025 Funding | FY2026 Funding | FY2027 Funding | FY2028 Funding | FY2029 Funding | Total Project Cost | Supply (mgd) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Q184 | PRWC Southeast Wellfield Implementation | $14,834,987 | $14,500,000 | $14,500,000 | $14,500,000 | $14,500,000 | $14,500,000 | $247,530,000 | 12.5 |
| Q294 | PRWC Southeast Test Well No. 3 | $2,062,500 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $4,125,000 | Study |
| Q308 | PRWC- West Polk Wellfield | $12,364,308 | $651,190 | $10,000,000 | $10,000,000 | $10,000,000 | $10,000,000 | $237,400,000 | 10 |
| Q309 | PRWC- Test Prod Well #2 West Polk Wellfield | $1,448,500 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $4,125,000 | Study |
| | **Total Brackish Groundwater Projects** | **$30,710,295** | **$15,151,190** | **$24,500,000** | **$24,500,000** | **$24,500,000** | **$24,500,000** | **$493,180,000** | **22.5** |

## Table 3-e. Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) and Aquifer Recharge Projects

| Project Number | Water Supply Development Assistance - Aquifer Recharge/ Storage and Recovery Projects (Programmatic Budget 2.2.2.5) | Prior District Funding | FY2025 Funding | FY2026 Funding | FY2027 Funding | FY2028 Funding | FY2029 Funding | Total Project Cost | Benefit (mgd) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| N435 | City of Bradenton Surface Water Aquifer Storage Recovery 2 | $2,350,000 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $4,700,000 | Storage |
| Q142 | Pinellas County Chestnut Park Aquifer Storage, Recovery & Recharge | $893,500 | $0 | $2,779,875 | $926,625 | $0 | $0 | $9,200,000 | Storage |
| | **Total Aquifer Recharge/ASR Projects** | **$3,243,500** | **$0** | **$2,779,875** | **$926,625** | **$0** | **$0** | **$13,900,000** | **0** |

## Table 3-f. Conservation Projects

| Project Number | Water Supply Development Assistance - Conservation Rebates, Retrofits, Etc. Projects (Programmatic Budget 2.2.2.7) | Prior District Funding | FY2025 Funding | FY2026 Funding | FY2027 Funding | FY2028 Funding | FY2029 Funding | Total Project Cost | Benefit (mgd) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| B015 | Water Incentives Supporting Efficient (WISE) Program | Annual Request | $225,000 | $225,000 | $225,000 | $225,000 | $225,000 | Annual Request | 0.531 |
| N973 | Winter Haven Consumption/Conservation Programs Data Management Software | $60,000 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $120,000 | 0.016 |
| N999 | Marion County Toilet Rebate Program Phase 5 | $32,000 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $64,000 | 0.01 |
| Q145 | Longboat Key Club - Advanced Irrigation System | $508,516 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $1,115,000 | 0.095 |
| Q166 | Bartow - Golf Course Advanced Irrigation System | $250,000 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $500,000 | 0.051 |
| Q193 | Crystal River - Conservation Phase 1 | $9,090 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $18,180 | 0.005 |
| Q215 | TBW - Demand Management Program Phase 2 | $1,432,238 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $2,864,476 | 0.68 |
| Q245 | Pinellas County AMI Metering Analytics | $139,414 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $278,828 | 0.111 |
| Q256 | St. Petersburg - Sensible Sprinkling Program - Phase 10 | $50,000 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $100,000 | 0.055 |
| Q265 | North Port - Water Distribution Ridgewood/ Lamplighter Area Looping | $173,950 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $347,900 | 0.015 |
| Q266 | Polk County - Florida Water Star Builder Reimbursement Program | $20,000 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $40,000 | 0.005 |
| Q267 | PRWC- Demand Management Implementation | $102,679 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $205,358 | 0.064 |
| P964 | Water Use Evals for Non-Ag Users | $103,400 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $103,400 | 0.011 |
| Q304 | Venice Toilet Rebate and Retrofit Phase 9 | $16,500 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $33,000 | 0.005 |
| Q306 | WRWSA Irrigation Eval Program, Phase 7 | $51,000 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $102,000 | 0.025 |
| Q311 | Bay Laurel CCDD Water Conservation Program Phase 2 | $191,900 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $383,800 | 0.028 |
| Q319 | Manatee County Toilet Rebate Phase 15 | $50,000 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $100,000 | 0.017 |
| Q320 | Citrus County Water Conservation Program phase 6 | $21,350 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $42,700 | 0.006 |
| Q371 | Polk County Irrigation System Evaluation Program, Phase 8 | $72,500 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $178,750 | 0.053 |
| Q387 | St. Pete Sensible Sprinkling Program, Phase 11 | $50,000 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $100,000 | 0.005 |
| | **Total Conservation Rebates, Retrofits, Etc.** | **$3,334,537** | **$225,000** | **$225,000** | **$225,000** | **$225,000** | **$225,000** | **$6,697,392** | **1.788** |

## Table 3-g. Water Supply Planning Projects

| Project Number | Water Supply Planning (Programmatic Budget 1.1.1) | Prior District Funding | FY2025 Funding | FY2026 Funding | FY2027 Funding | FY2028 Funding | FY2029 Funding | Total Project Cost | Supply (mgd) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Q324 | WRWSA Regional Water Supply Plan 2024 Update | $175,000 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $350,000 | NA |
| **Total Planning Projects** | | **$175,000** | **$0** | **$0** | **$0** | **$0** | **$0** | **$350,000** | **0** |

## Table 3-h. Summary of Funding for Water Supply Development Projects

| Water Supply Development Assistance Project Totals (Programmatic Budget 2.2.2 & 1.1.1) | Prior District Funding | FY2025 Funding | FY2026 Funding | FY2027 Funding | FY2028 Funding | FY2029 Funding | Total Project Cost | Supply (mgd) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Surface Water Projects | $18,682,867 | $14,000,000 | $14,000,000 | $14,000,000 | $14,000,000 | $14,000,000 | $338,235,100 | 0.00 |
| Regional Potable Water Interconnect Projects | $67,443,197 | $36,878,966 | $71,377,604 | $47,632,336 | $33,173,698 | $29,673,699 | $765,531,356 | 6.00 |
| Reclaimed Water Projects | $22,737,450 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $48,252,482 | 5.23 |
| Brackish Groundwater Development Projects | $30,710,295 | $15,151,190 | $24,500,000 | $24,500,000 | $24,500,000 | $24,500,000 | $493,180,000 | 22.50 |
| Aquifer Recharge/ Storage and Recovery Projects | $3,243,500 | $0 | $2,779,875 | $926,625 | $0 | $0 | $13,900,000 | 0.00 |
| Conservation Projects | $3,334,537 | $225,000 | $225,000 | $225,000 | $225,000 | $225,000 | $6,697,392 | 1.79 |
| Water Supply Planning Projects | $175,000 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $350,000 | 0.00 |
| Total Funding for Water Supply Development Projects | $146,326,846 | $66,255,156 | $112,882,479 | $87,283,961 | $71,898,698 | $68,398,699 | $1,666,146,330 | 35.52 |

Acronyms: ASR - aquifer storage and recovery, BMPs - best management practices, ET - Evapotranspiration, mgd - million gallons per day, NERUSA/NWRUSA - Northeast/Northwest Regional Utility Service Areas of Polk County Utilities, PRMRWSA - Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority, PRWC - Polk Regional Water Cooperative, WRWSA - Withlacoochee Regional Water Supply Authority,

## Funding Sources

The District provides significant financial assistance for water resource development and water supply development projects through the District's Cooperative Funding Initiative (CFI), and District Initiatives. The financial assistance is provided primarily to governmental entities, but private entities may also participate in these programs. Portions of state funding are allocated to the District through the DEP and legislative appropriations for the Springs Initiative, the Florida Forever Program, the Water Protection and Sustainability Program, and the District's FARMS Program. These sources are described below.

### District Funding

**Cooperative Funding Initiative –**The District's primary funding mechanism is its CFI program, which includes funding for major regional water supply and water resource development projects and localized projects throughout the District's 16-county jurisdiction. The CFI is a matching grant program that enables the Governing Board to jointly participate with local governments and other entities to ensure proper development, use, and protection of the regional water resources of the District. Projects of mutual benefit are generally funded 50 percent by the District and 50 percent by the public or private cooperators. Communities or counties qualifying under the Rural Economic Development Initiative (Section 288.0656, F.S.) may be eligible for greater matching shares.

Projects with construction costs exceeding $5 million will undergo a third-party review to confirm costs, schedules, and ability to meet its resource benefits. Any state and federal funds received for the projects are applied directly against the project costs, with both parties benefitting equally.

Beginning in 2023, state and federal funds may be applied to eligible cost increases incurred above the Governing Board approved total project cost, before equally reducing both parties' share. The District is committed to solving the region's water resource issues through cooperative programs, such as the CFI which has been in place since 1988. These efforts have been highly successful resulting in a combined investment (District and cooperators) of more than $4.1 billion in incentive-based funding assistance for a variety of water resource projects addressing the District's four areas of responsibility: water supply, natural systems, flood protection and water quality.

**District Initiatives –** Projects implemented through District Initiatives are of great importance or a regional priority and, in most cases, are fully funded by the District. Examples of these initiatives include Water Resource Development (WRD) projects such as: (1) the Quality of Water Improvement Program (QWIP) to plug deteriorated, free-flowing wells that waste water and cause inter-aquifer contamination; (2) the Utilities Services Group to conserve water by assisting utilities in controlling their water loss; (3) data collection and analysis to support major District initiatives such as the MFLs program; (4) the FARMS program and other various agricultural research projects designed to increase the water-use efficiency of agricultural operations; (5) WRD investigations and MFLs Recovery projects which may not have local cooperators; and (6) the WISE (Water Incentives Supporting Efficiency) program launched in 2019 offers cost-share funding for a wide variety of water conservation projects (50 percent match with a maximum of $20,000 per project) to non- agricultural entities.

### State Funding

**DEP Springs Initiative –** A legislative appropriation specific to providing for the protection and restoration of Florida's major springs systems has enabled the DEP to assist local governments in achieving restoration goals through its Springs Initiative program. To address the unique and

complex challenges required for each spring system, the District invited local, regional and state agencies to form the Springs Coast Steering Committee. Through the Springs Coast Steering Committee, the District recommends projects to the DEP for funding consideration. Projects include the re-establishment of aquatic and shoreline vegetation near spring vents, construction of infrastructure necessary to convey wastewater in a priority focus area of Outstanding Florida Springs, currently treated in septic systems or package plants, to a centralized wastewater treatment facility which may increase reclaimed water production, and implementation of other BMPs within springshed basins. The first year of the appropriation was FY2014, when the District received $1.35 million from DEP. Since then, the District has appropriated more than $78.4 million from the DEP to implement projects to restore aquatic habitats, reduce groundwater withdrawals and nutrient loading within the first-magnitude springsheds, and improve the water quality and quantity of spring discharges. These projects are listed in the Work Program Appendix A - Projects for Implementing BMAPs. The District did not receive applications for FY2025 for new funding.

**The Florida Forever Program –** The Florida Forever Act, as originally passed by the Florida Legislature in 1999, established the 10-year $3 billion statewide Florida Forever Program. The program was extended by the Legislature during the 2008 legislative session, allowing the program to continue for 10 more years at $300 million annually. The District hasn't received any new Florida Forever funding since FY2011. Since 1999, the District has allocated $95 million ($81.6 million for land acquisition and $13.4 million for water body restoration) of Florida Forever funding Districtwide in support of water resource development.

A "water resource development project" eligible for funding under the Florida Forever program is defined in Section 259.105, F.S., as a project that increases the amount of water available to meet the needs of natural systems and the citizens of the state by enhancing or restoring aquifer recharge, facilitating the capture and storage of excess flows in surface waters, or promoting reuse. Implementation of eligible projects under the program includes land acquisition, land and water body restoration, aquifer storage and recovery (ASR) facilities, surface water reservoirs, and other capital improvements. Numerous tracts have been acquired in the northern region including Potts and Flying Eagle preserves, Three Sisters Springs, and coastal preserves at Weeki Wachee and Chassahowitzka Rivers. A primary example of how the funds were used by the District for water resource development was the purchase of lands around Lake Hancock within the Peace River watershed, as the first step in restoring minimum flows to the Upper Peace River. In addition, the District Governing Board expended $35.7 million in ad valorem-based funding to complete the acquisition of lands associated with the Lake Hancock project which were acquired on a voluntary basis and through eminent domain proceedings. In FY2023, the District expended the final balance of its prior-year funds held in the state's Florida Forever Trust Fund.

**Facilitating Agricultural Resource Management Systems (FARMS) Program –** The District's FARMS Program is an agricultural best management practice (BMP) cost-share reimbursement program that involves both water quantity and water quality. This public/private partnership program was developed by the District and the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) in 2003. The purpose of the FARMS Program is to implement production-scale agricultural BMP projects that will provide water resource benefits including water quality improvement, reduction of Upper Floridan withdrawals, conservation, and restoration or augmentation of the area's water resources and ecology. Since 2003 the District has co-funded $54.5 million dollars towards $92.6 million dollars in total project costs for 254 FARMS projects resulting in 32.5 million gallons per day (mgd) of water resource benefits. Operating under District Governing Board Policy, the program utilizes state funding when available. Since inception of the program, the District has utilized $7.3 million in state appropriations and $1.2 million from the FDACS. No funding has been provided by state appropriations since FY2009.

**NRCS Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) –** The EQIP provides technical, educational, and financial assistance to eligible farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners to address soil, water, and related natural resource concerns on their lands while complying with federal, state of Florida, and tribal environmental laws that encourage environmental enhancement. The District's FARMS Program partners with the NRCS on both financial and technical levels and has coordinated dual cost-share projects whenever possible. The maximum funding for using both FARMS and EQIP is 75 percent of the total project cost.

**Water Protection and Sustainability Program –** Large areas of Florida do not have sufficient traditional water resources to meet the future needs of the state's growing population and the needs of the environment, agriculture, and industry. The state's Water Protection and Sustainability Program Trust Fund (WPSPTF) was created in the 2005 legislative session through Senate Bill 444 to accelerate the development of alternative water sources and later recreated in Chapter 373, F.S., as part of the 2009 legislative session. Legislation focused on encouraging cooperation in the development of alternative water supplies and improving the linkage between local governments' land use plans and water management districts' regional water supply plans (RWSP). The program provides matching funds to the District for alternative water supply development assistance. From FY2006 through FY2009, the District was appropriated a total of $53.75 million by the Legislature through the WPSPTF for water supply development projects. An additional $700,000 in appropriations were allocated to the District between FY2020 and FY2021.

Program funds are applied toward a maximum of 20 percent of eligible project construction costs. In addition, the Legislature established a goal for each water management district to annually contribute funding equal to 100 percent of the state funding for alternative water supply development assistance, which the District has exceeded annually. The legislation also requires that a minimum of 80 percent of the WPSPTF funding be related to projects identified in a district water supply plan. The District's RWSP is utilized in the identification of the majority of WPSPTF-eligible projects. Projects are evaluated for funding based on consideration of the 14 factors described in Subsections 373.707(8)(f) and (g), F.S., and additional District evaluation factors as appropriate.

**Water Supply and Water Resource Development Grant Program –** In FY2020, the state appropriated funds in addition to the Water Protection and Sustainability Program through the establishment of a Water Supply and Water Resource Development grant program in order to maximize the effort of addressing the demands on Florida's water supply to meet the future needs of the state's growing population and the needs of the environment. By identifying and researching all viable alternative water supply resources, the grant program is intended to help communities plan for and implement conservation, reuse, and other water supply and water resource development projects. Projects selected for funding are prioritized by areas of greatest need and greatest benefit, including timeliness of implementation. From FY2020 through FY2024, $36 million has been awarded to the District by DEP for alternative water supply development through this grant program with an additional $10 million anticipated in FY2025.

## Summary/Conclusions

The Work Program presented herein is adequate to ensure water is available to timely meet the water supply needs of existing and future reasonable-beneficial uses for a 1-in-10-year drought event and to avoid the adverse effects of competition for water supplies. Over the next five years, this Work Program outlines the District's commitment to ensure the availability of adequate water supplies for all reasonable-beneficial uses and to maintain the function of natural systems. It additionally illustrates the contributions of the District in support of MFLs and water reservations.

This Work Program outlines activities and projects that will make available 86.2 mgd of water upon completion, including reuse water and new potable supply. These benefits are associated with approximately $95.4 million budgeted for FY2025. The proposed funding for the 5-year Work Program is approximately $548 million through FY 2025-29. **Table 4** below summarizes the funding categorized in the Work Program as WRD data collection and analysis activities, WRD Projects, and Water Supply Development Projects.

**Table 4. Work Program Summary**

| WRD Data Collection and Analysis Activities | Sum of Current Year District Funding (FY2025) | Sum of Five-Year District Funding (F2025-29) | Sum of Water Made Available (mgd) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Water Resource Development - Data Collection and Analysis Activities (Table 1) | $24,473,170 | $117,901,726 | NA |
| Water Resource Development - Projects (Table 2) | $4,695,000 | $23,390,000 | 50.68 |
| Water Supply Development - Projects (Table 3-h) | $66,255,156 | $406,718,993 | 35.52 |
| **Totals** | **$95,423,326** | **$548,010,719** | **86.2** |

At the DEP's guidance, specific project details are provided in spreadsheet format. The DEP will present Work Program project data from each of the water management districts on their website for public review, in accordance with Section 373.536(6)(b), F.S. The detailed spreadsheet includes project schedules, cooperator and state funding levels, and the waterbodies and planning regions supported. The District's proposed Work Program projects spreadsheet is available online at: https://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/resources/plans-reports/water-resource-development-work-program

The WRD and water supply projects set forth a commitment to develop projects associated with the implementation MFLs, recovery/prevention strategies, and water reservations. The majority of projects are located within the SWUCA or NTBWUCA and support their recovery strategies by reducing impacts to the Upper Floridan aquifer. The remaining projects are located in the District's Northern Planning Region, where a proactive, preventative approach is taken to optimize available water resources.

The data collection and analysis activities are a critical part of the WRD component implemented by the District. These activities support the District's MFLs programs. At the beginning of FY2025, the District has established and continues to monitor 207 adopted MFLs and has scheduled the establishment or revaluation of 23 MFLs through FY2027. The District's annual MFLs Priority List and Schedule and Reservations List and Schedule is published in the Consolidated Annual Report, and can also be found on the District's webpage at: https://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/projects/mfl/documents-and-reports

Other data collection and analysis activities include conducting watershed management planning, the QWIP program to preserve water resources through proper well abandonment, and the Implementation of stormwater storage and conveyance BMPs.

# Appendix A

## District Projects for Implementing Basin Management Action Plans

Basin Management Action Plans (BMAPs) provide technical direction for restoring impaired waters by reducing pollutant loadings to meet the allowable loadings established in a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL). In 2016, the Florida Legislature amended Section 373.036, F.S., to require the identification of all specific projects that implement a BMAP or a recovery or prevention strategy in the Work Program. The Work Programs have historically identified water resource development projects that support MFL recovery and prevention but haven't included projects primarily intended to implement BMAPs. Consistent with section 373.036, F.S., and in a manner coordinated with DEP and the five water management Districts, this Appendix A of the Work Program provides a five-year funding outlook for projects specifically identified in an adopted BMAP.

The District budgeted for twelve BMAP projects, each benefitting the water quality of first- magnitude springs in the District's northern planning region.

**Kings Bay/Crystal River Basin Management Action Plan**

- Citrus County Cambridge Greens Septic to Sewer (W432)
- Crystal River Preserve State Park Redfish Hole Restoration (W401)
- Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Mapping (WS01)

**Chassahowitzka, Homosassa Springs Basin management Action Plan**

- Citrus County Old Homosassa West Septic to Sewer Project (WH04)
- Citrus County Old Homosassa East Septic to Sewer project (Q134)
- Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Mapping – Chassahowitzka (WS01)
- Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Mapping – Homosassa (WS01)
- Chassahowitzka Education Campaign (W466)

**Weeki Wachee Springs Basin Management Action Plan**

- Hernando County Weeki Wachee Springshed Nitrogen Removal Stormwater Retrofits (WW05)
- Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Mapping (WS01)
- Weeki Wachee Education Campaign (W466)

**Rainbow Springs Basin Management Action Plan**

- Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Mapping (WS01)

The projects are categorized under various District Programmatic Budget activity codes. District funding shares are presented in **Table A-1**. Funding awarded from the DEP is reflected in the funding columns. Additional funding from the local cooperator shares, including state appropriations are reflected under the total project cost. Consistent with the District's CFI policy, projects with construction costs exceeding $5 million will undergo a third-party review (TPR) at the 30 percent design stage to confirm costs, schedules, and resource benefits. Project details are available in the Work Program BMAP spreadsheet available online at:

https://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/resources/plans-reports/water-resource-development-work- program

**Table A-1. Projects for Implementing BMAPs.**

| BMAPs Projects | Prior Funding | FY2025 Funding | FY2026 Funding | FY2027 Funding | FY2028 Funding | FY2029 Funding | Total Project Cost | Funding Sources |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Citrus County Cambridge Greens Septic to Sewer (W432) | $7,200,500 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $10,243,000 | District, DEP, Citrus County, State |
| Citrus County Old Homosassa West Septic to Sewer Project (WH04) | $8,950,800 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $10,333,000 | District, DEP, Citrus County, State |
| Citrus County Old Homosassa East Septic to Sewer Project (Q134) | $14,440,000 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $18,190,000 | District, DEP, Citrus County, State |
| Hernando County Weeki Wachee Springshed Nitrogen Removal Stormwater Retrofits (WW05) | $1,000,000 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $2,000,000 | District, County |
| Crystal River Preserve State Park Redfish Hole Restoration (W401) | $197,601 | $0 | $2,000,000 | $0 | $0 | $0 | $2,197,601 | District |
| Weeki Wachee Education Campaign (W466) | Annual Request | $10,000 | $10,000 | $10,000 | $10,000 | $10,000 | Annual Request | District |
| Chassahowitzka Education Campaign (W466) | Annual Request | $10,000 | $10,000 | $10,000 | $10,000 | $10,000 | Annual Request | District |
| Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Mapping (WS01) | $55,000 | $55,000 | $55,000 | $55,000 | $55,000 | $55,000 | Annual Request | District |
| Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Mapping (WS01) | $55,000 | $55,000 | $55,000 | $55,000 | $55,000 | $55,000 | Annual Request | District |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Mapping (WS01) | $55,000 | $55,000 | $55,000 | $55,000 | $55,000 | $55,000 | Annual Request | District |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Mapping (WS01) | $55,000 | $55,000 | $55,000 | $55,000 | $55,000 | $55,000 | Annual Request | District |
| Submerged Aquatic Vegetation Mapping (WS01) | $55,000 | $55,000 | $55,000 | $55,000 | $55,000 | $55,000 | Annual Request | District |
| **Totals** | **$31,788,901** | **$295,000** | **$2,295,000** | **$295,000** | **$295,000** | **$295,000** | **$42,963,601** | |

Consolidated Annual Report

*March 1, 2025*

# Polk Regional Water Cooperative

## Status Report

Southwest Florida
*Water Management District*

# Chapter 7 Polk Regional Water Cooperative Status Report

The Polk Regional Water Cooperative (PRWC) was created in 2016 through Interlocal Agreement and consists of Polk County and 15 municipal member governments. The PRWC was formed to provide for regional cooperation on the development and delivery of water resources to meet future water demands within Polk County. The majority of the PRWC jurisdiction is located within the District's Southern Water Use Caution Area, while the entirety of its jurisdiction is located within the Central Florida Water Initiative (CFWI) planning area.

In 2017, the Florida Legislature passed the Heartland Headwaters Protection and Sustainability Act (HB 573) to recognize the critical importance of Polk County's aquifers to the economic and ecological health of the region as headwaters for six of Florida's major river systems. The Act requires the development of a comprehensive annual report to be completed by the PRWC and submitted to the Governor, President of the Senate, Speaker of the House, Department of Environmental Protection and water management districts by December 1 of each year. In addition, the Act further requires the PRWC to coordinate with the appropriate water management district to provide a status report on projects receiving priority state funding and to include such status report in the consolidated water management district annual report (Section 373.463(3), Florida Statutes). This section of the District's Consolidated Annual Report serves as the PRWC status report for 2024.

For the FY2023-24 funding cycle, a ranked list of 48 PRWC member projects were submitted for state funding consideration, with $8,500,000 received from the Florida Legislature for priority projects. A total of 47 ranked member projects were submitted for state funding support in FY2024-25, with $2,614,387 received for priority projects.

For FY2025-26, a prioritized list of 29 PRWC and local member government projects are being submitted for funding consideration by the Florida Legislature. Table 1 lists the 2 PRWC and 27 local member government projects, including total project cost, requested state funding, and local member government funding. A detailed description of each project is included in the Heartland Headwaters Protection and Sustainability Act Annual Comprehensive Water Resources Report recently published and available from the PRWC. For FY2025-26, $235,229,730 will be required to implement the 13 ranked priority projects, with $197,599,034 committed in member local government funding. A total of $37,630,695 for these 13 ranked priority projects is being requested from the state and their implementation is subject to approval of state funding for the FY2025-26 budget year. In addition, annual reoccurring funding of $15,000,000 is requested over the next five years for the PRWC's Southeast Wellfield Project and member local government receiving facilities.

## Table 1. FY2025-26 Project Cost and Rank

| Priority Ranking | Project Name | Member Government | Total Project Cost (All Years) | Total Project Cost (FY 25-26) | State Funding Requested (FY 25-26) | Local Gov. Funding (FY 25-26) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Polk Regional Water Cooperative Southeast Wellfield Construction and Land Acquisition | PRWC | $ 587,866,056 | $ 194,789,130 | $ 12,585,095 | $ 182,204,034 |
| 2 | Polk Regional Water Cooperative Demand Management Implementation Program | PRWC | $ 150,000 | $ 150,000 | $ 75,000 | $ 75,000 |
| 3 | Bartow PRWC AWS Receiving Facility | City of Bartow | $ 4,000,000 | $ 4,000,000 | $ 4,000,000 | $ - |
| 3 | Lake Alfred PRWC Receiving Facility | City of Lake Alfred | $ 7,000,000 | $ 500,000 | $ 500,000 | $ - |
| 3 | Auburndale PRWC AWS Receiving Station | City of Auburndale | $ 2,900,000 | $ 2,900,000 | $ 2,700,000 | $ 200,000 |
| 3 | Dundee PRWC AWS Receiving Station | City of Dundee | $ 6,569,000 | $ 6,569,000 | $ 6,369,000 | $ 200,000 |
| 3 | Eagle Lake PRWC AWS Receiving Station | City of Eagle Lake | $ 6,700,000 | $ 2,500,000 | $ 2,500,000 | $ - |
| 3 | Winter Haven Pollard Rd WPF - PRWC AWS Receiving Facility | City of Winter Haven | $ 15,990,000 | $ 12,990,000 | $ 3,900,000 | $ 9,090,000 |
| 3 | Winter Haven PRWC - (Auburndale, WH Transmission Main Extension) | City of Winter Haven | $ 415,000 | $ 51,600 | $ 51,600 | $ - |
| 3 | Polk County Utilities ERUSA PRWC AWS Receiving Facility | Polk County Utilities | $ 3,943,875 | $ 2,157,500 | $ 1,078,750 | $ 1,078,750 |
| 3 | Polk County Utilities CRUSA PRWC AWS Receiving Facility | Polk County Utilities | $ 1,068,875 | $ 372,500 | $ 186,250 | $ 186,250 |
| 3 | Polk County Utilities NERUSA PRWC AWS Receiving Facility | Polk County Utilities | $ 6,297,283 | $ 3,850,000 | $ 1,925,000 | $ 1,925,000 |
| 3 | Haines City PRWC AWS Receiving Facility | City of Haines City | $ 5,000,000 | $ 4,400,000 | $ 1,760,000 | $ 2,640,000 |
| | | **Sub-total:** | **$ 647,900,089** | **$ 235,229,730** | **$ 37,630,695** | **$ 197,599,034** |
| NR | Bartow Water Master Plan | City of Bartow | $ 500,000 | $ 500,000 | $ 500,000 | $ - |
| NR | Bartow Wastewater Master Plan | City of Bartow | $ 500,000 | $ 500,000 | $ 500,000 | $ - |
| NR | Bartow Doug Allen WRF Flood Protection | City of Bartow | $ 1,200,000 | $ 1,000,000 | $ 1,000,000 | $ - |
| NR | Bartow New Ground Storage Tank | City of Bartow | $ 1,750,000 | $ 1,500,000 | $ 750,000 | $ 750,000 |
| NR | Bartow Secondary Distribution Water Line | City of Bartow | $ 1,200,000 | $ 1,000,000 | $ 550,000 | $ 450,000 |
| NR | Bartow Sludge Drying Bed | City of Bartow | $ 1,500,000 | $ 750,000 | $ 375,000 | $ 375,000 |
| NR | Auburndale Hickory Road Sprayfield | City of Auburndale | $ 1,700,000 | $ 1,700,000 | $ 1,700,000 | $ - |
| NR | Winter Haven Lake Idyl Nutrient Reduction & Stormwater Reuse Feasibility Study & Design | City of Winter Haven | $ 200,000 | $ 200,000 | $ 100,000 | $ 100,000 |
| NR | Winter Haven Water Resource Facility at Pollard Road | City of Winter Haven | $ 200,000,000 | $ 39,000,000 | $ 19,500,000 | $ 19,500,000 |
| NR | Winter Haven Bradco Farms MAR / ASR Wellfield (A Sapphire Necklace Project) | City of Winter Haven | $ 50,149,600 | $ 50,149,600 | $ 25,074,800 | $ 25,074,800 |
| NR | Winter Haven Aquifer Recharge Project | City of Winter Haven | $ 3,300,000 | $ 1,200,000 | $ 600,000 | $ 600,000 |
| NR | Winter Haven Logistics Parkway Storm Water Reclamation | City of Winter Haven | $ 4,600,000 | $ 450,000 | $ 225,000 | $ 225,000 |
| NR | Winter Haven ONE Water DPR Mobile Demonstration Unit | City of Winter Haven | $ 2,700,000 | $ 550,000 | $ 275,000 | $ 275,000 |
| NR | Frostproof Septic-to-Sewer Conversion Project - Phase 1 | City of Frostproof | $ 7,500,000 | $ 2,500,000 | $ 2,500,000 | $ - |
| NR | Frostproof Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvements | City of Frostproof | $ 950,000 | $ 475,000 | $ 475,000 | $ - |
| NR | Frostproof Water Treatment Plant No. 4 Improvements | City of Frostproof | $ 4,800,000 | $ 4,800,000 | $ 4,200,000 | $ 600,000 |
| | | **Sub-total:** | **$ 282,549,600** | **$ 106,274,600** | **$ 58,324,800** | **$ 47,949,800** |
| | | **Total for all PRWC and PRWC Member Projects** | **$ 930,449,689** | **$ 341,504,330** | **$ 95,955,495** | **$ 245,548,834** |

*Source: Heartland Headwaters Protection and Sustainability Act Annual Comprehensive Water Resources Report, PRWC, 2024.*

Consolidated Annual Report

March 1, 2025

# Florida Forever Work Plan

## *Annual Update 2025*

Southwest Florida
*Water Management District*

# Chapter 8 Florida Forever Work Plan

## Introduction

As required by Section 373.199 (7), Florida Statutes (F.S.), this report is the District's annual update of its original Florida Forever Work Plan. The District's approach to the Florida Forever Work Plan is to provide a discussion of the eligible projects the District could consider acquiring using funding under the Florida Forever Act, Section 259.105, Florida Statues (Florida Forever) over a five-year period using existing District funds or additional funds received through the sale of surplus lands. The District could also consider the acquisition of Florida Forever projects if it receives future funding under Florida Forever. Per Florida Statutes 373.139 (6) revenue received from the sale of surplus lands may not be used for any purpose except the purchase of other conservation lands. Additionally, the District's Governing Board Policy, Sale, Exchange or Conveyances of Interest in Lands by the District states that revenue derived from the sale of lands may not be used for any purpose except for the purchase of other lands related to the District's four areas of responsibility. This report depicts eligible properties on the maps included herein and reports on progress and changes since the report's last update.

Florida Forever initially provided for the issuance of up to $3 billion in bonds to state agencies, water management districts and local governments. Water management district funding is to be used for land acquisition (including less-than-fee purchases), water resource development, and water body restoration. Over the life of the program, at least 50 percent of the funds allocated to the water management districts must be spent on land acquisition.

This annual update is organized into nine sections including the introduction, modifications to last year's Florida Forever Work Plan, land acquisitions completed during fiscal year 2024 (FY2024), restoration projects, land acquisition status, lands surplused during FY2024, summaries of land management activities, progress of funding, staffing and resource management activities, and project maps that identify lands for potential acquisition by planning region.

Florida Forever funds must contribute to achieving the following goals as set forth in Section 259.105, F.S.:

- Enhance the coordination and completion of land acquisition projects.
- Increase the protection of Florida's biodiversity at the species, natural community, and landscape levels.
- Protect, restore, and maintain the quality and natural functions of land, water, and wetland systems of the state.
- Ensure that sufficient quantities of water are available to meet the current and future needs of natural systems and the citizens of the state.
- Increase natural resource-based public recreational and educational opportunities. Preserve significant archaeological or historic sites.
- Increase the amount of forestland available for sustainable management of natural resources.
- Increase the amount of open space available in urban areas.

The District used funds received through the sale of surplus lands that included Florida Forever funding to support land acquisition in FY2024. This annual update has been prepared with the anticipation of no new Florida Forever funds through the planning period of fiscal year 2025-2026.

A summary of past Florida Forever expenditures is depicted in Table 1. The District fully utilized its total allocation of $233.57 million of Florida Forever funding by FY2023. The District expended about 6 percent of the Florida Forever funding on water resources development projects and about 94 percent on land acquisition.

**Table 1. Past Expenditure through FY2023–2024 (Expressed in Millions of Dollars)**

| Fiscal Year | Water Resource Development | Land Acquisition | Cumulative Expenditures |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2023 & Prior | $13.44 | $220.13 | $233.57 |
| 2024 | $0 | $0 | $0 |
| 2025 | $0 | $0 | $0 |
| **Total Florida Forever Expenditures** | **$13.44** | **$220.13** | **$233.57** |

## Project Modifications and Additions to the Florida Forever Work Plan

Modifications to the Florida Forever Work Plan in FY2024 include additions and deletions to the proposed acquisition project areas. A total of 1,305 acres were added as proposed fee simple acquisitions, and a total of 2,908 acres were added as proposed less-than-fee acquisitions. Approximately 9,245 acres were removed from the proposed fee simple and approximately 5,177 acres were removed from the proposed less- than- fee because the land has been acquired by other conservation entities or by the District. These modifications resulted in a net reduction of 10,209 acres in the proposed acquisition project areas. Acres owned, managed, and surplused by the District along with funds budgeted were also updated.

## Land Acquisitions in FY2024

In FY2024, the District acquired a conservation easement including approximately 743 acres within the Lower Peace River Corridor Project and a fee simple acquisition of 192 acres in the Two Mile Prairie Project. Both acquisitions are reflected below in Table 2.

## Restoration Projects

The Lake Hancock restoration project is completed and there are no restoration projects for which Florida Forever funding is being utilized.

## District Land Acquisition Status

The following table depicts all lands owned in fee simple and less-than-fee (LTF) interests acquired by the District as of September 30, 2024.

**Table 2. District Land Acquisition Status, Rounded Acreages Derived Using Geographic Information System.**

| Project | Fee Acres | LTF Acres | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Alafia River Corridor | 4,498 | 1,498 | 5,996 |
| Alafia River Reserve | 334 | | 334 |
| Annutteliga Hammock | 1,736 | 465 | 2,201 |
| Bright Hour Watershed | | 32,247 | 32,247 |
| Brooker Creek Headwaters Nature Preserve | 1,039 | 67 | 1,106 |
| Brooker Creek Preserve | 1,635 | | 1,635 |
| Charlotte Harbor State Park | 7,421 | | 7,421 |
| Chassahowitzka River & Coastal Swamps | 5,742 | 10 | 5,752 |
| Chito Branch Reserve | 5,389 | | 5,389 |
| Cliff Stephens Park | 43 | | 43 |
| Conner Preserve | 3,486 | | 3,486 |
| Crooked Lake | 3,586 | | 3,586 |
| Cypress Creek Preserve | 8,506 | 815 | 9,321 |
| Data Collection Sites | 19 | 243 | 262 |
| Edward Medard Park and Reservoir | 1,291 | | 1,291 |
| Edward W. Chance Reserve - Coker Prairie Tract | 2,136 | | 2,136 |
| Edward W. Chance Reserve - Gilley Creek Tract | 5,798 | 58 | 5,856 |
| Flying Eagle Preserve | 16,304 | 133 | 16,437 |
| Green Swamp Wilderness Preserve - Colt Creek State Park | 5,068 | | 5,068 |
| Green Swamp Wilderness Preserve - Green Swamp East | 67,192 | 4,531 | 71,723 |
| Green Swamp Wilderness Preserve - Little Withlacoochee | 4,622 | 19,545 | 24,167 |
| Green Swamp Wilderness Preserve - Green Swamp West | 36,655 | 4,974 | 41,629 |
| Gum Slough - Half Moon | 4,096 | 5,831 | 9,927 |
| Hálpata Tastanaki Preserve | 8,171 | 4 | 8,175 |
| Hidden Lake | 589 | | 589 |
| Hillsborough River Corridor | 276 | 79 | 355 |
| Horse Creek | | 4,365 | 4,365 |
| Jack Creek | 1,349 | | 1,349 |
| Lake Hancock - Circle B Bar Reserve | 1,268 | 4 | 1,272 |
| Lake Hancock - Marshall Hampton Reserve | 1,097 | | 1,097 |
| Lake Hancock Project | 3,754 | 1,180 | 4,934 |

| Project | Fee Acres | LTF Acres | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Lake Lowry | 390 | | 390 |
| Lake Marion Creek Horseshoe Scrub Tract | 290 | | 290 |
| Lake Panasoffkee | 9,767 | 6,907 | 16,674 |
| Lake Tarpon Outfall Canal | 161 | 101 | 262 |
| Lake Tarpon Sink Enclosure | 10 | | 10 |
| Lake Thonotosassa | 144 | | 144 |
| Little Manatee River - Southfork Tract | 971 | | 971 |
| Little Manatee River - Upper and Lower Tracts | 6,596 | | 6,596 |
| Lower Cypress Creek | | 290 | 290 |
| Lower Hillsborough Wilderness Preserve | 16,064 | 3 | 16,067 |
| Lower Manatee River Floodway | 42 | | 42 |
| Lower Peace River Corridor | | 743 | 743 |
| Lower Peace River Corridor – Deep Creek | 2,084 | | 2,084 |
| Masaryktown Canal | 168 | 2 | 170 |
| Myakka Conservation Area | 4,747 | 18,283 | 23,030 |
| Myakka Conservation Area - Lewis Longino Preserve | | 3,419 | 3,419 |
| Myakka River - Deer Prairie Creek Preserve | 6,136 | | 6,136 |
| Myakka River - Schewe Tract | 3,993 | | 3,993 |
| Myakka River State Park - Myakka Prairie Tract | 8,248 | | 8,248 |
| Myakka State Forest | 8,565 | 15 | 8,580 |
| Panasoffkee/Outlet Tract | 813 | | 813 |
| Peace Creek Canal System | 3 | 18 | 21 |
| Peck Sink | | 10 | 10 |
| Potts Preserve | 9,375 | 3 | 9,378 |
| Prairie/Shell Creek | 609 | | 609 |
| Rainbow River Corridor | 112 | 12 | 124 |
| RV Griffin Reserve | 5,922 | | 5,922 |
| Sawgrass Lake | 389 | | 389 |
| Starkey Wilderness Preserve | 19,469 | 175 | 19,644 |
| Structure Sites/Office Sites | 100 | 58 | 158 |
| SWIM Conservation Easements | | 171 | 171 |
| Tampa Bay Estuarine Ecosystem (TBE) - Clam Bayou | 84 | | 84 |

| Project | Fee Acres | LTF Acres | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| TBE- Frog Creek | 119 | | 119 |
| TBE- Fred and Ida Schultz Preserve | 132 | | 132 |
| TBE- Jeanie and Pete Johnson Nature Preserve | 84 | | 84 |
| TBE– Rock Ponds | 2,530 | | 2,530 |
| TBE- Terra Ceia Preserve State Park | 1,463 | | 1,463 |
| TBE – Huber Tract | 287 | | 287 |
| Tampa Bypass and Harney Canals | 1,379 | 323 | 1,702 |
| Three Sisters Springs | 57 | | 57 |
| Tsala Apopka Outfall Canal | 3 | 141 | 144 |
| Two Mile Prairie - Tsala Apopka Connector | 462 | | 462 |
| Two-Mile Prairie - Withlacoochee State Forest | 3,090 | | 3,090 |
| Upper Hillsborough Preserve | 9,460 | 7,915 | 17,375 |
| Upper Myakka River Watershed | 2,357 | 2,264 | 4,621 |
| Upper Saddle Creek | 37 | | 37 |
| Weeki Wachee Springs State Park | 539 | | 539 |
| Weekiwachee Preserve | 12,820 | 2 | 12,822 |
| Wysong Park | 4 | 1 | 5 |
| **Total** | **343,175** | **116,905** | **460,080** |

## Surplus Lands

The following table depicts surplus lands sold by the District during FY2024.

**Table 3. Surplus Lands, Acreage Derived Using Geographic Information System Software.**

| Project | County | Acres Surplused | Compensation | Parent Tract Funding Source | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Annutteliga Hammock (multiple parcels) | Hernando | 31.90 | $604,759 | *WMLTF * P2000 *FF | Deed Restricted |
| Tampa Bypass Canal | Hillsborough | 0.10 | $15,600 | *TBD | Fee Simple |
| | | 30.63 | $587,359 | | |

* Water Management Lands Trust Fund (WMLTF), *Preservation 2000 (P2000), *Florida Forever (FF), * To Be Determined (TBD).

## Land Management Activities

The District manages its properties using a variety of tools including but not limited to direct management as well as utilizing management partnerships that match land use to agency

mission. For example, Colt Creek State Park was purchased with District, State, and Polk County Florida Forever funds, and is managed by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection as a state park. Hunting at the Green Swamp is via a wildlife management area agreement with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Additionally, the District's conservation lands have land management plans that outline the management goals and objectives for the property as well as authorized activities. The following is a brief description of the land projects and land management activities for properties owned by the District.

***Alafia River (including Alafia River Corridor, Chito Branch Reserve and Alafia River Reserve)*** – The Alafia River Corridor Project contains parcels of land along the Alafia River from Bell Shoals Road extending upstream to the headwaters of the Alafia River and spans both Hillsborough and Polk Counties. The Alafia River's natural floodplain is a mixture of hardwood swamps and upland hammocks. Acquisition of the land within Hillsborough County was co-funded by the District and Hillsborough County with fee simple title held entirely by the District. In 1996, the District entered into a lease agreement with Hillsborough County that designated the County as manager of lands jointly purchased by the County and the District. Recreational improvements provided by Hillsborough County include hiking trails, equestrian trails, fishing, and primitive and group camping. Project lands in Hillsborough County acquired by the District for the C.W. "Bill" Young Reservoir are jointly managed by the District and Tampa Bay Water and are known as the Chito Branch Reserve. In Polk County, the District and Polk County have co-funded and co-own the Alafia River Reserve. Polk County is responsible for a park site on the property and the District is responsible for resource management and trail development on the property. Parcels within this project with less-than-fee ownership are monitored by the District pursuant to the corresponding conservation easements.

***Annutteliga Hammock*** – The Annutteliga Hammock project is in Hernando County generally within a regional area located between Homosassa Springs to the northwest, the Withlacoochee State Forest to the northeast, Brooksville to the southeast, and Weeki Wachee Springs to the southwest. Since lands acquired to date are for the most part not contiguous, recreational use is limited to foot traffic and equestrian riding on more than eight (8) miles of marked trails. Land management activities consist of security, prescribed burning, resource monitoring, exotic species control, and public use/recreational development and conservation easement monitoring.

***Bright Hour Watershed*** – The Bright Hour Watershed project is within DeSoto County and consists of extensive, high-quality prairie, hammock, marsh, and slough systems that provide water management benefits. Hydrologic values include protection of the headwaters of several important creek systems, such as Prairie and Shell creeks. Water storage, conveyance, and flood control are also provided by the watershed's poorly drained landscape. Habitat protection for numerous rare plant and animal species and globally imperiled, high quality natural communities is amply afforded by this project. Since the District does not hold fee simple title to lands within the project, land management activities consist of monitoring the terms of conservation easements located within the project. There is no public recreation available since these are conservation easements.

***Brooker Creek*** – The Brooker Creek project is located within Hillsborough and Pinellas counties. The Brooker Creek Headwaters Nature Preserve located in Hillsborough County remains as islands of undeveloped natural and rural lands in the changing landscape of northwest Hillsborough County. The lands include several extensive and interconnected cypress swamps which form the headwaters of Brooker Creek. These headwater swamps are an important water

resource feature on their own, as well as for their contribution to downstream elements of the creek. Lands within the Brooker Creek Headwaters are managed by Hillsborough County. The County has developed and made available several miles of unimproved interior roads that are open to hikers. The dominant habitats within the Brooker Creek Preserve, located in Pinellas County, include cypress and mixed hardwood swamps along portions of Brooker Creek. As part of the area's natural drainage system, Brooker Creek is an important water resource feature. Local low-lying areas are drained by the creek's system of sloughs and swamps. Floodplain vegetation offers treatment of runoff prior to discharging into Lake Tarpon. Lands within the Brooker Creek project in Pinellas County are managed by Pinellas County. Recreational improvements/amenities available on the tract include equestrian trails, hiking trails and an interpretive foot trail. The District's Land management activities primarily consist of coordination with the lead land managers from Pinellas County and easement monitoring.

***Charlotte Harbor State Park*** – The Charlotte Harbor project is located in Charlotte County and was jointly purchased by the District and the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund of the State of Florida. Lands within the project area are characterized by a variety of natural communities including isolated freshwater marshes, pine flatwoods, tidal marshes, and tidal swamps. Under a management agreement with the State, the Florida Division of Recreation and Parks is lead land manager for the project. Currently, the park offers hiking, birding, canoeing and boating. The District's land management activities consist primarily of coordination with the State Parks land manager.

***Chassahowitzka River and Coastal Swamps*** – The Chassahowitzka River project is located in western Citrus and Hernando Counties and contains the Chassahowitzka River and its expansive coastal swamps. This project includes nearly two miles along the Chassahowitzka River and the Chassahowitzka Springs, which form the river's headwaters. The project is contiguous with the federally owned Chassahowitzka National Wildlife Refuge to the west, the Withlacoochee State Forest's Homosassa Tract to the north and the Chassahowitzka Wildlife Management Area to the south. The project contains the Chassahowitzka River Campground, which is operated and maintained by a private vendor through an agreement between the vendor and the District. Recreational activities/amenities are primarily managed by the vendor and include canoe/boat launch, campsites (some with full hook-ups), canoe rental; picnic pavilions; restrooms; potable water; and primitive camp sites along the river. Land management activities are conducted by the District directly and consist of prescribed burning, resource monitoring, land maintenance, and recreational monitoring.

***Conner Preserve*** – The Conner Preserve project is in Pasco County and includes the upper portion of Cypress Creek, a regionally important surface water feature and tributary creek of the Hillsborough River. Cypress Creek originates near I-75, east of CR 581 and north of CR 578 and has a contributing watershed of 74.5 square miles. Land use of the project area is primarily agricultural, dominated by several large cattle ranches. Land cover consists primarily of improved pasture, rangeland, live oak hammocks, pine flatwoods, xeric oak/longleaf pine, cypress domes and freshwater marshes/wet prairies. The project includes several shallow lakes, many of which include extensive marshes or open prairies. The project area itself is located between the District's Cypress Creek Preserve and the Cross Bar/Al-Bar Ranch complex, representing two major public supply wellfields operated by Tampa Bay Water. Recreational activities/amenities available include 1.7 miles of hiking trails, and approximately 15 miles of shared-use trails for hiking, horseback riding and biking. Land management activities are conducted by the District directly and consist of prescribed burning, restoration, resource monitoring, and recreational development/monitoring.

***Crooked Lake/Bowlegs Creek*** –The Crooked Lake/Bowlegs Creek project, which is located in Polk County, represents opportunities taken to protect important water resource ecosystems in the east central region of the District. Acquisition benefits include protecting important areas and habitat for aquifer recharge associated with the Lake Wales Ridge (Ridge) and protecting the water quality of Crooked Lake and Lake Cinch and Lake Reedy which receive flow from Crooked Lake. Crooked Lake is one of the largest lakes within the Ridge and is the only designated Outstanding Florida Water (OFW) in Polk County. The lake has good water quality because of existing shoreline vegetation coverage and relatively little urbanization around it. Although the alteration of natural lands throughout the region has resulted in habitat loss and fragmentation, this tract represents one of the few larger tracts remaining relatively intact and more importantly, is the last remaining large tract adjacent to a large Ridge lake. Lands within the project are jointly owned by the District and Polk County, and contain easements acquired by the United States Department of Agriculture/Natural Resources Conservation Services. Polk County manages the property.

***Cypress Creek Preserve*** – Cypress Creek Preserve project, located in Pasco County, was purchased to provide flood protection, and to serve as a public water supply. Cypress Creek Well Field serves as an important source of water for the surrounding region and is managed by Tampa Bay Water. Cypress Creek Preserve includes the heavily forested Cypress Creek swamp, formed by its namesake, Cypress Creek, as it flows to the Hillsborough River. As part of the tributary system to the Hillsborough River, the project serves both a water detention role and a water conveyance role. Additionally, the low-lying swamps provide treatment and assimilation of runoff waters. Within the property, the creek threads its way through an expanse of cypress and hardwood forests. Recreational activities/amenities available include equestrian and primitive camping, 3.5 miles of hiking trails, and approximately 15.5 miles of shared-use trails for hiking, horseback riding and biking. Land management activities are conducted by the District and include prescribed burning, mowing, exotic species control, timber management, resource management, public use, recreation development/maintenance, and easement monitoring.

***Edward W. Chance Reserve*** – In 2007, the former Lake Manatee Reserve was dedicated and renamed as the Edward W. Chance Reserve project (Reserve), in honor of departed Governing Board member, Ed Chance. The Reserve, which is located in Manatee County, extends over a large area which includes narrow floodplain forests and native pine flatwoods surrounded by vast areas of rangeland, improved pastures, croplands, and citrus groves. Lands purchased within this project protect an existing regional water resource, protect floodplains, and restore adjoining wetlands in the headwaters. Recreational amenities available include more than 10 miles of hiking trails and approximately 13 miles of shared-use trails for hiking, horseback riding and biking. Management units include the Coker Prairie and Gilley Creek Tracts. Land management activities conducted by the District include prescribed burning, mowing, exotic species control, timber management, resource management, public use, and recreation development/maintenance.

***Flying Eagle Preserve*** – The Flying Eagle Preserve project is located within the Lake Tsala Apopka region of Citrus County. The property includes over five miles of frontage on the Withlacoochee River and its forested floodplain. A broad expanse of mixed hardwoods and cypress swamps cover the floodplain along the river. Areas of hammocks and xeric oak scrub lands occur throughout the higher elevations of the interior portions. Scattered marshes and wet prairies complete the landscape. The Tsala Apopka system is important because it has been described as a primary recharge area for the Floridan aquifer. Recreational activities/amenities

available at Flying Eagle include four (4) miles of hiking trails and approximately 18 miles of shared-use hiking, horseback riding and bicycle trails; and primitive and equestrian camping. Hunting opportunities are available on both the wildlife management area administered by Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and by the District on the Boy Scout tract. Land management activities are conducted by the District directly and include prescribed burning, resource monitoring, natural systems restoration, mowing, exotic species control, security patrol, public use and recreational development/maintenance.

***Green Swamp Wilderness Preserve (including Colt Creek State Park)*** – The Green Swamp Wilderness Preserve project, (GSWP) is the District's largest landholding and is located in Pasco, Lake, Sumter and Polk counties. The GSWP includes Green Swamp East, Green Swamp West, Hampton tract, Little Withlacoochee Tract which is managed by the Florida Forest Service, and Colt Creek State Park which is managed by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. The GSWP is the headwaters for four major rivers: the Withlacoochee River, the Ocklawaha River, the Hillsborough River, and the Peace River. Acquisitions have been directed at protecting the headwater swamps, floodplains, and watershed areas in the Green Swamp region and along the two principal river systems (Withlacoochee and Hillsborough). The Green Swamp and its river systems are of hydrologic importance to central Florida, both in terms of surface water and ground water resources. Swamps, floodplains, and headwaters serve as natural flood detention areas, while uplands serve as areas for recharge. Recreational amenities on District-managed lands in the GSWP include over 31 miles of hiking trails (including approximately 15 miles of the Florida National Scenic Trail) and 140 miles of shared-use hiking, horseback riding and bicycle trails. Primitive, equestrian and backcountry camping is also available. Hunting is managed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Land management activities are mostly conducted by the District directly and include prescribed burning, resource monitoring, natural systems restoration, mowing, exotic species control, security patrol, public use and recreational development/maintenance.

***Gum Slough*** – Lands within the Half Moon Gum Slough project is located within Marion and Sumter counties and are dominated by densely forested swamps and hammocks. Nearly 1,100 acres of forested hardwood swamps that line the Gum Slough run from a common boundary with state-owned lands to the east (Half-Moon Wildlife Management Area). The lands within the area offer protection to portions of the Withlacoochee River, Gum Slough, and its various hydrologic characteristics. Recreational amenities available on the property are shared-use trails available for hiking, bicycling and horseback riding. The property is managed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission as part of the Half Moon Wildlife Management Area. Land management activities are conducted by FWC and include prescribed burning, resource monitoring, natural systems restoration, mowing, exotic species control, security patrol, public use, and recreational development/maintenance. Parcels within this project with less-than-fee ownership are monitored by the District pursuant to the corresponding conservation easements.

***Hálpata Tastanaki Preserve*** – The Hálpata Tastanaki Preserve project, located in Marion County, adjoins the Marjorie Harris Carr Cross Florida Greenway to the north and Ross Prairie State Forest to the east. To the southwest is Two Mile Prairie tract of the Withlacoochee State Forest in Citrus County. Primary surface water features include five miles of floodplain along the northern bank of the Withlacoochee River. The isolated wetlands and marshes scattered throughout the site form the site's internal drainage system and provide local surface water storage. The site of Camp Izard, an important battleground during the second Seminole War, is located within the project lands. Recreational amenities include approximately four (4) miles of

hiking trails and more than 12 miles of shared-use trails for hiking, horseback riding and bicycling. Land management activities conducted by the District directly include prescribed burning, natural systems restoration, timber management, exotic species control, resource monitoring, recreation development/maintenance and security.

***Hidden Lake*** – The Hidden Lake project is in the west-central Pasco County and is part of an interconnected system of lakes within the Rocky Sink/Boggy Creek basin of the Bear Creek Watershed. District ownership ensures protection of the lake and the surrounding forested wetlands and will help preserve water quality within the lake and sub-basin. Recreational use of the lands within the project is extremely limited due to development in the vicinity and the fact that the lands are essentially a "lake swamp." Limited land management is required, primarily security patrols for illegal activities (dumping and archaeological digging) and is conducted by the District.

***Horse Creek*** – The Horse Creek project, located in DeSoto and Hardee Counties, provides a buffer for Horse Creek, a high water-quality tributary of the Peace River. The project supports additional resource protection for the Peace River watershed and riverine wetlands. The Horse Creek natural communities include mesic and wet flatwoods, bottomland forest, depression and basin marshes, mesic hammock, scrubby flatwoods, baygall, and blackwater streams. The natural uplands are principally longleaf-pine-dominated mesic flatwoods with pockets of scrubby flatwoods on the highest elevations and more hydric wet flatwoods in the ecotone between the uplands and the Horse Creek floodplain. Recreation is not available on this project as the District holds a less-than-fee interest. Land management activities primarily consist of monitoring the associated conservation easement.

***Jack Creek*** – The Jack Creek project, located in Highlands County, includes a significant part of Jack Creek, its 100-year floodplain, and outlying forested areas associated with the creek system and local lake outflow wetlands. The project area also includes portions of sand pine scrub and mixed scrub–among Florida's most unique threatened upland habitats. Jack Creek and its associated swamps serve as the natural drainage basin for the immediate area, as well as the water conveyance system for lakes in the area. The District has a management agreement with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) wherein FWC manages both recreation and natural resources on the land. Land management activities consist of prescribed burning, security patrols, public use/recreation maintenance and enhancements, exotic species control, mowing and monitoring for listed plants and animals. Recreational amenities/activities on the Jack Creek property are limited to 6.5 miles of hiking trails due to its remote location, environmental sensitivity, and access constraints.

***Lake Hancock*** – The Lake Hancock project is located southeast of the City of Lakeland and north of the City of Bartow in Polk County. At approximately 4,500 acres, Lake Hancock is the largest lake associated with the Peace River and is the third largest lake in Polk County. A statutorily mandated minimum flow has been established for the Peace River and accordingly requires development of a recovery strategy. The strategy for the upper Peace River is to restore storage in Lake Hancock and release some of the water during the dry season to help meet the minimum flow requirements. Historically, Lake Hancock fluctuated more than a foot higher than it has during the past several decades. Lands acquired within this project assist in reversing those impacts by replacing the District's outfall structure so that water levels can be maintained at historical levels until released to help meet the upper Peace River minimum flow. The District acquired fee simple and less- than -fee interests to accomplish the recovery strategy. Additionally, the District and Polk County jointly acquired Circle B Bar and entered into a management

agreement authorizing Polk County to manage the recreation and resources on both Circle B Bar Reserve and the Marshall Hampton Reserve. Recreational activities available at the Circle B Bar Reserve include a Discovery Center, six (6) miles of hiking trails and wildlife viewing opportunities. Recreational activities available on Marshall Hampton Reserve include 11 miles of hiking and equestrian trails and wildlife viewing opportunities.

***Lake Panasoffkee*** – The Lake Panasoffkee project is in Sumter County and is comprised of a large, contiguous area of relatively undisturbed lands along the eastern portion of Lake Panasoffkee's watershed. The project extends north to include Big Jones and Little Jones creeks, both tributaries to the lake. Wetlands dominate the area with extensive mixed hardwood and maple swamps, lake front marshes, and willow areas. Lands within the project protect local and regional drainage features and provide storage and detention of surface waters, while providing important wildlife resources. Recreational activities/amenities more than 15 miles of shared-use hiking, horseback riding and bicycle trails; group picnic pavilion, horse stalls, primitive and equestrian camping, restrooms, and a campground host site to help oversee the facilities. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission manages hunting on the property and the District directly manages the other natural resources. Land management activities include exotic species control, land security, cattle lease management, maintenance of facilities located on the property, public use, recreation development/maintenance, prescribed burning, timber management, natural systems restoration, resource, and conservation easement monitoring.

***Little Manatee River*** – The Little Manatee River project, located in Hillsborough and Manatee Counties, contains parcels of land along the Little Manatee riverine corridor from downstream estuarine waters to the river's headwaters. Dense forest dominates the land along the river's floodplain with the adjoining uplands being comprised of a mixture of pine flatwoods, mixed hardwoods, and shrub and brushlands. The District has an interlocal agreement with Hillsborough County wherein the County has lead management responsibility for lands jointly purchased by Hillsborough County and the District located within Hillsborough County. Lands within Manatee County, known as the Southfork Tract, are directly managed by the District, and include approximately six (6) miles of hiking trails. Recreational improvements/amenities made available by Hillsborough County include canoe landing sites adjacent to primitive campsites along the river, fishing, and hiking trails. District land management activities on the Southfork Tract consist of road stabilization, prescribed burning, natural systems restoration, mowing and recreational development/maintenance.

***Lower Hillsborough Wilderness Preserve*** – The Lower Hillsborough Wilderness Preserve project located in Hillsborough County includes several miles of the Hillsborough River and its broad flood plain. The project contains important areas of natural flood conveyance and storage associated with the Hillsborough River, the Tampa Bay Bypass Canal and levee system, and houses the Morris Bridge Wellfield. Recreational activities available include five developed park sites managed by Hillsborough County with such amenities as hiking, paved and off-road bicycle trails, picnic pavilions, restrooms, boat launches and visitor centers. The District has also made available an additional 25 miles of equestrian trails and two primitive camping areas. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission oversees the Lower Hillsborough wildlife management area which offers family hunting opportunities. Other land management activities conducted by the District directly include exotic species control, land security, public use and recreation development/maintenance, prescribed burning, timber management, wildlife management, natural systems restoration, and mowing.

***Lower Peace River Corridor (including Deep Creek)*** – Located in Hardee, DeSoto and Charlotte County, the Lower Peace River Corridor project includes an extensive network of tributaries, floodplain swamps and connected headwaters. Recreational activities available include, approximately two (2) miles of hiking trails; more than six (6) miles of shared-use trails for hiking and horseback riding. Land Management activities are conducted by the District directly and include prescribed burning, mowing, exotic species control, recreational amenity development/monitoring, and security. Parcels within this project with less-than-fee ownership are monitored by the District pursuant to the corresponding conservation easements.

***Myakka River/Deer Prairie Creek/Myakka State Forest*** – A majority of the lands within the Myakka River project were jointly purchased with the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund of the State of Florida (Myakka State Forest) and Sarasota County (Deer Prairie Creek). Lands within the project area are characterized by a variety of natural lands and lands altered by development including mesic pine flatwoods, oak hammocks, shell mounds, prairie hammock and improved pasture. The project area includes portions of the Myakka River and its floodplain forests. Lands included within the Myakka State Forest boundary are managed by the Florida Forest Service (FFS). The FFS has made the following recreational improvements/amenities available on the property: shared-use trails for bicycling, horseback riding and hiking, and primitive camping. Lands within Deer Prairie Creek are jointly managed by the District and Sarasota County with the County managing recreation and the District managing the natural resources. Recreation on Deer Prairie Creek includes over 70 miles of unpaved and paved hiking and bicycling trails, canoe launch, fishing pier, picnic facilities, and restrooms. Land management activities include fencing, road maintenance, exotic species control, public use, prescribed burning and mowing.

***Myakka Conservation Area (including Myakka Prairie)*** – The Myakka Conservation Area project consists of oak/cabbage palm hammock dominated banks along the southern portions of the creek, isolated marshes and improved pastures within the upland portions and mixed natural lands scattered throughout. The property is characterized by the region's flat topography and includes landscapes of extensive shrub and brushlands, pine flatwoods and pastures. Numerous isolated freshwater marshes dot the site's flatlands. The main surface water feature, Myakkahatchee Creek, is a 21.5-mile-long tributary creek of the Myakka River. Approximately 4,700 acres are managed by Sarasota County. The Myakka Prairie is adjacent to lands within the Myakka River State Park and is managed by the Division of Recreation and Parks. Recreational development/amenities on the property made available by the State Park include hiking, bicycling and horseback riding trails. Land management activities conducted directly by the District include conservation easement monitoring.

***Panasoffkee/Outlet Tract*** – Lands within the Panasoffkee/Outlet Project extend over three miles along the eastern floodplain of the Withlacoochee River in Sumter County. For the most part, the areas are representative of the river's five-year floodplain, which include the regularly flooded cypress and mixed hardwood forests, as well as some areas of temperate hammock. Preservation of these lands along the river will maintain their function and protect forested swamps important to the water resources and water quality of the river system. Recreational activities on the property include approximately three (3) miles of hiking trails, fishing, and boat access. Land management activities conducted directly by the District include prescribed burning, mowing, road maintenance, exotic species control, cattle lease management, public use, and recreation development/ maintenance.

***Potts Preserve*** – The Potts Preserve project is located within the Lake Tsala Apopka region in eastern Citrus County and includes portions of the Hernando Pool. The Preserve's eastern boundary is formed along 5.5 miles of the Withlacoochee River and its associated floodplain. The lands are a mixture of lakes, ponds, and marshes surrounding islands of oak forests and lands partially cleared for agriculture. The Tsala Apopka system is considered important as an area of recharge for the Floridan aquifer. Recreational activities/amenities available include approximately 12 miles of hiking trails, nine (9) miles of shared-use trails for hiking, horseback riding and bicycling, equestrian, primitive, and backcountry camping. Hunting is also allowed on the property and is managed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Land management activities conducted by the District directly include public use and recreation development/maintenance, land security, prescribed burning, natural systems restoration, and mowing.

***Prairie/Shell Creek*** – The Prairie/Shell Creek project is envisioned as a greenway corridor from the mouth of the Peace River to the District's Bright Hour Watershed project to the north and to the State's Babcock Ranch to the south. The District to date has acquired the Prairie Shell Creek Preserve in northern Charlotte county along the Peace River. The project protects a portion of the Peace River shoreline as well as provides a place to attenuate floodwaters along the Prairie and Shell Creeks. Recreational activities/amenities available on the Preserve include approximately five (5) miles of hiking trails. Land management activities conducted by the District directly include prescribed burning, resource monitoring, resource protection, and recreational development.

***Rainbow River Ranch*** – The District's Rainbow River Ranch project is located along the eastern bank of the Rainbow River below the head spring. The property is located in Marion County adjacent to the Rainbow Springs State Park. Rainbow Springs is the seventh largest first magnitude spring in Florida and is the primary source of water for the Rainbow River which flows for approximately 5.7 miles until it discharges into the Withlacoochee River. The District's Rainbow River Ranch tract comprises about 16 percent of the eastern bank of the Rainbow River and is the last major undeveloped property along the eastern bank of this natural river corridor. Its shoreline includes marshes, wetlands, and giant bald cypress trees. The property is managed by the Division of Recreation and Parks as part of Rainbow Springs State Park. The District is developing two projects to restore natural communities and improve water quality.

***RV Griffin Reserve (including Lewis Longino Preserve)*** – The RV Griffin Reserve project is in DeSoto and Sarasota counties and includes lands supporting and surrounding the existing facilities at the Peace River/Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority reservoirs and water treatment plant. Lands in the project area include mixed hardwood forests along the river; however, a majority of the lands consist of pine flatwoods, rangelands, pastures, and pine plantations. The Reserve supports and protects present potable water supplies. The Water Supply Authority manages the approximately 6,000 acres owned by the District in fee simple. Recreational activities/amenities include shared-use trails available for bicycling, horseback riding and hiking. The District monitors a conservation easement known as the Lewis Longino Preserve.

***Sawgrass Lake*** – The Sawgrass Lake project is located in Pinellas County. The acquisition of the Sawgrass Lake project began in the 1970s to provide flood protection to the City of Pinellas Park. A water control structure was built to facilitate drainage canal improvements and to maintain desirable water level fluctuations in Sawgrass Lake and the surrounding swamp. The lake and swamp system provides natural water treatment to enhance the quality of water draining to Tampa

Bay. In 1976, the District, Pinellas County, and the Pinellas County School Board cooperatively agreed to establish a county park and an environmental education center on the site. The property is managed by Pinellas County and Pinellas County School Board. Pinellas County has developed a wide array of recreational amenities on the property including restrooms, potable water, elevated boardwalks, hiking trail, nature center, outdoor interpretive displays, and they offer interpretive tours by reservation. The School Board has established an environmental education program onsite that serves area students from kindergarten through fifth grade.

***Starkey Wilderness Preserve*** – The Starkey Wilderness Preserve project is located in southwestern Pasco County. The Starkey Wilderness Preserve protects portions of Five-Mile Creek, Pithlachascotee River, Anclote River, South Branch, Sandy Branch, and Cross Cypress Branch. The property consists of a combination of pine flatwoods, sand pine scrub, oak forests, scattered marshes, and cypress swamps. The Starkey Wellfield and part of the J. B. Starkey Wilderness Park (Starkey Wilderness Park) are located within the project limits. Recreation at the Starkey Wilderness Park is managed by Pasco County, while the District manages recreation on the Serenova Tract. Recreational activities/amenities available at Starkey Wilderness Park include paved bicycle trails, equestrian trails, hiking/backpacking trails, cabin rental, primitive camping, horse corral, picnic pavilions, self-guided educational nature trail, and restrooms. Recreational amenities on the Serenova tract include approximately 16 miles of shared-use hiking, horseback riding, and bicycle trails; and equestrian and primitive camping. Land management activities conducted by the District on the Preserve include prescribed burning, natural systems restoration, exotic species control, land security, recreational development/management, and mowing.

***Tampa Bay Estuarine Ecosystem*** – The Tampa Bay Estuarine Ecosystem project spanning Hillsborough, Pinellas, and Manatee Counties, furthers the Tampa Bay Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) plan. Approximately half the project consists of mangroves and salt marsh which dominate the northern project area along Bishop Harbor and the western area associated with the tidal bays of Moses Hole, Clambar Bay and Williams Bayou. The natural upland and wetland habitats within the project area provide natural water quality treatment of overland flows before reaching the receiving waters of Tampa Bay. A majority of lands within the Tampa Bay Estuarine Ecosystem project were jointly purchased with the State or other local governments. Under an agreement with the State, the Division of Recreation and Parks is the lead land manager for Terra Ceia Preserve State Park. Hillsborough County manages the Ekker Preserve and Schultz Preserve tracts; Pinellas County manages the Clam Bayou tract; and the District manages the Rock Ponds, Frog Creek, and Terra Ceia/Huber tracts. Land management activities conducted by the District on the Rock Ponds, Frog Creek and Huber include prescribed burning, natural systems restoration, exotic species control, land security, recreational development/management, and mowing.

***Two Mile Prairie Tract*** –Two-Mile Prairie tract project, located in Citrus County lies along the southern bank of the Withlacoochee River at the northern end of the Tsala Apopka Lake system and includes a variety of upland plant communities characterized by well-drained soils. Wetlands and surface water features include several miles of the Withlacoochee River and isolated depression marshes. The project protects natural floodplain areas along portions of the southern bank of the river, while adjoining uplands provide buffer areas to protect the river from high intensity land uses. The majority of lands within this project were jointly purchased between the District and the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund of the State of Florida (TIITF). Under a management agreement with the TIITF, the Florida Forest Service (FFS) is the lead land

manager and Two Mile Prairie is managed as part of the Withlacoochee State Forest. Recreational improvements/amenities made available by the FFS include a trail network north of CR-491 for bicycling and horseback riding, canoeing and non-gas-powered boating, fishing, primitive camping, picnicking, and 2.8 miles of registered “trail walkers” trail. Land management activities consist of monitoring and coordinating with the FFS regarding their management of the tract.

***Two Mile Connector –*** The Two Mile Prairie/Tsala Apopka Connector project is located in northeastern Citrus County with Two Mile Prairie State Forest to the northwest and Potts Preserve to the southeast. This project provides a connection between the Tsala Apopka and Two-Mile Prairie projects allowing for conveyance of surface waters and floodwater attenuation. Natural communities include basin marsh, scrub, and xeric and mesic hammock. Land management activities conducted by the District directly include resource monitoring and land maintenance. At this time there are no developed trails available on this tract, but it is open to the public for passive recreation.

***Upper Hillsborough Preserve*** – The Upper Hillsborough project, located in Pasco and Polk counties, includes the headwaters of the Hillsborough River, and lies just south of a unique hydrologic feature - the Withlacoochee River/Hillsborough River overflow. At this point, a portion of the flow of the Withlacoochee River naturally conveys to the Hillsborough River north of U.S. Highway 98. Lands within this project protect the hydraulic features of the river system along with extensive areas of forested wetland habitats. Recreational activities/amenities available include non-potable water; approximately nine (9) miles of hiking trails; more than 30 miles of shared-use hiking, horseback riding and bicycling trails; primitive, back country, and equestrian camping, and fishing. Hunting is managed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission through a wildlife management area agreement. Land management activities conducted by the District directly include prescribed burning, exotic species control, public use and recreational development/maintenance, land security and natural systems restoration.

***Upper Lake Marion Creek Watershed*** – The Upper Lake Marion Creek Watershed project, located in Polk County, is a relatively undisturbed creek system of the Upper Lake Marion Creek Watershed flows north out of Lake Marion, joins Snell Creek, and ultimately flows southeast to Lake Hatchineha. The entire Lake Marion Creek basin extends over 18,300 acres and includes portions of both the Southwest and South Florida water management districts. This district has an agreement with the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) to assist in the management of this land since the property’s proximity to SFWMD-managed lands enables the SFWMD to manage the property more cost-effectively. District land management consists primarily of coordination with the SFWMD.

***Upper Myakka River Watershed*** – The Upper Myakka River Watershed project is in Manatee County and includes forested floodplain swamps and marshes along the upper portions of the Myakka River watershed. The headwater swamps function as retention and detention areas for local drainage. Wetland forests and adjoining uplands provide treatment of surface runoff. Access to the property is limited to hiking and fishing since the project lands are predominately wetland, which is not conducive to recreational trail development, however there are two (2) miles of hiking trails available. Land Management conducted by the District directly includes natural systems restoration, exotic species control, land security, public use and recreational development/maintenance, prescribed burning, road maintenance and mowing. Additionally, activities include monitoring of conservation easements.

***Upper Saddle Creek Corridor*** – The Upper Saddle Creek Corridor project is in Polk County between the state-owned Tenoroc Fish Management Area and Lake Hancock. The property lies upstream of Lake Hancock and the upper Peace River and adjoins Saddle Creek Park which is owned by Polk County. The property is part of and provides protection to the floodplain of Saddle Creek, the major tributary to Lake Hancock. The District and Polk County jointly acquired and co-own the project lands, and Polk County is responsible for the management of the property.

***Weekiwachee Preserve*** – The Weekiwachee Preserve project is located in Hernando and Pasco counties and includes several miles of the Weeki Wachee River and extensive areas of hardwood swamps and hammocks. The Weeki Wachee Swamp extends several miles along the coastal portions of Hernando County and represents a regionally important wildlife area. The riverine swamps are environmentally sensitive areas, which play an important role in the river's conveyance system and in flood and storm abatement. As they approach their outfall at the Gulf of Mexico, the Weeki Wachee and Mud rivers form a complex system of productive estuarine marshes and lowlands. Recreational activities/amenities include approximately six (6) miles of hiking trails and six (6) miles of shared-use hiking and bicycling trails, and fishing. The Preserve is open to vehicular access two Saturdays of every month. Hunting is managed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission through a wildlife management area agreement. Land management activities at the Preserve conducted by the District directly include natural systems restoration, exotic species control, security, public use and recreational development/maintenance, prescribed burning, road maintenance and mowing. The Weeki Wachee Springs State Park is adjacent and is managed by the Florida Park Service offering boat tours, canoe/kayak launch, interpretive opportunities, and swimming.

## Progress of Funding, Staffing and Resource Management

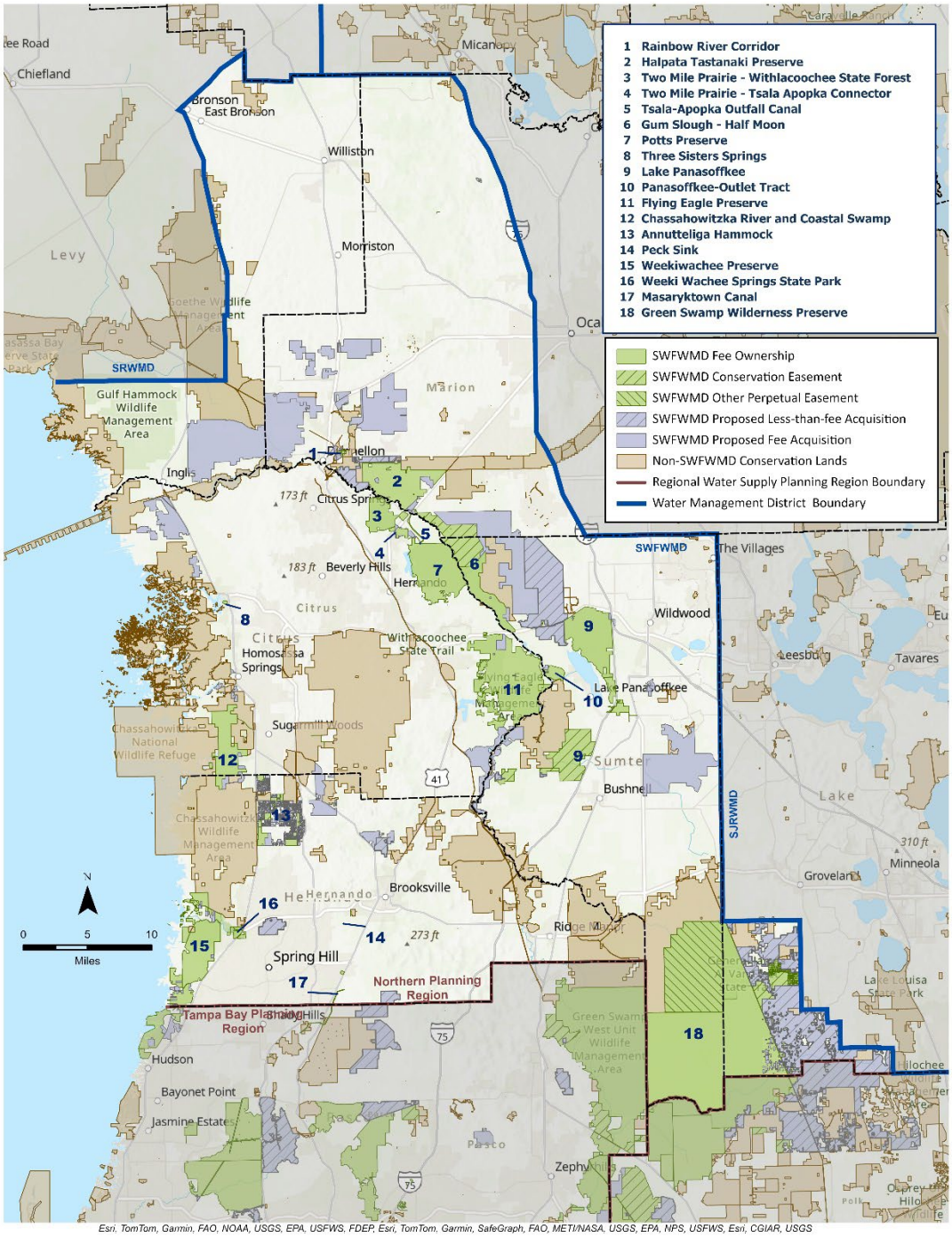
The following table depicts the District's budget for funding and staffing for resource management and public use.

**Table 4. Progress of Funding, Staffing, and Resource Management.**

| Budget Area | FY2021 Budget | FY2022 Budget | FY2023 Budget | FY2024 Budget | FY2025 Budget |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| FTEs | 35 | 37 | 36 | 34 | 35 |
| Resource Management and Public Use | $5,020,227 | $5,379,849 | $5,860,175 | $5,901,567 | $6,121,358 |

## Florida Forever Land Acquisition Projects

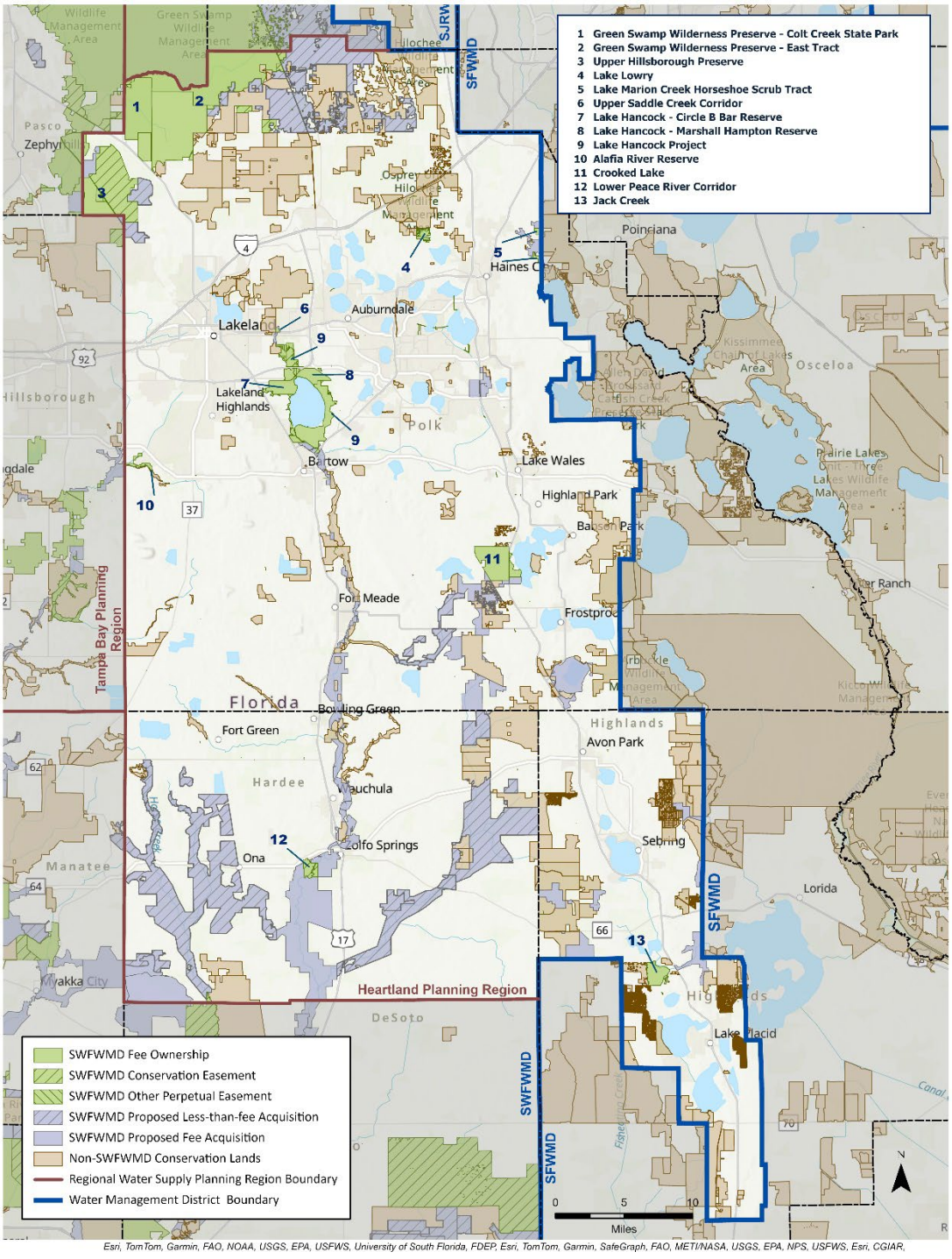
### Figure 2. Northern Planning Region Map.




The lands eligible for acquisition within the Northern Planning Region are identified as follows:

- Approximately 81,100 acres identified for potential fee simple acquisition
- Approximately 42,100 acres identified for potential acquisition through less-than-fee techniques

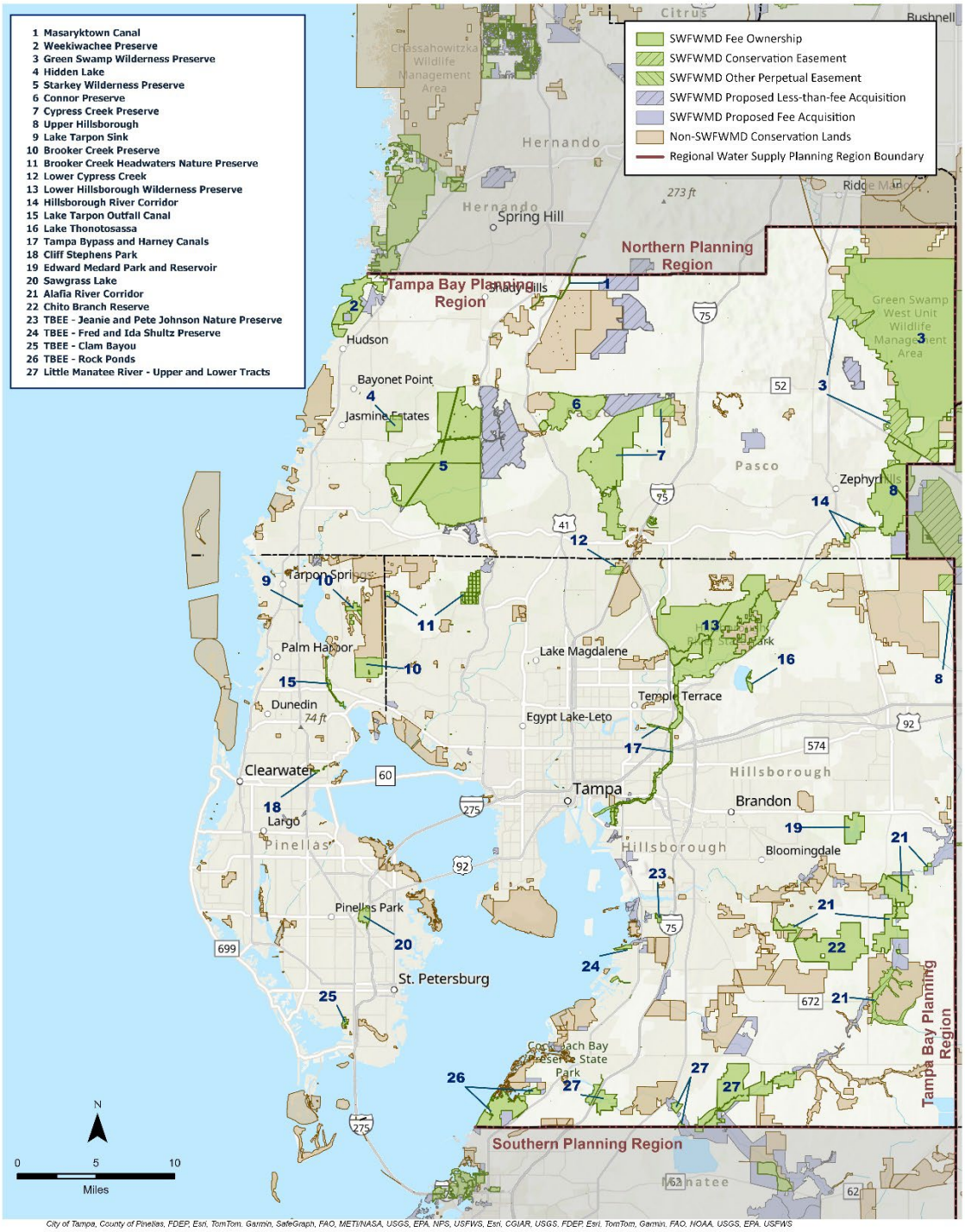
**Figure 3. Heartland Planning Region Map.**




The lands eligible for acquisition within the Heartland Planning Region are identified as follows:

- Approximately 50,100 acres identified for potential fee simple acquisition
- Approximately 82,700 acres identified for potential acquisition through less-than-fee techniques

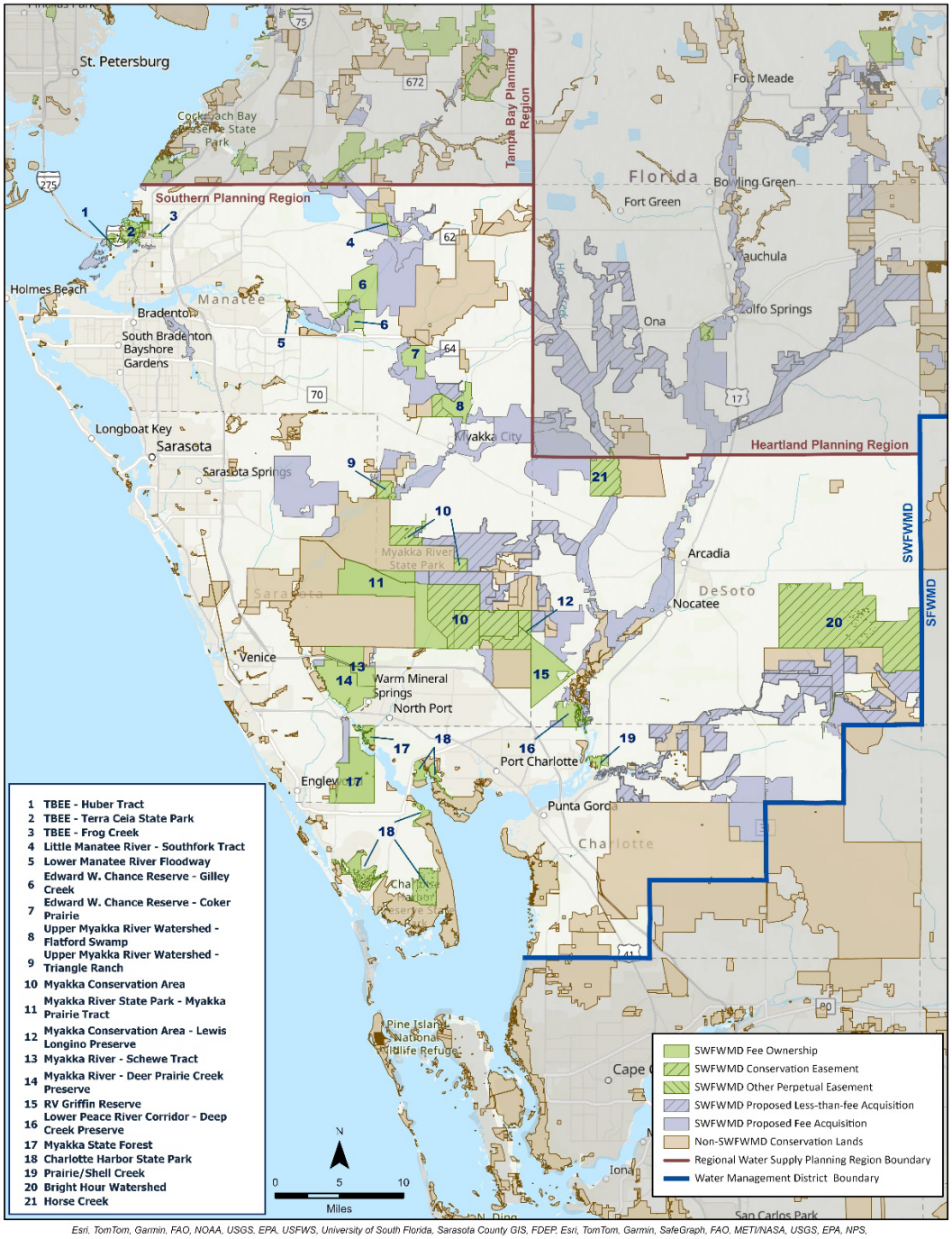
**Figure 4. Tampa Bay Planning Region Map.**




The lands eligible for acquisition within the Tampa Bay Planning Region are identified as follows:

- Approximately 13,000 acres identified for potential fee simple acquisition
- Approximately 16,300 acres identified for potential acquisition through less-than-fee techniques

**Figure 5. Southern Planning Region Map.**




The lands eligible for acquisition within the Southern Planning Region are identified as follows:

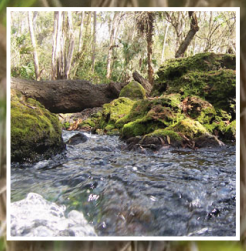
- Approximately 100,100 acres identified for potential fee simple acquisition
- Approximately 51,800 acres identified for potential acquisition through less-than-fee techniques

Base maps provided by *University of South Florida, FDEP, Esri, HERE, Garmin, SafeGraph, FAO, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, Esri, CGIAR, USGS, Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, EPA*.

Consolidated Annual Report

March 1, 2025

# 2024 Mitigation Donation Annual Report



Southwest Florida Water Management District

Southwest Florida Water Management District

2379 Broad Street, Brooksville, Florida 34604-6899
(352) 796-7211 or 1-800-423-1476 (FL only)
WaterMatters.org

An Equal Opportunity Employer

**Bartow Office**
170 Century Boulevard
Bartow, Florida 33830-7700
(863) 534-1448 or
1-800-492-7862 (FL only)

**Sarasota Office**
78 Sarasota Center Boulevard
Sarasota, Florida 34240-9770
(941) 377-3722 or
1-800-320-3503 (FL only)

**Tampa Office**
7601 U.S. 301 North
Tampa, Florida 33637-6759
(813) 985-7481 or
1-800-836-0797 (FL only)



January 6, 2025

The Honorable Ron DeSantis
Governor of Florida
Plaza Level 05, The Capitol
400 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0001

Subject: Annual Report on Cash Payments as Mitigation

Dear Governor DeSantis:

This letter is written pursuant to Section 373.414(1)(b)(2), Florida Statutes, which requires that each water management district report annually to the Executive Office of the Governor "all cash donations accepted under subparagraph 1 during the preceding calendar year for wetland mitigation purposes."

During the reporting period, the Southwest Florida Water Management District received no cash payments as mitigation, pursuant to 373.414(1)(b), Florida, Statutes.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Armstrong, P.G.
Executive Director

Cc: Secretary Alexis A. Lambert, DEP

Southwest Florida
*Water Management District*

# 2025–2029 Strategic Plan

# Message from the Chair

The Southwest Florida Water Management District has been developing an annual Strategic Plan for more than three decades to provide clear direction for the District's mission and priorities by highlighting a plan of action over a five-year period to focus District resources.

Our mission of protecting water resources, minimizing flood risks, and ensuring the public's water needs are met, sets the framework for four core mission goals: Water Supply, Water Quality, Natural Systems and Flood Protection. To meet these goals, District programs and projects support 12 Strategic Initiatives.

One of our biggest challenges has been continuing to ensure that we have adequate water supplies to meet current and anticipated growth. Our Alternative Water Supplies Strategic Initiative focuses on partnering with regional entities to develop alternative water supply sources. As a result, the Governing Board has prioritized more than $600 million in cooperative funding with the major regional water supply authorities in our region to develop alternative water supplies to meet the projected population growth. Another prioritization identified in the plan is potable reuse as a future supply source. The District has been investing in the advancement of this technology for several years through funding various projects and pilot studies.

Our region faced a new challenge in 2024 with three back-to-back hurricanes that brought record rainfall and historic flooding. The District is continuing to analyze the impacts from this unprecedented hurricane season and will be making recommendations that will likely impact our Flood Protection Strategic Initiatives in future Strategic Plans. While the Strategic Initiatives are implemented throughout the District, water resource needs can also vary by geographical location. Therefore, the

**Michelle Williamson**
**Chair**

Strategic Plan also prioritizes water resource issues into four planning regions: Northern, Tampa Bay, Southern and Heartland. By dividing water resource needs by planning region, the top water resource priorities are identified and measurable objectives are defined.

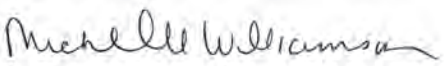
For example, in our Northern Planning Region, one of the objectives is to improve our five first-magnitude springs by implementing projects identified in the Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) plans to improve water quality and natural systems.

To successfully achieve the Strategic Initiatives and Regional Priorities, the District must also excel in its nine Core Business Processes, which are also outlined in the Strategic Plan. As the District's Governing Board Chair, I believe the District's greatest asset and strength is its highly skilled and dedicated staff. The Core Business Processes highlight the tools, support and information staff need to make informed, science-based decisions and provide high-quality service to the residents of the District.

The Core Business Processes also highlight the importance of engagement, not only with our internal staff, but also with our stakeholders including residents, media and elected officials. The District also engages various water use sectors through its Advisory Committees, which include Public Supply, Agriculture and Green Industry, Environmental and Industrial and Commercial.

Despite rising costs for the goods and services we need to meet our mission, I'm also proud of how the District continues to live within its means by continually looking for ways to reduce costs, improve effectiveness and maximize taxpayer dollars. Staff have also been successful at securing additional federal and state funding to further reduce the cost of projects.

Utilizing a highly skilled workforce and science-based information, the Strategic Plan is our roadmap that defines who we are, what we do and how we do it. While we will continue to face many challenges with the ever-growing population and intensifying storm events, I know we have the right people, resources, partnerships and plan in place to be successful.



**Michelle Williamson**
Governing Board Chair

## Governing Board

The Governing Board establishes policies for the District. Board members are unpaid citizen volunteers appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Florida Senate.

Michelle Williamson
Chair
Hillsborough

John Mitten
Vice Chair
Hernando, Marion

Jack Bispham
Secretary
Manatee

Ashley Bell Barnett
Treasurer
Polk

Ed Armstrong
Former Chair
Pinellas

Kelly S. Rice
Former Chair
Citrus, Lake, Levy, Sumter

Joshua Gamblin
DeSoto, Hardee, Highlands

John Hall
Polk

James Holton
Pinellas

Dustin Rowland
Pasco

Robert Stern
Hillsborough

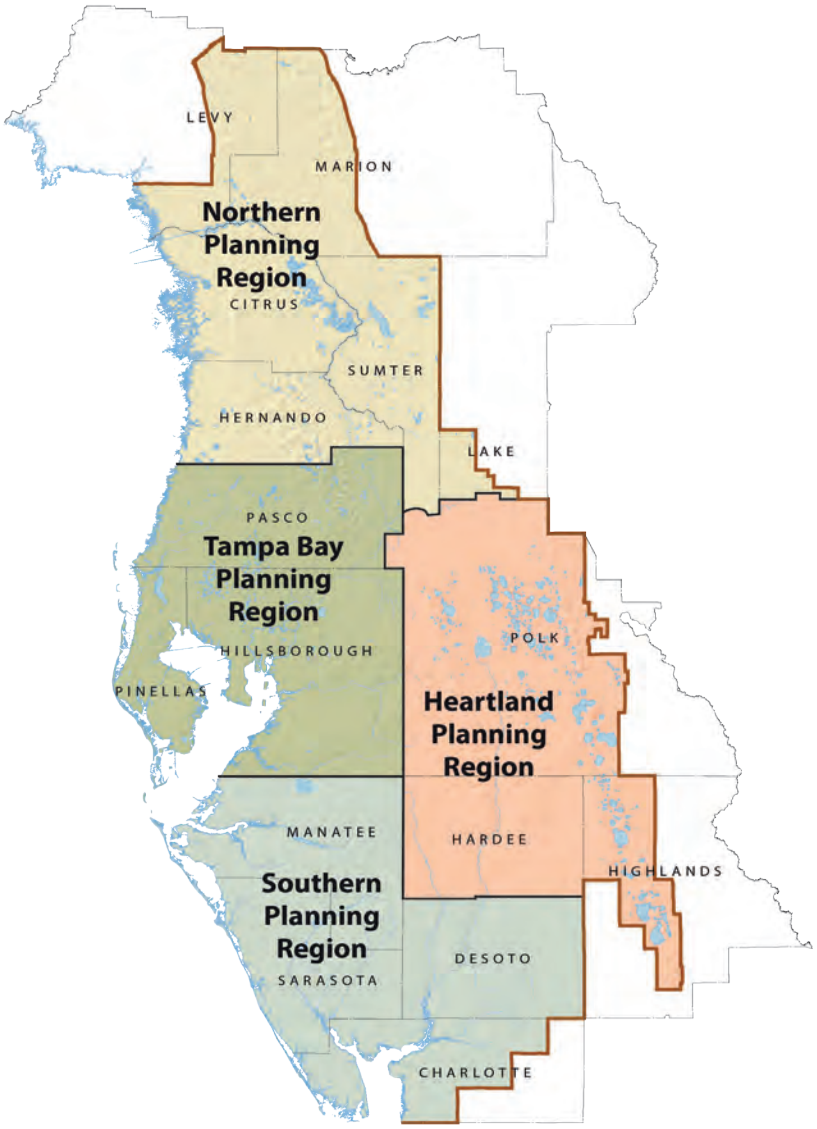
Nancy Watkins
Hillsborough, Pinellas

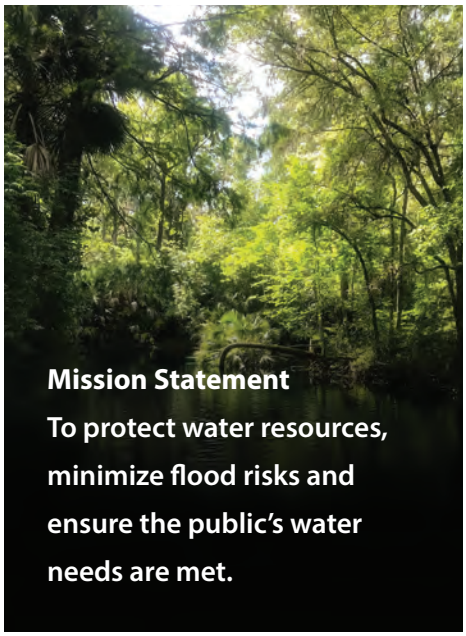
## Table of Contents

# Overview

The Southwest Florida Water Management District (District) is a science-based organization responsible for managing and protecting water resources in west-central Florida. The District's job is to ensure there are adequate water supplies to meet the needs of current and future users while protecting and restoring water and related natural resources. (See Mission Statement.)

The District encompasses all or part of 16 counties, from Levy County in the north to Charlotte County in the south. It extends from the Gulf of Mexico east to the highlands of central Florida. The District contains 97 local governments spread over approximately 10,000 square miles, with an estimated 5.69 million permanent residents in 2022. This figure does not include seasonal residents and tourists. For planning purposes, the District is divided into four regions: Northern, Tampa Bay, Heartland and Southern. (See District Planning Regions map.)



**Mission Statement**

**To protect water resources, minimize flood risks and ensure the public's water needs are met.**

## GOVERNING BOARD

A 13-member Governing Board establishes policies and sets the budget for the District. Appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate, Governing Board members are unpaid volunteers representing varied backgrounds and interests. Board members, who must live in the District, serve four-year terms.

# Overview

## BUDGET

The District's primary funding source is ad valorem taxes, although revenues are also derived from state and federal appropriations, permit fees, interest earnings and other sources. The taxing capabilities of the District are established by the Legislature within the limits set by the Florida Constitution. The limit for the District is one mill, or one dollar per thousand dollars of assessed value. The Governing Board millage rate for fiscal year 2025 is 0.1909 mill. More information about budgeting is included in this document's Core Business Processes section.

## CORE MISSION

Florida Statutes, primarily Chapter 373, authorize the District to direct a range of initiatives, programs and actions. These responsibilities can be grouped under four general areas, which form the District's core mission: water supply, water quality, natural systems and flood protection. The District has established a goal for each of these areas of responsibility:

**Water Supply Goal:**
Ensure an adequate supply of water to provide for all existing and future reasonable and beneficial uses while protecting and maintaining water resources and related natural systems.

**Water Quality Goal:**
Protect and improve water quality to sustain the water resources, environment, economy and quality of life.

**Natural Systems Goal:**
Preserve, protect and restore natural systems to support their natural hydrologic and ecological functions.

**Flood Protection Goal:**
Minimize flood damage to protect people, property, infrastructure and investment.

## Strategic Initiatives

The District is implementing a wide array of programs and projects to meet these four goals. These activities are grouped under 12 Strategic Initiatives:

- Regional Water Supply Planning
- Alternative Water Supplies
- Reclaimed Water
- Water Conservation
- Water Quality Assessment and Planning
- Water Quality Maintenance and Improvement
- Minimum Flows and Minimum Water Levels (MFLs) Establishment and Monitoring
- Conservation and Restoration
- Floodplain Management
- Programs, Projects and Regulations
- Flood Protection Facilities
- Emergency Flood Response

## Regional Priorities

While the Strategic Initiatives identify activities implemented throughout the District, the water resource needs vary from one planning region to another. The top water resource priorities for each region, along with measurable objectives, are identified in the Regional Priorities section of this document.

## Core Business Processes

In addition to adhering to its adopted values, the District must excel in nine core business processes to successfully achieve its Strategic Initiatives:

- Water Resources Planning and Monitoring
- Innovative Projects
- Financial Sustainability
- Regulation
- Land Management
- Structure Operations
- Knowledge Management
- Engagement
- Cybersecurity

# Water Supply

## 1. Regional Water Supply Planning

*Goal Statement: Identify, communicate and promote consensus on the strategies and resources necessary to meet future reasonable and beneficial water supply needs.*

The District's regional water supply planning effort provides the framework for future water supply management decisions and is a statutory requirement where current water sources are not adequate to supply existing and future uses while sustaining natural resources (F.S., 373.709(1)). This is a collaborative, transparent effort involving local governments, utilities, the agricultural community, business representatives, environmental organizations and other stakeholders.

### STRATEGIES

- Develop accurate and reliable demand projections
- Identify sufficient regional water supply sources to meet projected demands
- Encourage the development and use of regional water supply authorities to plan and coordinate water supply solutions
- Incorporate adaptive management processes in water supply planning
- Coordinate with other water management districts on water supply and regulation approaches
- Proactively coordinate with water supply utilities
- Demonstrate the District's financial commitment to assist in the development of regional water supply needs

## 2. Alternative Water Supplies

*Goal Statement: Increase development of alternative sources of water to ensure groundwater and surface water sustainability.*

Alternative water supply (AWS) refers to any nontraditional source of water that reduces the region's dependency on fresh groundwater. Since 1988, the District has helped to develop over 400 million gallons per day (mgd) of alternative water supplies, including reuse and water conservation benefits and new potable water sources.

### STRATEGIES

- Develop alternative water supply sources that include surface water capture, desalination and brackish groundwater systems
- Continue to promote partnerships with agriculture through District programs such as the Facilitating Agricultural Resource Management Systems (FARMS) Program
- Partner with regional entities to provide alternative water supplies
- Continue to leverage District funds to facilitate the development of alternative water supplies
- Continue to support research and development of aquifer storage and recovery technology
- Promote conjunctive use of surface and groundwater resources through regulation and funding incentives

*Reclaimed water pipe.*

## 3. Reclaimed Water

*Goal Statement: Maximize beneficial use of reclaimed water to offset potable water supplies and restore water levels and natural systems.*

Reclaimed water is wastewater that has received at least secondary treatment and disinfection and is used for a beneficial purpose, such as irrigation, manufacturing processes or power generation. By offsetting demand for groundwater and surface water, this alternative water supply reduces stress on environmental systems, provides economic benefits by delaying costly water system expansions and reduces the need to discharge wastewater effluent to surface waters. More than 214 mgd of reclaimed water is being beneficially reused in the District, accounting for more than 16% of overall water use. In addition, the District's Governing Board recently identified potable reuse as a priority for the District to achieve its goal of 75% reuse of available wastewater by 2040.

### STRATEGIES

- Increase availability by increasing storage capacity
- Increase availability by promoting interconnects between reclaimed water utilities
- Maximize efficient and beneficial use of reclaimed water
- Improve efficiency through measures such as metering and volume-based pricing
- Continue to support reclaimed water research, monitoring and public education
- Partner with cooperators for the development of potable reuse projects, with priority for regional entities
- Promote the beneficial use of reclaimed water and the offset of traditional water supplies through the existing regulatory framework
- Promote the use of reclaimed water for aquifer recharge and environmental enhancement projects
- Promote active public engagement on potable reuse through outreach and education programs
- Continue to support and promote One Water Florida

## 4. Water Conservation

*Goal Statement: Enhance efficiencies in all water-use sectors to ensure beneficial use.*

Water conservation is achieved through education, financial incentives and various regulatory and non-regulatory programs. Per capita water usage in the District has regularly ranked as the lowest in the state.

### STRATEGIES

- Promote water conservation through public engagement programs
- Support research and implementation of water conservation techniques and practices
- Promote water-conserving rate structures
- Utilize financial incentives to further encourage effective water conservation practices through the Water Incentives Supporting Efficiency (WISE) program and Florida Water Star
- Utilize regulatory programs to establish effective water conservation practices
- Continue to promote partnerships with agriculture through District programs such as the FARMS Program

# Water Quality

## 1. Assessment and Planning

*Goal Statement: Collect and analyze data to determine local and regional water quality status and trends to support resource management decisions and restoration initiatives.*

Those who manage Florida's water resources must have access to accurate and timely information to support good management decisions. The District's water quality monitoring programs and networks help provide these data.

### STRATEGIES

- Continue to develop and maintain long-term water quality monitoring networks to collect, analyze and distribute accurate water quality information
  - Coastal Groundwater Quality, Inland Water Quality and Water Use Permit Monitoring Networks
  - Springs and Aquifer Nutrient Monitoring Networks
  - Surface Water Quality Monitoring Networks
- Continue to support the District's internal data governance process
- Continue to promote partnerships through District water quality programs
- Assess the utilization of new technologies to improve accuracy and availability of water quality data

## 2. Maintenance and Improvement

*Goal Statement: Develop and implement programs, projects and regulations to maintain and improve water quality.*

The District develops and implements projects, programs and regulations to maintain and improve water quality consistent with the Governor's Executive Order 19-12, which instructs the water management districts to review budgets and prioritize available funding to focus on projects that will help address harmful algal blooms and maximize nutrient reductions. Examples of these efforts include partnerships for best management practices (BMPs) implementation such as the FARMS Program, focused on the agriculture community, and the Watershed Management Program (WMP), addressing watershed improvements; and the Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) and Springs initiatives programs that implement nutrient removal and other water quality improvement projects.


*District employee in the lab.*

The District also acquires and manages land for water resources conservation/protection purposes through its land resources program and regulates stormwater management through the Environmental Resource Permitting (ERP) process. Additionally, data and information are shared with counties, cities and the state for projects to improve water quality.

### STRATEGIES

- Continue to support, review and track Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) and Basin Management Action Plans (BMAP) processes for District priority water bodies
- Promote Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ principles and other behaviors that protect water quality
- Participate in the development and implementation of the statewide stormwater management criteria to enhance the District's ERP program
- Use regulatory programs to promote water quality protection and improvement
- Continue to promote partnerships through District water quality programs such as the SWIM and FARMS programs and the Quality of Water Improvement Program
- Support the implementation of prioritized septic and package plant retrofit projects within the Northern region to reduce nutrient concentrations in springs priority focus areas
- Support local government efforts to improve District priority water bodies

*FARMS Project: Bethel Farms Phase 3 Project (H777) (DeSoto County).*

# Natural Systems

## 1. Minimum Flows and Levels Establishment and Monitoring

*Goal Statement: Establish and monitor MFLs, and where necessary, develop and implement recovery/prevention strategies to recover water bodies and prevent significant harm.*

Minimum flows and levels (MFLs) identify the limit or water level at which further withdrawals would be significantly harmful to the water resources or ecology of the area. Rivers, streams and springs require minimum flows, while minimum levels are set for lakes, wetlands and aquifers. MFLs are used for permitting or planning decisions concerning how much water may be safely withdrawn from or near a water body.

Through fiscal year 2023, the District has established MFLs for 207 water bodies. The District's process for establishing MFLs includes an annual update of water bodies prioritized for MFLs development, extensive data collection, analysis and reporting, public review, independent scientific peer review and rule adoption. The District routinely assesses potential water supply/resource concerns and evaluates water use permit applications to ensure violations of established MFLs do not occur. In addition, water bodies with established MFLs are monitored and assessed annually to determine the need for strategies to recover or prevent flows or levels from falling below established MFLs. All necessary recovery or prevention strategies are included in the District's Regional Water Supply Plan (RWSP).

As of 2023, 96% of the established MFLs were being met. To address water bodies where MFLs are not being achieved, the District is implementing recovery strategies for the lower Hillsborough River and the Southern Water Use Caution Area (SWUCA). In addition, the District has successfully implemented recovery strategies for the Northern Tampa Bay Water Use Caution Area (NTBWUCA) and lower Alafia River and determined the NTBWUCA and the Dover/Plant City Water Use Caution Area (DPCWUCA) recovery strategies are no longer necessary.

### STRATEGIES

- Update the MFLs priority list and schedule annually
- Establish MFLs through:
  - Data collection
  - Data analysis and reporting
  - Independent scientific peer review and public review
  - Governing Board approval and rule adoption
- Continue to incorporate MFLs in District water use permit application review processes and compliance monitoring
- Monitor and report hydrologic conditions to support status assessments for water bodies with established MFLs
- Continue to review and refine scientific methods used for establishing MFLs
- Develop, adopt and implement MFLs recovery and prevention strategies
- Incorporate MFLs recovery and prevention strategies into the RWSP development process

## 2. Conservation, Restoration and Management

*Goal Statement: Restoration and management of natural ecosystems for the benefit of water and water-related resources.*

The Conservation and Restoration Strategic Initiative preserves, protects and restores natural systems to support natural hydrologic and ecologic functions. The major components of this initiative include land acquisition and management, ecosystem monitoring and restoration, education and regulation. To date, over 43,000 acres of habitat have been restored through District programs and partnerships with state and local governments.

Acquisition and management of land are critical to the District's conservation and restoration objectives. Once acquired, altered land is restored, if necessary, and managed to maintain ecological and hydrological functions. The District monitors its lands to ensure continued compliance with its mission and initiatives.

Restoration initiatives, such as the SWIM Program, are overseen by the District to restore natural systems associated with priority water bodies.

The District also regularly tracks land and water resource alterations through its aerial land use/land cover, wetland and seagrass mapping efforts. Through reviews such as local government plan amendments and large-scale development proposals, Florida Coastal Management applications and related activities, staff can offer feedback to better link land and water resources. In addition, the District's ERP program helps protect water resources.

### STRATEGIES

- Evaluate acquisition opportunities, while placing priority on water resource benefits
- Promote innovative restoration projects and partnerships
- Regulate to avoid impacts or minimize and mitigate unavoidable impacts
- Partner to continue wetland, lake and river monitoring and analysis
- Provide technical assistance to state, regional and local governments for linking land and water issues and concerns
- Apply adaptive land management strategies to maintain and enhance District conservation lands
- Effectively and efficiently manage District conservation lands with a focus of keeping natural systems intact and functioning, or enhance altered natural systems where appropriate

*Great Blue Heron in the wetlands.*

# Flood Protection

***Due to extreme weather August–October of 2024 associated with Hurricanes Debby, Helene and Milton, the District experienced flooding across all four planning regions; therefore, the District is prioritizing projects that will identify flood risk and minimize impacts from flooding as a regional priority in all of the four planning regions.***

## 1. Floodplain Management

*Goal Statement: Collect and analyze data to determine floodplain information, flood protection status and trends to support floodplain management decisions and initiatives.*

The WMP identifies, prioritizes and addresses flood-related water resource issues within a watershed. Information developed through the WMP is used by local governments, the District and state and federal governments in regulatory and advisory floodplain management programs.

### STRATEGIES

- Implement the WMP
- Continue to promote partnerships at the local, state and federal level
- Increase public awareness of floodplains and flood risk
- Provide system-based data to support the operation of District flood control and water conservation structures
- Document water levels after flood events

## 2. Programs, Projects and Regulations

*Goal Statement: Develop and implement programs, projects and regulations to maintain and improve flood protection to minimize flood damage while preserving the water resource.*

The District's ERP program uses WMP information and regulations to protect floodplain and historic basin storage and ensure that new development does not increase flood levels or the rate of stormwater runoff onto neighboring properties.

Strategic property acquisition allows land to fulfill natural functions of storing and accommodating excess water and reduces the risk of flood damage by preserving floodplains.

The District's WMP identifies flood risk and efficient alternatives to reduce the risk of flood damages. The District encourages implementation of selected intermediate and regional system improvement projects to reduce flood risk and to maximize opportunities to provide water quality improvements. Implementation of local system improvements is primarily the responsibility of the local government.

### STRATEGIES

- Implement the ERP program using WMP floodplain information to maintain current levels of flood protection
- Identify floodplain management and flood protection value associated with land acquisition opportunities
- Implement and maintain the asset management program for the District's 84 water control structures
- Operate and maintain District flood control and water conservation structures, canals, dams, levees and associated facilities
- Develop, implement and maintain an asset management program for District flood control and water conservation structures and associated facilities

## 3. Flood Protection Facilities

*Goal Statement: Operation, Maintenance and Capital Improvements of the District's dams, canals and water control structures to minimize flood damage while preserving the water resource and contributing to water supply.*

The District operates, maintains and performs capital improvements on three earthen dams, five major canal systems and 84 water control structures in support of the Flood Protection Strategic Initiative.

The District monitors the water resources and operates its water control structures 365 days a year. The maintenance of the dams, canals and water control structures is an ongoing effort and aligns with federal standards, where necessary. A Capital Improvement Plan has been completed for the District's water control structures. The District is implementing high-priority improvements identified in the District's risk-based plan. In FY2024, the District started construction on its first capital project resulting from the Plan at the Lake Tarpon Outfall Canal Structure 551 which included cement repair and addition of cathodic protection system at this coastal structure. Additional capital improvement projects are in design which include another cement repair and the addition of cathodic protection systems and the replacement of flood gates and their associated lift system based on the age and condition. These projects will further improve the preventative maintenance, life cycle management and capital improvement planning for the water control structures.

### STRATEGIES

- Operate and maintain the District's 84 water control structures to maximize the flood protection benefits
- Monitor and maintain the District's dams and canals
- Implement and maintain the asset management program for the District's 84 water control structures
- Conduct long-term, risk-based capital planning
- Implement prudent capital projects to minimize the likelihood of failure of the District's water control structures

## 4. Emergency Flood Response

*Goal Statement: Provide effective and efficient assistance to state and local governments and the public to minimize flood damage during and after major storm events, including operation of District flood control and water conservation structures.*

Through its emergency flood response initiative, the District prepares for, responds to, recovers from and mitigates the impacts of critical flooding incidents. To ensure adequate preparation, the District has developed an emergency operations program and maintains a Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan (CEMP), which provides guidelines for pre-incident preparation, post-incident response and recovery, deployment and annual exercises. The District's Emergency Operations Center and emergency response staff are critical to incident response. All water management districts are members of the State Emergency Response Team and serve as support agencies to the state. The District also provides emergency assistance to local governments and the public. The District's Hydrologic Data Section provides data to internal and external customers to assist with situation assessments and decision making.

### STRATEGIES

- Continue to promote an effective and efficient incident management system
- Train staff in National Incident Management System /Incident Command System structure
- Exercise the District's CEMP, high hazard structure Emergency Action Plans and Flood Event Guidelines
- Provide emergency assistance to the state, local governments and other agencies

## Northern Planning Region - Springs

**PRIORITY:**
Improve the Chassahowitzka River, Crystal River/Kings Bay, Homosassa River, Rainbow River, Weeki Wachee River and associated springs

**OBJECTIVES:**
- Implement water quality and natural systems projects identified in the SWIM plans for the five first-magnitude spring systems
- Assist with septic to sewer conversions and package plant retrofits within the five first-magnitude springsheds
- Monitor status and trends associated with targets in each SWIM plan to assess the ecological condition of the spring systems
- Continue support of the Springs Coast Steering Committee (SCSC)
- Implement MFLs to protect spring flow through monitoring and reporting hydrologic conditions and through their consideration in water use permit reviews and water supply planning

**HIGHLIGHT:**
The water resources in the District include more than 200 documented springs, and the rivers, bays and estuaries that are fed by them. The five largest spring groups within the District are concentrated in the Northern region along the Springs Coast. These five first-magnitude (flow rates of 100 cubic feet per second or greater) spring groups form the headwaters of the Chassahowitzka River, Crystal River/Kings Bay, Homosassa River, Rainbow River and Weeki Wachee River. All five systems are listed as a District SWIM priority water body and by the state as Outstanding Florida Waterways and Outstanding Florida Springs. In addition, the District has established MFLs to help protect each of these systems.

The Crystal River/Kings Bay, Homosassa, Chassahowitzka and Weeki Wachee rivers flow into a region of the Gulf of Mexico known as the Springs Coast. The estuaries and nearshore coastal waters of the Springs Coast contain over 500,000 mapped acres of seagrass habitats making it one of the largest expanses of seagrass in the world. Along with seagrass, the nearshore coastal waters of the Springs Coast include many species of attached algae, sponges, corals and hard bottom habitat supporting numerous ecologically and economically important species such as bay scallop, grouper, tarpon and manatee. The District's seagrass mapping program has been the single most relied upon metric for tracking the overall health of our Springs Coast estuaries. Springs Coast seagrass mapping occurs every four years using a combination of aerial imagery and intensive field surveys.

The rivers, bays and springs of this region have experienced ecological changes caused by both natural and human impacts. Issues facing these coastal resources include sea-level rise, reduced water clarity and changes in the aquatic vegetation and nutrient enrichment. In addition, spring flow is highly dependent upon seasonal rainfall patterns. The District has established, and continues to evaluate, MFLs for its first-magnitude springs and other water bodies in the region to prevent significant harm that could occur as a result of water withdrawals.

In 2014, the District, together with local, regional and state partners, formed the SCSC. The committee's mission is to build consensus and partnerships to improve and manage each of the five first-magnitude spring systems through effective development and implementation of SWIM plans. All first-magnitude spring groups now have approved SWIM plans.

Each SWIM plan is a living document with adaptive management at its core. These plans identify management actions, projects that address the issues facing each system and specific quantifiable objectives and indicators to assess overall progress and help guide the SCSC. In the August 2017 workshop, the District's Governing Board prioritized combining District funds with state and local funds for projects that would convert septic systems to central sewer to benefit springs. The Board also identified the need to protect the District's investment by ensuring controls are in place to prevent additional pollution from new septic systems. In addition to these management plan development and implementation activities, the FARMS Program continues to work with agricultural producers to implement BMPs to reduce groundwater use and nutrient loading in springsheds.

*Weeki Wachee River.*

Quantifiable objectives and indicators are established for each first-magnitude spring system. The SCSC provided support and input on updates to the quantifiable objectives and including indicators. These updates were approved by the Governing Board on June 25, 2024.

### Chassahowitzka River Spring Group
- Water clarity
- Nitrate concentration
- Minimum flows
- Coverage of desirable submerged aquatic vegetation
- Coverage of invasive aquatic vegetation

### Crystal River/Kings Bay Spring Group
- Water clarity
- Nitrate concentration
- Phosphorus concentration
- Chlorophyll concentration
- Minimum flows
- Coverage of desirable submerged aquatic vegetation
- Coverage of invasive aquatic vegetation
- No net loss of shoreline in natural condition
- Enhancement of disturbed shoreline

### Homosassa River Spring Group
- Water clarity
- Nitrate concentration
- Minimum flows
- Coverage of desirable benthic habitat
- Coverage of invasive aquatic vegetation
- No net loss of shoreline in natural condition

### Rainbow River Spring Group
- Water clarity
- Nitrate concentration
- Minimum flows
- Coverage of desirable submerged aquatic vegetation
- Coverage of invasive aquatic vegetation

### Weeki Wachee River Spring Group
- Water clarity
- Nitrate concentration
- Minimum flows
- Coverage of desirable submerged aquatic vegetation
- Coverage of invasive aquatic vegetation

## Northern Planning Region – Water Supply

**PRIORITY:**
Ensure long-term sustainable water supply

**OBJECTIVES:**

- Increase water conservation
  - Achieve and maintain 150-gallon daily compliance per capita with all public supply utilities
  - Achieve and maintain average unadjusted gross per capita water use of 148 gallons per capita per day (gpcd) by 2025
    - This represents a 5.4% savings of 4.35 mgd from the 2011-2015 average
  - Achieve 75% utilization of all wastewater flows and a 75% resource benefit by 2040 and assist in the implementation of potable reuse
    - As of 2023, the Northern region had 25.6 mgd of wastewater flow and 17.5 mgd of reuse for a utilization rate of approximately 68%
- Increase the use of reclaimed water for potable, recharge and environmental enhancement projects
- Continue to partner with the Withlacoochee Regional Water Supply Authority to promote regional water supply planning and development

The District promotes regional approaches to water supply planning and development. The benefits of regional systems include economies of scale, better ability to manage environmental impacts, improved system reliability, operational flexibility and emergency backup capability. Larger regional systems are also able to take advantage of conjunctive use, wherein both groundwater and alternative sources are available and can be managed to mimic natural hydrologic cycles.

In the Northern region, the District is partnering with the Withlacoochee Regional Water Supply Authority to promote regional water supply planning and development. This most recently includes cooperatively funding regional water conservation efforts and an update to the Authority's Master Water Supply Plan.


**HIGHLIGHT:**
The District's most recent RWSP was completed in 2020 with the next five-year update currently underway. The 2025 RWSP will assess water demands, as well as sources and projects to meet those demands, for the Northern Planning Region through 2045. Completion of the 2025 RWSP is scheduled for late 2025.

Public supply use, which accounts for about 50% of the water use in the Northern region, has significant potential for water savings. In 2023, there were seven utilities in the Northern region with compliance per capita figures higher than 150 gpcd. The District's goals are to ensure that all utilities fall below the maximum compliance per capita usage and to further reduce the regional average per capita in accordance with the RWSP. The District's plan to assist public supply utilities is to minimize the need for additional groundwater supplies by maximizing the use of available reclaimed water and implementing comprehensive water conservation measures and best management practices.

*Reclaimed water facility.*

## Tampa Bay Planning Region – Lower Hillsborough River MFLs Recovery and MFL Monitoring

**PRIORITY:**
Implement the lower Hillsborough River MFLs Recovery Strategy and monitor other MFLs

**OBJECTIVES:**

- **Northern Tampa Bay Water Use Caution Area**
  - Complete annual assessments and the third required five-year evaluation of results achieved from implementation of the MFLs recovery strategy adopted for the lower Hillsborough River
  - Achieve 75% utilization of all wastewater flows and a 75% resource benefit by 2040 and assist in the implementation of potable reuse
    - As of 2023, the Tampa Bay Region had 235.8 mgd of wastewater flow and 125.7 mgd of reuse for a utilization rate of approximately 53%
  - Increase the use of reclaimed water for potable, recharge and environmental enhancement
  - Achieve and maintain a reduction in 2011-2015 regional average unadjusted gross per capita (94 gpcd) water use by 5.3% to 89 gpcd by 2025. This represents savings of 16.25 mgd
  - Assist Tampa Bay Water in the development of 20 mgd of alternative supply sources and 11 mgd of water conservation savings
  - Maintain regulatory programs associated with the NTBWUCA
  - Continue to monitor the environmental conditions through annual assessments of established MFLs
- **Dover/Plant City Water Use Caution Area**
  - Maintain achievement of the DPCWUCA area minimum aquifer level for the upper Floridan aquifer by continuing to implement cold protection permitting procedures, assess their status annually and promote FARMS projects that reduce cold protection groundwater uses
  - Continue to monitor the aquifer system through annual assessment of the established DPCWUCA minimum aquifer level
- **Southern Water Use Caution Area**
  - Achieve 40 mgd offset in groundwater withdrawals in the SWUCA by 2025
  - Achieve the SWUCA saltwater intrusion minimum aquifer level (SWIMAL) for the upper Floridan aquifer to slow the rate of saltwater intrusion in the Most Impacted Area (MIA)
  - Ensure that there are sufficient water supplies for all existing and projected reasonable-beneficial uses
  - Continue to monitor recovery of environmental conditions in the SWUCA through annual assessments of MFLs and five-year recovery status reviews

**HIGHLIGHT:**
The District sets MFLs on priority water bodies. An MFL is the limit or water level at which further withdrawals would be significantly harmful to the water resources or ecology of the area. If the existing flow or level of a water body is below or is projected to fall below an applicable minimum flow or level within 20 years, a recovery or prevention strategy must be implemented.

Additionally, the District can designate a water use caution area (WUCA) when the Governing Board determines that regional action is necessary to address cumulative water withdrawals which are causing or may cause adverse impacts to the water and related natural resources or the public interest. WUCA rules enhance the protection and recovery of the water resources. Three WUCAs, the NTBWUCA, DPCWUCA and SWUCA, have been identified for portions of the Tampa Bay Planning Region.

The **NTBWUCA**, which encompasses all of Pinellas and Pasco counties, and those portions of Hillsborough County north of Highway 60, was established to address adverse impacts caused by ground and surface water withdrawals. The first phase of the District's recovery strategy for restoring water resources within the NTBWUCA called for reduced pumping from Tampa Bay Water's regional wellfields and providing financial incentives for construction of alternative water supply projects. To date, these efforts have produced more than 140 mgd of new alternative water sources and allowed for groundwater withdrawals to be reduced by more than 60 mgd. In addition, Tampa Bay Water has formed a regional water conservation program called Tampa Bay Water Wise. This program offers a variety of incentives for water conservation Best Management Practices (BMPs) with the long-term goal of conserving 11 mgd.

In 2010, the District determined that more information was needed to fully evaluate the effects of the reductions on MFLs recovery and initiated a second phase of the NTBWUCA recovery strategy through adoption of a comprehensive plan that would sunset in 2020. The plan included continued monitoring and evaluation of environmental mitigation for withdrawal impacts and continued water conservation activities by Tampa Bay Water's member governments.

Comprehensive recovery assessments completed by Tampa

Bay Water and the District in 2020, as well as MFL status assessments completed by the District in 2020 and 2021, identified substantial recovery of hydrologic and ecologic conditions associated with strategy implementation and rainfall conditions. Collectively these evaluations indicated that as of 2021, 120 of the 121 established MFLs in the NTBWUCA were being achieved, with the exception being MFLs established for the lower Hillsborough River. Based on these findings, the District's Governing Board repealed the comprehensive recovery plan for the NTBWUCA in 2021 and readopted the Hillsborough River Recovery Strategy for continued implementation. Corrective operational protocols for achieving minimum flows in the river have been identified and are being implemented to ensure future compliance. The recovery strategy for the lower Hillsborough River addresses the augmentation of the river with water from a variety of sources, including Sulphur Springs, Blue Sink, the Tampa Bypass Canal and Morris Bridge Sink. An update on the status of the Hillsborough River Recovery Strategy is provided to the Governing Board annually. In addition, two comprehensive five-year recovery assessments have been completed and a third and final five-year assessment will be completed in 2025.

The **DPCWUCA** extends over an approximate 260-square-mile area in northeast Hillsborough County and eastern Polk County and overlaps with portions of the NTBWUCA and the SWUCA. The DPCWUCA was established in 2011 to address impacts from groundwater pumping for cold protection. To protect crops from freeze events, common management practice for many farmers with agricultural commodities, including strawberries, blueberries, citrus and nurseries, involves pumping groundwater for cold protection when air temperatures drop to near freezing. Substantial groundwater use during these times lowers groundwater levels and can impact residential wells and contribute to sinkhole development. During a historic 11-day freeze event in January 2010, numerous residential wells in the Dover/Plant City area were impacted, and sinkholes were reported. As a result, the District developed and adopted a minimum aquifer level and recovery strategy for the DPCWUCA in 2011 to significantly reduce and monitor groundwater pumping during future freeze events that may cause impacts to existing legal users.

The objectives of the DPCWUCA Recovery Strategy were, by 2020, to have reduced groundwater pumped for cold protection by 20% relative to that pumped during the 2010 weather event and to achieve the minimum aquifer level. Recovery mechanisms identified in the strategy include non-regulatory and regulatory approaches. Non-regulatory mechanisms associated with the strategy include cost-share assistance through the FARMS Program to incentivize the implementation of BMPs to offset groundwater withdrawals for cold protection. The strategy's regulatory measures addressed groundwater withdrawal impacts, alternative water supplies, frost/freeze protection methods and resource recovery. These rules along with the non-regulatory mechanisms were intended to promote continued recovery of the minimum aquifer level.

An assessment completed in 2020 indicated the 2010 weather event that precipitated adoption of the DPCWUCA minimum aquifer level and recovery strategy may be expected about once every 570 years. In addition, use of updated modeling and evaluation of declining historic and projected agricultural land use and water use indicated the minimum aquifer level was being achieved and the recovery strategy was not needed. Based on these findings, the District repealed the DPCWUCA recovery strategy in 2022, continues to implement the DPCWUCA rules and associated projects and will annually assess the status of the currently-met minimum aquifer level.

The **SWUCA** extends over 5,100 square miles in eight District counties and includes the southern portion of Hillsborough County within the Tampa Bay Planning Region. Depressed aquifer levels in the SWUCA have resulted in saltwater intrusion along the coast, contributed to reduced flows in the upper Peace River and lowered lake levels in areas of Polk and Highlands counties. Groundwater withdrawals have been identified as the primary cause of the depressed aquifer levels throughout the groundwater basin, with drawdowns in some areas exceeding 50 feet.

The District adopted the SWUCA Recovery Strategy in 2006 to recover MFLs that were concurrently established with the strategy. The major goals for the recovery strategy are reducing the rate of saltwater intrusion in the MIA, restoring minimum flows in the upper Peace River and restoring minimum levels within the lakes in the Ridge area, which extends roughly 90 miles along the center of the state in Polk and Highlands counties. A status assessment completed in 2023 indicated that, for the first time, the SWUCA SWIMAL was being met. Through fiscal year 2024, the District has adopted MFLs for 50 priority water bodies in the SWUCA and approximately 86% of these MFLs are being met.

Within the Tampa Bay Planning Region, the District is helping to fund the Hillsborough County South Hillsborough Aquifer Recharge Project (SHARP). This project's goal is to expand the use of reclaimed water to recharge non-potable portions of the upper Floridan aquifer to improve aquifer water levels in the MIA of the SWUCA and to slow the rate of saltwater intrusion.

### Primary elements of the SWUCA Recovery Strategy for this region include:

- Updating the RWSP to identify how to address increasing water needs while minimizing impacts to the water resources and related natural systems
  - The District approved a plan update in 2020, with the next update underway and scheduled for completion in 2025
- Providing financial incentives for water conservation, creation of alternative supplies and regional interconnections
- Monitoring and reporting

*Hillsborough River.*

# Tampa Bay Planning Region – Improve Water Bodies

**PRIORITY:**
Improve Tampa Bay and lakes Seminole, Tarpon and Thonotosassa

**OBJECTIVES:**
- Develop and implement natural system projects that restore critical shoreline, coastal uplands and intertidal systems and freshwater wetlands
- Develop and implement water quality projects to reduce nutrient loading
- Update the Lake Tarpon and Lake Thonotosassa SWIM plans

**HIGHLIGHT:**

**Tampa Bay** is designated as an "Estuary of National Significance" and a District SWIM priority water body. The 400-square-mile bay is Florida's largest open-water estuary. Its 2,200-square-mile watershed contains more than two million residents.

Three main challenges exist in the Tampa Bay watershed. Coastal uplands and wetlands have been altered and lost. Nonnative animal and plant species have spread, and water quality has been degraded from pollutants and nutrient loading.

The District completed the update of the Tampa Bay SWIM Plan and was approved by the Governing Board on Oct. 24, 2023. The District worked closely with the Tampa Bay Estuary Program (TBEP), local governments and other stakeholders to complete this latest update. The Tampa Bay SWIM Plan draws heavily on the TBEP Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP), the Tampa Bay Nitrogen Management Consortium Reasonable Assurance Plan and other relevant documents. The Tampa Bay SWIM Plan does not duplicate the TBEP's CCMP, rather it uses the CCMP as a reference to identify those elements that align with SWIM's core missions of water quality, hydrologic restoration and natural systems.

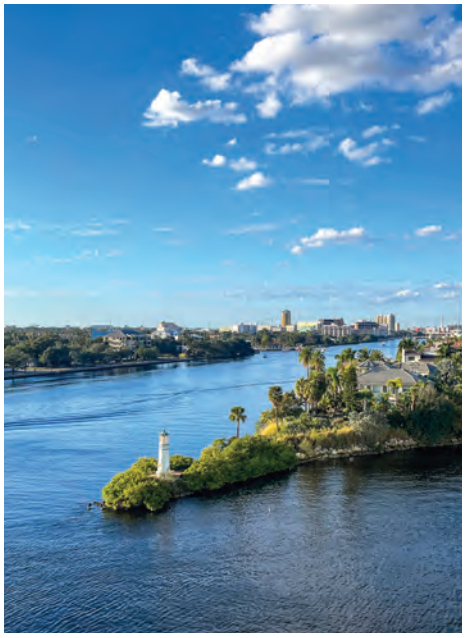
For more than 30 years, the District's seagrass mapping program has been the most relied upon metric for tracking the overall health of our estuaries. In Tampa Bay, seagrass habitat is mapped every two years using a combination of aerial imagery and intensive field surveys. From 1988 to 2016, seagrass habitat expanded throughout Tampa Bay, reaching a record 41,655 mapped acres in 2016. The TBEP established a recovery goal of 40,000 acres of seagrass habitat. This target is based on seagrass acreage estimates from 1950s aerial photography and identified in the Habitat Master Plan (2020 Update). In 2014, the District mapped 40,295 acres of seagrass in Tampa Bay, exceeding TBEP's target for the first time since mapping began in 1988. In 2016 and again in 2018, total seagrass acreage in Tampa Bay exceeded 40,000 mapped acres. In 2020 and 2022, however, the bay experienced back-to-back seagrass losses with 34,297 and 30,137 mapped acres, respectively. The next seagrass mapping results based on imagery acquired over the winter of 2023-2024 will be released in early 2025.

Habitat restoration continues to be a focus in Tampa Bay and the District's SWIM Program together with many cooperators and partners have restored over 7,300 acres of coastal habitat. Additionally, the District is committed to improving water quality completing projects that have treated more than 132 square miles of contributing Tampa Bay watershed.

**Lake Seminole** is a 684-acre freshwater lake in west-central Pinellas County that was created in the 1940s by the impoundment of an arm of Long Bayou, a brackish water segment of Boca Ciega Bay. The lake's watershed encompasses approximately 3,500 acres, of which almost 90% is developed. Water quality concerns in Lake Seminole began in the 1960s, as urbanization of the watershed increased and worsened in the 1980s and 90s.

In 2004, Pinellas County adopted the Lake Seminole Watershed Management Plan to identify and implement projects to reduce nutrient concentrations in the lake and to meet targeted water quality goals. In 2006, Lake Seminole was included in the FDEP's draft verified list of impaired waters for nutrients. Pinellas County developed a Reasonable Assurance Plan (RAP) in 2007, to set forth actions to reduce nutrient loading to Lake Seminole and restore the lake's water quality. RAP updates were submitted to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) in 2011, 2014 and 2019 outlining the progress made toward the goals set forth in the original RAP. Lake Seminole RAP water quality goals are expressed as annual means for chlorophyll-a (Chl-a) and the Trophic State Index (TSI), a composite measurement used in evaluating the level of enrichment to a water body. Completed projects identified in the Lake Seminole RAP include retrofitting stormwater outflows from five of the highest nutrient loading subbasins and removing nutrient rich sediments from the lake. In 2017, the Pinellas County Board of County Commissioners approved funding, matched with District funding, to dredge nutrient-rich sediment from the lake. Dredging of this sediment is completed and the project is currently in the close-out phase.

*Water and muck slurry entering the dredge material manangement area at Lake Seminole.*



*Tampa Bay.*

**Lake Tarpon** extends over 2,532 acres, making it the largest freshwater lake in the Tampa Bay area. The lake is designated as an Outstanding Florida Water, a fish management area and a District

SWIM priority water body. Overall, Lake Tarpon can be described as a water body with excellent sport fishing and healthy submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) habitat.

Despite its healthy status, the lake is currently listed by FDEP as being impaired for chlorophyll-a (a measure of phytoplankton abundance) based on exceedance of the state's Numeric Nutrient Criteria (NNC). The lake is currently, and has been, in compliance with water quality standards for both total nitrogen (TN) and total phosphorus (TP), creating a disconnect between chlorophyll-a and nutrient concentrations. In recent years, Pinellas County and the District have co-funded technical projects to examine this disconnect.

The Lake Tarpon Water Quality Management Plan was completed in 2017. One of the findings of this report was that chlorophyll-a concentrations were a function of residence time and lake levels and not nutrient loading. The plan also found that healthy plant communities in the lake coincided with periods of improved chlorophyll-a concentrations. Pinellas County submitted a petition to FDEP for development of Type III Site Specific Alternative Criteria (SSAC) for Nutrients. In January 2024, FDEP published a draft report proposing Type III nutrient SSAC that were developed using data from a period when the lake supported a healthy plant community while accounting for fluctuation in chlorophyll-a above FDEP's generally applicable criterion.

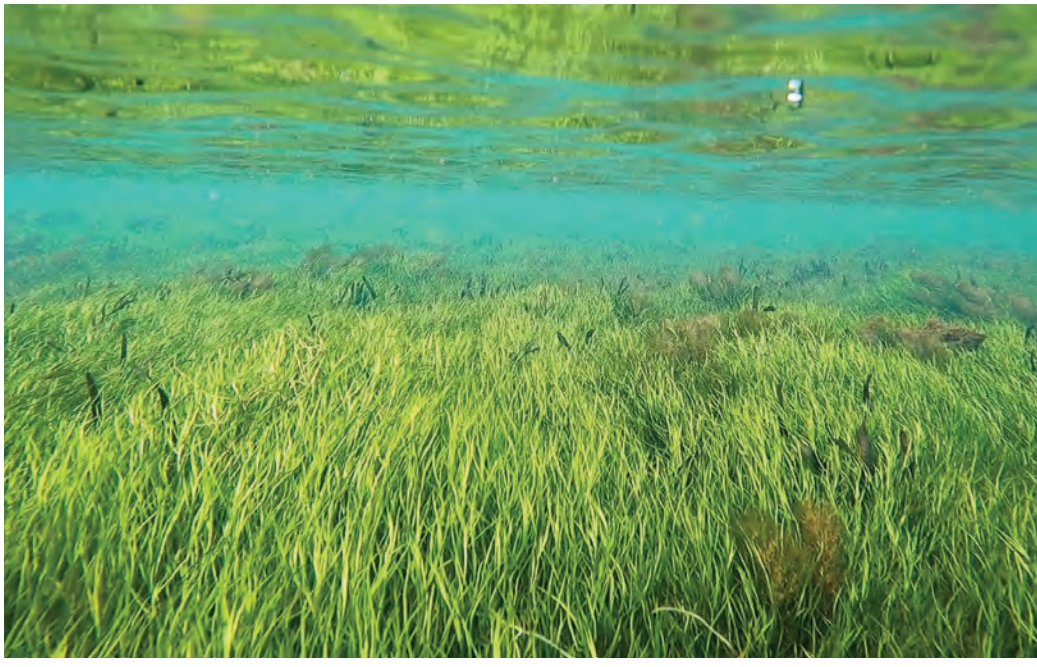
The findings of these studies have been considered during the update to the Lake Tarpon SWIM Plan. The District has coordinated closely with FDEP and Pinellas County regarding the SSAC to ensure that the goals and management strategies in the SWIM plan update are not in conflict with the SSAC. Additionally, during development of the SWIM Plan update, two technical stakeholders' workshops were held to ensure coordination with agencies and local governments that manage water resources in the Lake Tarpon watershed.

**Lake Thonotosassa**, the largest natural lake in Hillsborough County with a surface area of greater than 800 acres, is popular for recreational use as it is one of the few natural lakes in the area with public access. The lake discharges into the Hillsborough River, which is used for the City of Tampa's municipal water supply and the lake is designated as a District SWIM priority water body.

Challenges exist in the Lake Thonotosassa watershed. Nutrient loadings from the watershed have caused extreme nutrient enrichment resulting in algal blooms within the lake. Habitat quality and species diversity have declined. Nonnative plant species are more abundant, while availability of desirable sport fish has decreased.

The District completed a nutrient source tracking project with Hillsborough County to identify nutrient sources in the watershed. Areas with high nutrient loadings were prioritized for projects, such as stormwater improvement projects, maintenance/control of exotic plants, enhancement of wetland and aquatic habitats and public education and awareness of stormwater pollution prevention. As part of this implementation, the District's FARMS and SWIM programs are coordinating with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to work with agriculture operations in the watershed to implement BMPs. During 2018 and 2019, the District participated in FDEP's development of a nutrient TMDL for Lake Thonotosassa, which was adopted by FDEP in July 2019.

*Lake Tarpon.*



*Underwater photo of submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV).*

## Heartland Planning Region – SWUCA Recovery

**PRIORITY:**
Implement the SWUCA Recovery Strategy

**OBJECTIVES:**
- Achieve 40 mgd of offsets in groundwater withdrawals in the SWUCA by 2025
- Achieve the SWUCA SWIMAL for the upper Floridan aquifer to slow the rate of saltwater intrusion in the MIA
- Assist in recovering the minimum flows for the upper Peace River through implementation of the Lake Hancock Lake Level Modification project
- Recover minimum levels for Polk County and Highlands County lakes by 2025
- Ensure a sustainable water supply
  - Achieve and maintain daily 150-gallon compliance per capita with all public supply utilities
  - Achieve and maintain a reduction in 2011-2015 regional average unadjusted gross per capita (111 gpcd) water use by 4.3% to 106 gpcd by 2025. This represents a water savings of 3.8 mgd
  - Assist Polk Regional Water Cooperative (PRWC) in the development of 30 mgd of alternative water supply sources and implementation of water conservation programs identified in its demand management plan
  - Increase percentage of total water use supplied by alternative sources
  - Maximize the water conservation potential for the region
  - Maximize regional interconnects among public supply utilities
  - Complete the next updates for the District and Central Florida Water Initiative (CFWI) RWSPs by 2025
  - Achieve 75% utilization of all wastewater flows and a 75% resource benefit by 2040 and assist in the implementation of potable reuse
    - As of 2023, the Heartland region had 44.4 mgd of wastewater flow and 22.6 mgd of reuse for a utilization rate of approximately 51%

**HIGHLIGHT:**
Most of the District's Heartland Planning Region falls within the eight-county SWUCA, which encompasses approximately 5,100 square miles. In the SWUCA, depressed aquifer levels have caused saltwater intrusion along the coast, contributed to reduced flows in the upper Peace River and lowered lake levels in portions of Polk and Highlands counties.

Groundwater withdrawals were identified as the primary cause of the depressed aquifer levels throughout the groundwater basin, with drawdowns in some areas exceeding 50 feet.

Through fiscal year 2024, the District has adopted MFLs for 50 priority water bodies in the SWUCA and approximately 86% of these MFLs are being met. An MFL is the limit or water level at which further withdrawals would be significantly harmful to the water resources or ecology of the area. The District adopted the SWUCA Recovery Strategy to achieve MFLs that are not being met by reducing the rate of saltwater intrusion in the MIA, restoring flows to the upper Peace River and increasing water levels at lakes in the Ridge area, which extends roughly 90 miles along the center of the state in Polk and Highlands counties.

### Primary SWUCA Recovery Strategy elements for this region include:
- Updating the RWSP to identify how to address growing regional water needs while minimizing impacts to water resources and related natural systems
  - The District approved a plan update in 2020, with the next update underway and scheduled for completion in 2025
- Providing financial and regulatory incentives for conservation, construction of alternative supplies and regional interconnections
- Monitoring and reporting

As described in the most recent SWUCA Recovery Strategy five-year assessment, the District has been successful in multiple efforts associated with its SWUCA goals. Partnering with the Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority (PRMRWSA), the District has assisted in developing a sustainable water supply to meet the needs of a four-county region within the SWUCA. The District has also assisted with the creation of the PRWC and is helping to fund its evaluation and development of AWS projects, including water conservation. The FARMS Program and other water conservation efforts have reduced Upper Floridan groundwater withdrawals in the SWUCA, which has helped to increase groundwater levels in the MIA.


*A soil moisture sensor that relays readings back to a central control unit to indicate irrigation needs to the grower.*

The SWIMAL elevation established for the upper Floridan aquifer in the MIA must be met or exceeded for five consecutive years for recovery. This elevation was met or exceeded from 2018 through 2022, leading to the SWIMAL being achieved for the first time. This accomplishment represents an important step towards slowing the rate of saltwater intrusion in the region.

The District's Lake Hancock Lake Level Modification Project became fully operational in 2014 and a reservation was established in 2020 for water stored in Lake Hancock and released to lower Saddle Creek to help recover minimum flows in the upper Peace River. Implementation of the project and the reservation supported achievement of MFLs established for all three upper river sites in 2020, and again in 2021 and 2022. Recovery in the upper Peace River has also led to improvements in low-flow conditions in the lower portion of the river. Ridge lake water levels have increased several feet since the 1990s, but some lake MFLs in the SWUCA continue to not be met. Reevaluation of these MFLs by 2025 using new, updated lake-level methods and peer-reviewed wetland criteria will support future assessment of recovery needs.

While the southern two-thirds of Polk County is included in the SWUCA, all of Polk County is part of the designated CFWI planning area. The CFWI planning area includes all of Polk, Orange, Osceola and Seminole counties and the southern portion of Lake County. The boundaries of the St. Johns River, South Florida and Southwest Florida water management districts meet in the planning area.

The District is collaborating with the other water management districts, the state and local governments and utilities to identify a sustainable water supply for the CFWI planning region. Key successes in meeting the water resource challenges of the area have included refinement of a shared groundwater model to determine regional resource availability and the publication of the second CFWI RWSP in 2020. Ongoing efforts include coordination and planning for water resource data collection needs, establishment of consistent water use permitting rules among the three water management districts with jurisdiction in the CFWI planning area and development of the 2025 RWSP.

Within the CFWI, the need for 30 mgd of AWS sources in the Polk County area was identified. The District assisted in the establishment of the PRWC in 2017 as a collaborative entity to address water supply needs among its member governments and is currently coordinating with the PRWC on development of AWS projects and maximizing water conservation efforts to meet projected 2040 water supply demands. These efforts include implementation of a long-term demand management plan and District investigation of the lower Floridan aquifer as a potential alternative water supply source. Through FY2023, the Governing Board allocated $65 million to the Polk Partnership Fund for implementation of selected project, with $30.5 million contributed from the Fund towards these projects in FY2024. The PRWC is developing both the Southeast and West Polk lower Floridan Aquifer Wellfield projects. Third-party reviews of the preliminary designs were evaluated in 2022 and approved by the District for funding assistance with final design and construction phases. Contractor bidding for the Southeast Wellfield Facility is underway as of late 2024, and construction of the Southeast Regional Transmission has commenced. The West Polk Wellfield design is ongoing. Water conservation efforts and demand management plans will help extend the resources developed through these expensive AWS projects.


*Peace River.*

## Heartland Planning Region – Improve Water Bodies

**PRIORITY:**
Improve Winter Haven Chain of Lakes and Ridge Lakes

**OBJECTIVE:**
- Implement plans and projects for water quality and natural systems improvement

**HIGHLIGHT:**
The **Winter Haven Chain of Lakes** is a system of 19 interconnected lakes in Polk County within a combined 32-square-mile watershed. Designated as a District SWIM priority water body, the chain includes two major groups, with five lakes in the northern chain and 14 in the southern chain. A series of constructed canals connect the lakes and enhance recreational access throughout the chain.

Two main challenges exist in the Winter Haven Chain of Lakes watershed: nutrient loading from urban runoff and the loss of natural systems. The District is working with local governments through its cooperative funding program to reduce nutrient loadings by improving stormwater management and to restore natural systems which can also improve water quality and provide additional environmental benefits.

Success will be measured by water quality improvements, including those associated with reductions in non-point source loading of nutrients and areal increases in restored natural systems. Additionally, lakes with sufficient water quality data will be evaluated using Florida's numeric nutrient criteria.

Water quality improvement projects have been implemented for eight lakes in the chain (Conine, Howard, May, Lulu, Hartridge, Jessie, Cannon and Mariana). In addition, more than 30 low impact development (LID) best management projects have been installed within the downtown area of the City of Winter Haven.

Approximately 130 lakes lie within the **Ridge Lakes** area, which extends roughly 90 miles along the center of the state in Polk and Highlands counties. The high number of deep sinkhole basin lakes makes this region uniquely different from the other lake regions in the District and throughout the state.

Declining water quality, due to nutrient loading from the watershed, remains a challenge for lakes in the Ridge Lakes area. Common water quality impacts include stormwater runoff, wastewater effluent, residential fertilizer applications, agricultural runoff, shoreline habitat degradation and hydrologic alterations. Through the District's Ridge Lakes Restoration Initiative, emphasis has been placed on protective lake management strategies. Stormwater treatment has been a high priority, as well as enhancement and restoration of natural systems and additional flood protection.

The District-led Ridge Lakes Plan update was completed in 2019. The project's purpose was to propose lake-specific action plans and conceptual designs for prioritized lakes. In addition, a general action plan was also developed for the non-prioritized lakes to provide a path forward to further efforts in the Ridge Lakes. Data needs are identified for lakes without sufficient water quality information. Of the 136 lakes studied, 21 are impaired or potentially impaired for one or more nutrients, 23 are not impaired and more than 94 lakes do not have enough water quality data to determine impairments. Improved monitoring plans were recommended for the 94 lakes with insufficient data. Conceptual designs for water quality improvement projects were prepared for 12 prioritized lakes. The plan will be used to work with local governments to develop projects and programs aimed at water quality improvements.

*Sandhill Cranes on a lake.*

*Lake Howard.*

## Southern Planning Region – SWUCA Recovery

**PRIORITY:**
Implement the SWUCA Recovery Strategy

**OBJECTIVES:**
- Achieve 40 mgd of offset in groundwater withdrawals in the SWUCA by 2025
- Achieve the SWUCA SWIMAL for the upper Floridan aquifer to slow the rate of saltwater intrusion in the MIA
- Ensure a sustainable water supply
  - Achieve and maintain 150-gallon daily compliance per capita with all public supply utilities
  - Assist the Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority in the development of 21 mgd of alternative supply sources
- Achieve and maintain a reduction in 2011-2015 regional average unadjusted gross per capita (84 gpcd) water use by 5.2% to 79.7 gpcd by 2025, a water savings of 4.7 mgd
  - Maximize water conservation
  - Maximize public supply interconnects
  - Achieve 75% utilization of all wastewater flows and a 75% resource benefit by 2040.
    - As of 2023, the Southern region had 75.9 mgd of wastewater flow and 50.3 mgd of reuse for a utilization rate of approximately 66%
  - Develop ASR options for potable and reclaimed water supply
  - Increase the percentage of total water use supplied by alternative sources
  - Continue assessing the viability of using excess runoff in Flatford Swamp for improving groundwater levels in the MIA

**HIGHLIGHT:**
The entire Southern region of the District falls within the eight-county SWUCA. Within the approximate 5,100-square-mile SWUCA, depressed aquifer levels have caused saltwater intrusion along the coast, contributed to reduced flows in the upper Peace River and lowered lake levels in areas of Polk and Highlands counties. Groundwater withdrawals are the primary cause of the depressed aquifer levels throughout the region, with drawdowns in some areas exceeding 50 feet.

Through fiscal year 2024, the District has adopted MFLs for 50 water bodies in the SWUCA and approximately 86% of these MFLs are being met. An MFL is the limit or water level at which further withdrawals would be significantly harmful to the water resources or ecology of the area. The District adopted the SWUCA Recovery Strategy in 2006 to address MFLs not being met by reducing the rate of saltwater intrusion in the MIA, restoring flows to the upper Peace River and increasing water levels at lakes in the Ridge area, which extends roughly 90 miles along the center of the state in Polk and Highlands counties.

### Primary SWUCA Recovery Strategy elements for this region include:
- Updating the RWSP to identify how to address growing regional water needs while minimizing impacts to the water resources and related natural systems
  - The District approved a plan update in 2020, with the next update underway and scheduled for completion in 2025
- Providing financial incentives for water conservation, development of alternative supplies and regional interconnections
- Monitoring and reporting

The District has been successful in multiple efforts associated with its SWUCA goals, as noted in the recently completed five-year assessment of the ongoing SWUCA Recovery Strategy. Partnering with the PRMRWSA, the District has assisted in developing a sustainable water supply to meet the needs of a four-county region within the SWUCA. The District has also assisted with the creation of the PRWC and is helping to fund its evaluation and development of AWS, including water conservation. The FARMS Program and other water conservation efforts have reduced Upper Floridan groundwater withdrawals in the SWUCA, which in turn has helped to increase groundwater levels in the MIA.

Since the 1970s, the Quality of Water Improvement Program (QWIP) has prevented waste and contamination of water resources (both groundwater and surface water) by reimbursing landowners for plugging abandoned or improperly constructed artesian wells. The program focuses on the southern portion of the District where the upper Floridan Aquifer (UFA) is under artesian conditions, creating the potential for mineralized groundwater to migrate upward and contaminate shallower aquifers or surface waters. The program reimburses approximately 200 well-pluggings per year, with more than 7,700 well-pluggings reimbursed since its inception.

*Lake Hancock.*

The SWIMAL elevation established for the upper Floridan aquifer in the MIA must be met or exceeded for five consecutive years. This elevation was met or exceeded from 2018 through 2022, resulting in the achievement of the SWIMAL for the first time. This compliance with the SWIMAL represents an important milestone for meeting the recovery strategy goal of slowing saltwater intrusion in the region.

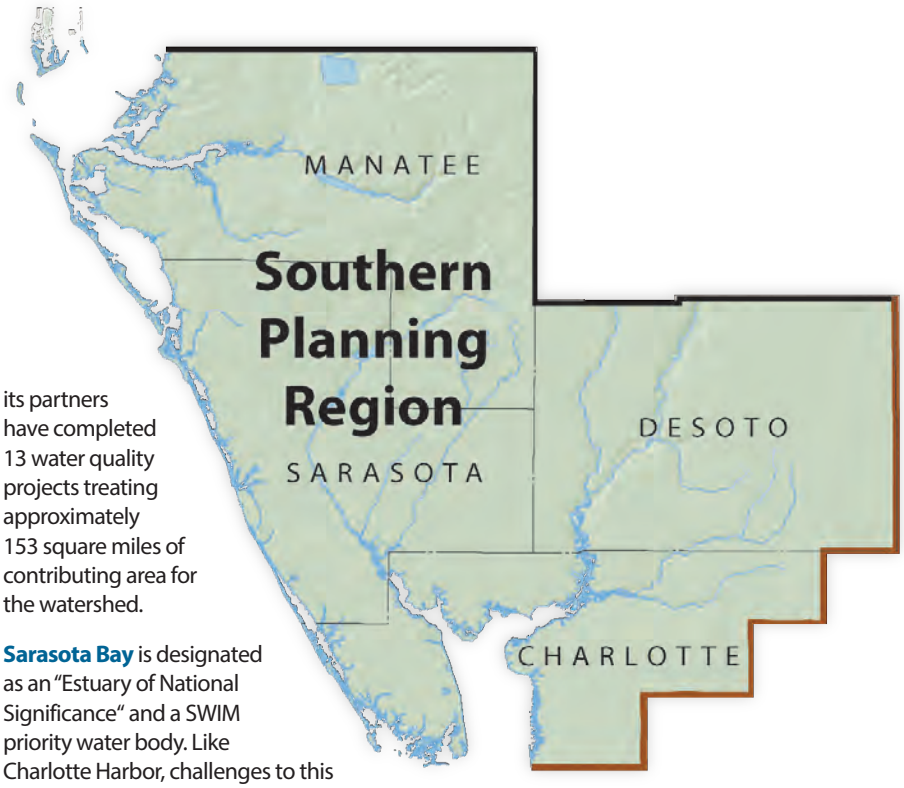
Based on groundwater modeling, the District's Flatford Swamp Aquifer Recharge project continues to show promise in its potential to help to support SWIMAL recovery, as well to slow saltwater intrusion by recharging the Floridan aquifer system near the MIA. As of July 2023, the test recharge well, monitoring wells and surface water facilities have all been completed, and operational testing of the system is underway.

The District's Lake Hancock Lake Level Modification project became fully operational in 2014 and a reservation was established in 2020 for water stored in Lake Hancock and released to lower Saddle Creek to help meet the minimum flows in the upper Peace River. Recovery in the upper Peace River, where MFLs established for all three sites in the river segment were achieved in 2020, 2021 and 2022, has led to improvements in low-flow conditions in the lower portion of the river. Ridge lake water levels have increased several feet since the 1990s, but some lake MFLs in the SWUCA continue to not be met. Reevaluation of these MFLs by 2025 using updated lake-level methods and new, peer reviewed wetland criteria will support future assessment of recovery needs.

## Southern Planning Region – Improve Water Bodies

**PRIORITY:**
Improve Charlotte Harbor, Sarasota Bay, Shell/ Prairie/Joshua Creeks

**OBJECTIVES:**
- Develop plans and implement projects for water quality improvement
- Develop plans and implement projects to restore natural systems




**HIGHLIGHT:**

**Charlotte Harbor** is Florida's second largest open water estuary at 270 square miles. Generally considered one of the most productive estuarine ecosystems in southwest Florida, the harbor is designated an "Estuary of National Significance" and a SWIM priority water body.

Challenges for the 4,400-square-mile Charlotte Harbor watershed include alteration and loss of wetlands, an increase in nonnative plant species, water quality degradation from point and non-point source pollutants and seagrass loss.

The success indicator for this system (as reported in the November 2020 update to the Charlotte Harbor SWIM Plan) is to maintain seagrass cover for Charlotte Harbor proper and Lemon Bay, including Dona and Roberts Bay, at 2016 levels (23,503 acres). As of 2022, total mapped seagrass acreage was 17,392 acres. This represents a continued sharp decline since 2018 and the lowest acreage reported since the District began mapping seagrass habitat in 1988. The District's seagrass mapping program has been the most relied upon metric for tracking the overall health of our estuaries, including Charlotte Harbor and Lemon Bay. Seagrass habitat is mapped every two years using a combination of aerial imagery and intensive field surveys.

The District participates with other government agencies through the Coastal and Heartland National Estuary Partnership to update and implement the comprehensive conservation and management plan, and implement water quality and hydrologic alteration improvement projects to restore coastal upland, wetland and intertidal habitats.

As of 2024, the District and its cooperators have completed 30 natural systems projects, which have restored over 5,300 acres of coastal habitats for Charlotte Harbor. The District and its partners have completed 13 water quality projects treating approximately 153 square miles of contributing area for the watershed.

**Sarasota Bay** is designated as an "Estuary of National Significance" and a SWIM priority water body. Like Charlotte Harbor, challenges to this 150-square-mile watershed include changes to coastal uplands, loss of wetlands, increases in nonnative plant species and water quality degradation from point and non-point source pollutants and more recently significant losses in seagrass habitat.

From 2008 to 2018, seagrass acreage for Sarasota Bay remained relatively consistent. However, in 2022, Sarasota Bay like its neighbors to the north and south, continued experiencing significant declines, reducing seagrass acreage to a 15-year low. Despite these losses, seagrass acreage remains above 1988 totals. Field verification has proven some areas are starting to recolonize but are too sparse to be included during aerial imagery mapping. The next seagrass mapping results based on imagery acquired over the winter of 2023-2024 will be released in early 2025.

The District is working with other government agencies on Sarasota Bay initiatives. These include assisting with the update to the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program's comprehensive

*Sarasota Bay.*

conservation and management plan, implementation of water quality improvement projects and restoration of coastal upland, wetland and intertidal habitats. As of 2024, the District and its partners have completed 14 projects to provide water quality treatment for 70 square miles of watershed contributing to Sarasota Bay. Additionally, 39 projects restoring more than 950 acres of coastal habitats have been completed in Sarasota Bay.

**Shell, Prairie and Joshua Creek (SPJC)** watersheds are in the southern region of the Peace River Basin. Combined, the SPJC watersheds comprise a surface area of 487 square miles, or approximately 20% of the Peace River Basin.

The City of Punta Gorda obtains its potable water supply from the Shell Creek in-stream reservoir. Prairie and Shell creeks (and associated tributaries) are designated as Class I waters, which means they are designated for use as potable water supplies.

Groundwater withdrawals for agricultural irrigation created mineralized water quality issues in the SPJC watersheds. The FARMS Program was created in 2003 with the goal of improving the watersheds' water quality. Through BMP implementation, the FARMS Program has partnered with producers to reduce groundwater use by capturing runoff in tailwater recovery ponds and reusing the water for irrigation. This reduces the amount of mineralized groundwater used within the watershed and results in downstream water quality benefits.

A key success indicator is the reduction of total dissolved solids (TDS) in these surface waters. Through the implementation of FARMS Program projects and other initiatives, water quality concentrations for chloride, specific conductance and TDS measured at key surface water reference sites in the SPJC watersheds have significantly improved. Additionally, these FARMS Program projects have reduced approximately 15.3 mgd of groundwater use, which contributes to SWUCA recovery.

*Centrifugal pumping station.*

*Shell Creek.*

*FARMS tailwater irrigation pumps.*

# Core Business Processes

**Managing and protecting the water resources of a 16-county area requires a highly skilled, motivated workforce with the right tools, support and good information to make informed decisions and provide high-quality service to the residents of the District. All the various functions of this workforce have been evaluated and categorized into nine core business processes. To successfully achieve our Strategic Initiatives and Regional Priorities, the District must excel in each of these.**

## WATER RESOURCES PLANNING AND MONITORING

Water Resources Planning and Monitoring encompasses surface water and groundwater resource evaluations and other comprehensive planning efforts in partnership with local, state, regional, federal and other stakeholders. These responsibilities include identifying, collecting, analyzing and disseminating relevant and accurate data and mapping products and providing technical assistance.

Examples include the SWUCA Recovery Strategy Five-Year Assessment, MFLs studies, Regional Water Supply Planning, Strategic Plan update, WMPs, Consolidated Annual Report and reviews of proposed comprehensive plan amendments and large-scale development.

## INNOVATIVE PROJECTS

The District initiates and supports creative, collaborative projects to produce measurable benefits to the environment, water resources and the regional community. The projects address the core mission goals for water supply, flood protection, water quality and natural systems.

*Well drilling.*

## FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

The District's primary funding source is ad valorem taxes, which vary from year to year. In addition to paying for its operating costs, the District provides financial incentives through partnerships with public and private entities on projects that protect and restore the water resources of the region, such as promoting water conservation, developing alternative water supplies, enhancing natural systems and water quality and promoting flood management activities.

The District operates on a pay-as-you-go basis that allows it to make more funding available for projects. The District targets at least 50% of its budget each year for water resources projects.

## REGULATION

Regulation involves multiple permit activities that promote a fair allocation of the water resources, protect wetlands, enforce well construction standards and ensure that new activities do not increase the risk of flooding or degrade water quality. The permitting process also ensures operational performance monitoring of permitted systems to protect the region's citizens and water resources.

The District is committed to protecting its water resources and related natural systems while also providing quality service to the regulated community. The District's Regulation Division is structured to eliminate duplication, increase efficiency and consistency and reduce costs. Centralizing the permitting review process in the District's Tampa office ensures that permit applicants throughout the District are treated consistently. Improved online permitting services make it easier and more convenient to submit a permit application and access permit data.

The District also continues to work with the other water management districts and the FDEP to achieve statewide permitting consistency wherever possible while allowing for regional water resource differences.

## LAND MANAGEMENT

Per Section 373.1391 Florida Statutes, lands titled to the governing boards shall be managed and maintained to the extent practicable, in such a way as to ensure a balance between public access, general public recreational purposes and restoration and protection of their natural state and condition. Land Management is responsible for maintaining District lands. In its 10,000-square-mile region, the District owns an interest in approximately 460,000 acres of land that provide various water resource benefits. These lands are managed to restore and sustain natural systems, store flood waters, recharge the aquifer and improve water quality. District conservation lands are managed following an adaptive management strategy based on science to achieve land management goals. Land Management staff focus restoration efforts on imperiled natural communities where appropriate. Of the lands owned in fee by the District 99% are available for public recreation. District lands are evaluated periodically to ensure that District areas of responsibility are achieved. Surplus is considered when lands are not necessary for statutory requirements, or that do not benefit the District's areas of responsibility.

In addition, effective July 1, 2022, section 373.036(2)(e), F.S., requires the District to develop a list of critical wetlands to be acquired using funds from the Land Acquisition Trust Fund (Critical Wetland List). The statute requires the Critical Wetland List to be included in the District's Strategic Plan. In developing the Critical Wetland List, the District must consider the ecological value of the wetland, the effect of the wetland on water quality and flood mitigation, the ecosystem restoration value of the wetland and the inherent susceptibility of the wetland to development due to its geographic location or natural aesthetics. Before adopting or amending the Critical Wetland List, the District must notify the current property owners and allow them to request their property be removed.

The District does not plan to acquire conservation lands using funds from the Land Acquisition Trust Fund in Fiscal Year 2025. Therefore, the District has not developed a list of critical wetlands as described in section 373.036(2)(e), F.S. However, the District's Florida Forever Workplan identifies conservation lands and lands necessary for water resource development projects or waterbody restoration projects that meet eligibility criteria for acquisition. If the District determines that

funds from the Land Acquisition Trust Fund are necessary to acquire lands, the Strategic Plan will be updated to include the list described in section 373.036(2)(e), F.S.

### STRUCTURE OPERATIONS

Structure Operations maintains and operates 84 water control structures. Most of these structures are conservation structures that are operated to maintain water levels and provide limited flood relief. The larger flood control structures, like those associated with the Tampa Bypass Canal System, are capable of quickly moving large quantities of water and are operated to maximize flood protection. Structure S-160 on the Tampa Bypass Canal is the largest state-owned flood control structure in Florida.

### KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

As an information-based organization, high-quality data are critical to making informed decisions that protect and enhance the water resources. Knowledge Management is the practice of systematically and actively collecting, managing, sharing and leveraging an organization's data, information and processes.

As the region's knowledge leader for water resources information, the District collects a variety of regulatory, scientific and socio-economic and business data to support its Strategic Initiatives. While the focus of Knowledge Management activities is on meeting and supporting these initiatives, it is recognized that many public and private stakeholders also rely on this information to meet their business needs. Since FY2016, an emphasis has been placed on building awareness and expanding a culture of Knowledge Management throughout all business units within the agency, as well as improving the documentation, organization, review and storage of key business practices and related supporting documentation (governing documents). During FY2025, the District will continue efforts to organize governing documents to facilitate knowledge sharing, ensure the alignment of division/bureau practices with the Governing Board's policies and executive director procedures and allow for timely retrieval and review of existing governing documents. The focus also will cover streamlined processes for maintenance of updated documents.

Information technology and water resource data collection activities at the District are managed by a governance procedure, with oversight by a governance committee that includes members of the District's Executive Team. The information technology and data governance process monitors, informs and controls the efficient and effective use of information technology and data collection to ensure these initiatives and associated resource expenditures are in alignment with the strategic direction and priorities of the District. The focus for the future will be on expanding governance processes across all business practices at the District to further supplement the District's Knowledge Management initiatives.

The District promotes consistency of data collection activities by coordinating with local, regional and state entities through participation on statewide, regional councils and interagency workgroups. The District is also working with the other water management districts and state agencies to implement common replacement standards for equipment; to develop common standards for sharing financial, geospatial, scientific and permit information; and to establish frameworks for joint development of software applications.

### ENGAGEMENT

Engagement is a key to retaining a highly skilled and motivated workforce, the cornerstone of any successful organization. Keeping staff informed and involved promotes good morale and increases productivity. Additionally, engagement extends beyond internal staff.

To manage water resources effectively over a large region, engaging external publics, including citizens, media, elected officials, advisory committees and other stakeholders is also critical. Outreach and education engage these various groups to foster behaviors, secure funding and assist in developing laws that conserve, protect and sustain Florida's water and related natural resources. Also, through its planning and outreach processes the District collaborates with stakeholders and advisory committees to help meet those goals. Input from stakeholders and advisory committees is used by the Governing Board to make water resource decisions.

Engagement helps to communicate those shared interests, forging relationships that support collaboration to benefit the region's water and related resources, economic stability and quality of life.

### CYBERSECURITY

As the region's knowledge leader for water resources information, an effective cybersecurity program is vital to protect the trust in and reliability of that information. As the world has become more digitally connected, so has the District and the role of cybersecurity in support of the District's mission and vision. Cybersecurity is an essential component in providing protection of sensitive and critical data, ensuring business continuity, safeguarding the value, integrity and trust of its water resource data, protecting against danger to public health, safety and welfare, meeting statutory and regulatory requirements and defending against evolving cyber threats.

Maintaining security over valuable information and mission critical systems has become a considerable challenge as the cyber-threat landscape has continued to evolve. While the release of common vulnerabilities and exposures has increased by 500% over the last 10 years, updating and upgrading security of every device connected to the District's resources is an ongoing activity that's required as a key element to safeguarding the District's Information Technology (IT) assets.

As new technologies emerge, they must be evaluated not only for their benefits or how they may or may not increase productivity and improve functionality for District staff and systems, but they must also be evaluated against the risk of introducing them into the District's technology environment. In other words, cybersecurity spans the breadth and width of the organization and is essential in every aspect of how the District conducts daily activities. The investment made by the District in cybersecurity is essential to mitigating risks and ensuring the long-term success and resilience of the District.

Southwest Florida
*Water Management District*

VISAV 11-06-2024

The Southwest Florida Water Management District (District) does not discriminate on the basis of disability. This nondiscrimination policy involves every aspect of the District's functions, including access to and participation in the District's programs, services and activities. Anyone requiring reasonable accommodation, or who would like information as to the existence and location of accessible services, activities, and facilities, as provided for in the Americans with Disabilities Act, should contact the Human Resources Office Chief, at 2379 Broad St., Brooksville, FL 34604-6899; telephone (352) 796-7211 or 1-800-423-1476 (FL only); or email *ADACoordinator@WaterMatters.org*. If you are hearing or speech impaired, please contact the agency using the Florida Relay Service, 1-800-955-8771 (TDD) or 1-800-955-8770 (Voice). If requested, appropriate auxiliary aids and services will be provided at any public meeting, forum, or event of the District. In the event of a complaint, please follow the grievance procedure located at *WaterMatters.org/ADA*.

# Strategic Plan Annual Work Plan Report

Section 373.036(2)(e)4, Florida Statutes (F.S.), indicates the water management districts may substitute an Annual Work Plan Report, included as an addendum to the annual Strategic Plan, for the statutorily- required District Water Management Plan. The Annual Work Plan Report must detail the implementation of the Strategic Plan for the previous fiscal year, addressing success indicators, deliverables and milestones. The Southwest Florida Water Management District (District) has decided to submit an annual Strategic Plan and Annual Work Plan Report in lieu of the District Water Management Plan. The Annual Work Plan also satisfies the requirements of Section 189.0694(1)&(2), Florida Statutes that requires goals and objectives and reporting on the meeting of these goals and objectives.

The Annual Work Plan Report is intended to fulfill the statutory requirement by identifying the regional priorities and objectives in the Strategic Plan, and providing a discussion of the milestones, success indicators and deliverables achieved in FY2024 as they relate to the specific programs that implement the plan.

# Northern Region Priorities and Objectives

## Priority: Improve Northern Coastal Spring Systems

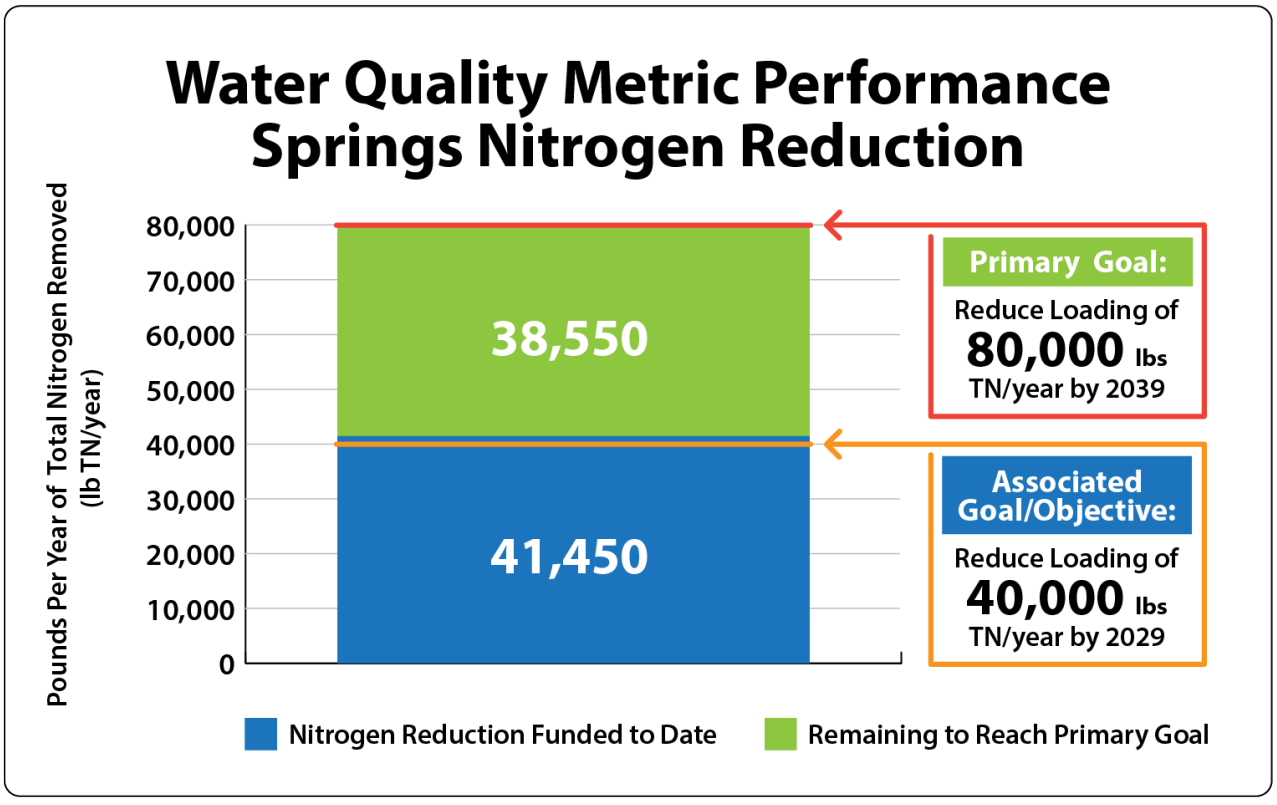
***Objective: Implement water quality and natural systems projects identified in the five Surface Water Improvement Management Plans***

Surface Water Improvement Management (SWIM) plans have been approved for the Rainbow, Homosassa, Chassahowitzka and Weeki Wachee rivers and Crystal River/Kings Bay. These plans identify and implement specific management actions and projects (i.e., programs, initiatives, and Cooperative Funding Initiative (CFI)) to address major issues facing the systems. Each SWIM Plan is a living document with adaptive management at its core. The SWIM Plans include numeric targets called quantifiable objectives. Currently, these five SWIM Plans are under refinement to include long-term trend indicators along with quantifiable objectives. Together, these long-term trends and objectives are used to develop and prioritize management actions and projects, thus promoting effective and efficient resource management. If the objectives are achieved, the expected result is a healthy spring ecosystem.

The District implements data collection, investigations and habitat restoration and water quality improvement projects to support the SWIM Plans in the five springsheds. In FY2023, summer and winter mapping and evaluation of submerged aquatic vegetation was completed in the Weeki Wachee, Chassahowitzka, Homosassa, Rainbow River and Kings Bay systems (WS01). The District also completed construction on the Three Sisters shoreline stabilization project which is a cooperative project with the City of Crystal River and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The project, which extends from the mouth of the Three Sisters Spring, runs to around the area of Idiot's Delight Spring will benefit the Crystal River/Kings Bay Spring system by restoring habitat, including critical manatee habitat, and reducing erosion along the shoreline of the Three Sisters property. Construction is ongoing for a stormwater retrofit within the Weeki Wachee springshed (WW05). The District continues the Weeki Wachee Channel Restoration project (WW04) which will remove sediments from a 1.5-mile segment of the river impacted by excessive sedimentation. The project will improve habitat for fisheries and manatee passage, as well as improve water quality by removing sediment sources in the river. The DEP is contributing funding to the project and the funding agreement was executed. In Rainbow River, a study was completed to investigate a correlation between iron concentrations and filamentous algae growth. Ten Mini-Facilitating

Agricultural Resource Management Systems (FARMS) projects were approved in FY2024 for the northern region with seven in the coastal springs systems, resulting in an estimated 20,948 gpd reduction in groundwater use.

In addition, the District's Governing Board approved a water quality metric in February 2020 to measure the District's success in assisting state and local governments by funding projects that achieve a nitrogen reduction within the District's five first-magnitude springs basin management action plans (BMAPs) boundaries. This metric has a start date of June 2018 and includes a primary goal to reduce nitrogen loading to the springs through District-funded projects by 80,000 pounds per year (lbs/year) of total nitrogen (TN) by FY2039. The metric also includes an associated goal/objective to reduce nitrogen loading through District-funded projects by 40,000 lbs/year of TN by FY2029. District staff evaluated performance by compiling and analyzing data from projects completed or funded after June 2018 through FY2024. The evaluation revealed that 12 District-funded projects within the five first-magnitude springs BMAPs boundaries are expected to reduce nitrogen loading by 41,450 lbs/year of TN. This achieves approximately 104 percent of the 2029 associated goal/objective and 52 percent of the 2039 primary goal. (See graphic for illustration.) The District will continue to prioritize funding for projects that reduce nitrogen loading and protect the District's first-magnitude springs.




***Objective: Assist with septic to sewer conversion within the five first-magnitude spring areas***

Converting properties on septic systems to centralized sewer by constructing line connections has been identified to improve the water quality of Florida springs. In an August 2017 workshop, the District's Governing Board prioritized combining District funds with state and local funds for projects that would connect domestic septic systems to central sewer to benefit springs. The Board also identified the need to protect the District's investment by ensuring controls are in place to

prevent additional pollution from new conventional septic systems and to ensure the new infrastructure is utilized.

During FY2024, one septic to sewer project was under construction, Cambridge Greens. Old Homosassa West and Old Homosassa East septic to sewer conversion projects are expected to start construction during FY2025. For FY2024, no new septic to sewer construction projects were included in the District's budget through the CFI program.

***Objective: Monitor status and trends associated with targets in each springs plan to assess the health of the spring systems***

Each of the SWIM Plans for the five first-magnitude spring systems on the Springs Coast have identified quantifiable objectives and long-term trend indicators for the three focus areas of water quality, water quantity and natural systems. The District closely monitors the water quality and the submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) to track the status and trends in the various quantifiable objectives. Beyond the quantifiable objectives, District status and trend monitoring is part of a holistic approach for evaluating the overall ecological health of the five first-magnitude spring systems. Data collection and analysis for these systems have been ongoing since the mid-1990s and form the foundation upon which science-based decisions are made.

The District has a comprehensive array of water quality monitoring activities including groundwater monitoring wells in the springsheds, individual spring vents and surface water stations in associated rivers and nearshore coastal waters. Through the District's joint funding agreement with the United States Geological Survey (USGS), stage, discharge, velocity and select water chemistry analytes are also collected. In addition, the District has been monitoring vegetation in these systems, with mapping conducted twice a year to capture seasonal variation. Leveraging years of experience by District scientists, the monitoring information is analyzed and reported on an annual basis and placed in the context of long- term trends. This information is presented to the Springs Coast Management Committee (SCMC), Springs Coast Steering Committee (SCSC) and several community and volunteer organizations.

In 2007, the District began mapping seagrass along the Springs Coast. This region has one of the largest and most diverse seagrass ecosystems in the world covering an area of over 900 square miles from Waccasassa Bay south to Anclote Key and extending approximately 25 miles offshore. Seagrasses are often mixed with other ecologically important organisms like sponges, corals and attached algae, forming a mosaic of diverse and biologically productive habitats. While seagrasses help maintain good water quality, they are also sensitive to increased nutrient pollution and other stressors like red tide and hurricanes. For this reason, the District maps seagrasses along the Springs Coast every four years. In 2021, the District completed the most recent mapping cycle. A total of 586,511 acres of seagrass habitat was mapped, a slight increase from the 577,920 acres mapped in 2016. In 2020, a total of 586,511 acres of seagrass habitat was mapped, a slight increase from the 577,920 acres mapped in 2016. In 2024, the District began the next Springs Coast mapping cycle. The flight window for the 2024 seagrass maps opened on December 1, 2023, with acquisition being completed in March 2024. Aerial imagery is acquired using a high-resolution digital camera mounted on a fixed-wing aircraft flying at an altitude of 9,000 feet. Image post-processing was completed over the summer and photointerpretation is ongoing to be completed early 2025. Results from the 2024 mapping cycle will be released spring 2025.

***Objective: Continue support of the Springs Coast Steering Committee***

The SCSC meets on a quarterly basis and is supported by the SCMC and Technical Working Group. The initial focus of these groups was to create SWIM plans for each of the five first-magnitude springs in the District. These SWIM plans were finalized between 2015 and 2017, and in 2020, with additional years of collected data, the SCSC began a reevaluation of the quantifiable objectives for all five spring systems. The SCSC recommended refinements to the existing SWIM Plans and the District's Governing Board approved the final SWIM Plans in June 2024.

An additional focus for the SCSC and SCMC's has involved soliciting and evaluating projects which will benefit the water quality, water quantity or natural systems of springs within the District. The committees annually evaluate State springs funding project applications submitted by city, county and other local stakeholders using DEP guidelines. In 2024, two projects were evaluated and recommended to DEP for a funding request of $5,800,000 and project selection announcement is anticipated before the end of the calendar year. In FY 2023-2024, 4 projects were awarded approximately $11.1M by the DEP.

***Objective: Implement Minimum Flows and Levels to protect spring flow***

Minimum flows have been established for 10 springs or spring groups within the District, including all five of the District's Outstanding Florida Springs (i.e., the first-magnitude Chassahowitzka, Homosassa, Kings Bay, Rainbow and Weeki Wachee Spring groups). Ongoing hydrologic and hydrogeological data collection, annual status assessments, evaluations completed on a five-year basis as part of the District's regional water supply planning process, consideration of spring minimum flows during water use permit review processes, and as-needed reevaluations of spring and other minimum flows and minimum water levels (MFLs) ensure the successful protection of spring flows.

## Priority: Ensure Long-Term Sustainable Water Supply

***Objective: Increase conservation***

The District utilizes per capita water use to help ensure a sustainable water supply in the future and to measure progress in measuring conservation. Specifically, the goals are to achieve and maintain 150 gallons per day compliance per capita with all public supply utilities and to reduce the 2011 to 2015 Northern regional average unadjusted gross per capita (156 gpcd) by 5.6 percent by 2025. The District has been making progress toward meeting these per capita objectives. In 2011, there were 14 utilities with compliance per capita above 150 gpcd in the Northern Region. Based on 2023 data, seven utilities were over 150 gpcd in the Northern Region. The regional average unadjusted gross per capita has increased by approximately 3.7 percent to 162 gpcd in 2023.

The District has been active in promoting conservation in the Northern Region. During FY2024 the District's Water Incentives Supporting Efficiency (WISE) program funded two projects in the Northern region. These projects are estimated to conserve a total of 6,286 gpd and have a District investment of $5,467. During FY2024, CFI funded conservation projects with WRWSA, Citrus County, and Bay Laurel Community Development District were actively being implemented. Additionally, the District operates a leak detection program to help public supply water utilities locate water leaks in utility water distribution systems. Three leak detection surveys were conducted in FY2024 in the Northern Region. Since the program's inception,1,648 water leaks have been identified across the entire District, resulting in approximately 6 mgd of water being conserved.

The District partnered with one northernUF/IFAS Extension office in FY2024 through the Conservation Education Program (CEP) to develop, implement and fund conservation education projects to help reduce residential water use. CEP projects are fully funded by the District at a total program investment of $20,000. The District also oversees the Florida Water Star$^{SM}$ (FWS) program, a voluntary water conservation certification program for new and existing residential homes and commercial construction. In FY2024, there was a total of 885 residential properties that achieved FWS certification in the Northern Region, with a total estimated water savings of approximately 42,746,385 gallons per year. Additional conservation outreach efforts in the Northern Region in FY2024 included ongoing community-wide outreach programs and awareness campaigns, such as the Water 101 campaign, the provision of free publications and water-conserving items and school district funding support ($60,400 in FY2024 for the latter).

***Objective: Maximize beneficial use of reclaimed water***

The Strategic Plan identifies the objectives of 75 percent reclaimed water utilization and resource benefit by 2040. As of 2023, with District assistance, this region has achieved 68 percent utilization and 70 percent resource benefit, exceeding the interim 2025 goals of 60 percent utilization and resource benefit. For 2023, the region had a beneficial reclaimed water flow of 17 mgd, while the objectives are 14 mgd by 2025 and 24 mgd by 2040. The regional water supply planning process updates these targets as needed.

***Objective: Continue to partner with the Withlacoochee Regional Water Supply Authority to promote regional water supply planning and development***

The District maintains an ongoing partnership with the Withlacoochee Regional Water Supply Authority (WRWSA) to promote regional water supply planning and development. In cooperation with the District, the WRWSA completed the most recent update to its Regional Water Supply Plan (RWSP) in 2019. Coordination on the next RWSP update was initiated in 2023 and will be completed in early 2025. In addition, an ongoing water conservation partnership with the WRWSA currently includes phase seven of the Regional Irrigation System Audit program, which addresses outdoor water conservation.

# Tampa Bay Region Priorities and Objectives

## Priority: Implement Minimum Flows and Level Recovery Strategies

***Objective: Northern Tampa Bay Water Use Caution Area Recovery Strategy***

The District established the Northern Tampa Bay Water Use Caution Area (NTBWUCA) in 1989 to address adverse impacts to water resources from water withdrawals. The first phase of a recovery strategy for the NTBWUCA was approved by the District in 1999. Among other things, it included the establishment of MFLs, reductions in groundwater withdrawals and the development of alternative water sources. The "Comprehensive Environmental Resource Recovery Plan for the NTBWUCA," which was adopted in 2010, served as the second phase of the NTBWUCA recovery for implementation through 2020.

Under the Comprehensive Plan, Tampa Bay Water (TBW) developed and implemented a "Permit Recovery Assessment Plan." Results from this assessment plan and an independent evaluation completed by District staff were presented to the Governing Board in February 2021, with both indicating implementation of the Comprehensive Plan and the preceding first phase of the recovery strategy had been successful in achieving recovery of hydrologic and ecological conditions in the area. Based on these findings, the Governing Board removed the Comprehensive Plan from the District's Recovery and Prevention Strategies for Minimum Flows and Levels rules in 2021, and also removed references to the plan in the District's Consumptive Use of Water rules. A final Recovery Assessment Plan was submitted to the District by TBW in 2021 and the Consolidated Permit for water withdrawals issued to TBW by the District was renewed in January 2022.

The District's 2024 MFLs status assessment, which was based on hydrologic data collected through 2023, indicated 120 of 121 MFLs within the NTBWUCA are being met, including those established for all 70 lakes, 34 wetlands, 7 aquifer sites, 3 freshwater river segments, 2 springs and 4 estuaries. Within the NTBWUCA, only the MFLs adopted for Lake Dan are not being met. Corrective operational protocols for fully recovering minimum flows in the lake have been identified and are being implemented to ensure future compliance.

As part of the rulemaking to remove the Comprehensive Plan for the NTBWUCA from District rules, the Governing Board re-adopted the lower Hillsborough River Recovery Strategy rule. Implementation of the recovery strategy for the river calls for the augmentation of flows downstream of the Hillsborough River Reservoir using a variety of sources and projects. For strategy implementation, the District has independently and cooperatively worked with the City of Tampa on the diversion of water from the Tampa Bypass Canal through the reservoir to the lower river and completed permitting and pre- withdrawals monitoring associated with use of Morris Bridge Sink as a recovery source. The District has also supported City of Tampa projects involving diversions from Sulphur Springs and Blue Sink to the base of the dam for river recovery. Currently the District is supporting the City's investigations of the feasibility of routing excess flows from Curiosity Creek to Sulphur Springs to improve flows and salinity conditions in the spring run and river.

An update on the status of the lower Hillsborough River Recovery Strategy is provided annually to the Governing Board. In addition, the District has completed the second of three planned five-year recovery strategy assessments for the river. This assessment, completed in 2020, documented hydrologic and other environmental improvements associated with the ongoing implementation of recovery strategy projects. In FY2024, the District continued data collection and stakeholder outreach efforts associated with the third recovery strategy assessment, in anticipation of its completion in 2025.

The District also continues to encourage water reuse which helps with the achievement of MFLs through groundwater use reduction. The Strategic Plan identifies the objectives of 75 percent reclaimed water utilization and resource benefit by 2040. As of 2023, with District assistance, this region has achieved 53 percent utilization and 71 percent resource benefit, which is on the way to meeting the interim 2030 goal of 65 percent utilization and resource benefit. For 2023, the region had a beneficial reclaimed water flow of 126 mgd, while the objectives are 143 mgd by 2025 and 202 mgd by 2040. The regional water supply planning process updates these targets as needed.

***Objective: Assist Tampa Bay Water in the development of 20 mgd of alternative supply sources***

The District is currently assisting TBW with funding for two large projects critical to meeting water demands in southern Hillsborough County. The first project consists of design and construction of a booster pump station to increase delivery capacity by 5 mgd to the existing regional Delivery Point of Connection at the Lithia Water Treatment Facility. The second project is an approximately 26-mile transmission main with max day capacity of 65 mgd to supply alternative water to a new Point of Connection to serve significant growth in southern Hillsborough County. The District is further assisting TBW with implementation of a demand management plan to improve efficiencies in customer water use by co-funding rebates and incentives for customers of TBW's member governments. The conservation program, known as Tampa Bay Water Wise, conserved 0.38 mgd in FY24.

***Objective: Dover/Plant City Recovery Strategy***

The Dover Plant City Water Use Caution Area (DPCWUCA), a Minimum Aquifer Level Protection Zone for the area, a Minimum Aquifer Level (MAL) and a recovery strategy were established in 2011 to address impacts from groundwater pumping for cold protection activities associated with agricultural water use. During a historic, 11-day freeze event in January 2010, the District received 750 dry well complaints and approximately 140 sinkhole complaints were reported in the area. To address the situation, the District developed and adopted a comprehensive management plan to reduce and monitor groundwater pumping during future cold protection events.

A preliminary status assessment completed in 2020 indicated that the MAL was being met. However, the recovery strategy requirement of 20 percent reduction in groundwater withdrawal quantities used for cold protection by January 2020 had not been achieved. In accordance with the recovery strategy, a reassessment of the DPCWUCA Recovery Strategy was therefore completed. Trend evaluations indicated that demands for cold protection are decreasing and are expected to continue decreasing. Additionally, temperature history for the area indicates the return interval for a cold event of similar magnitude to the 2010 event is approximately once in 570 years. Given the decreasing demand for cold projection withdrawals and the rarity of the January 2010 event, staff concluded that the objective to reduce cold protection use by 20 percent based on that event was impractical and unreasonable. As part of the reassessment, staff also evaluated and refined the approach used for assessing the status of the MAL.

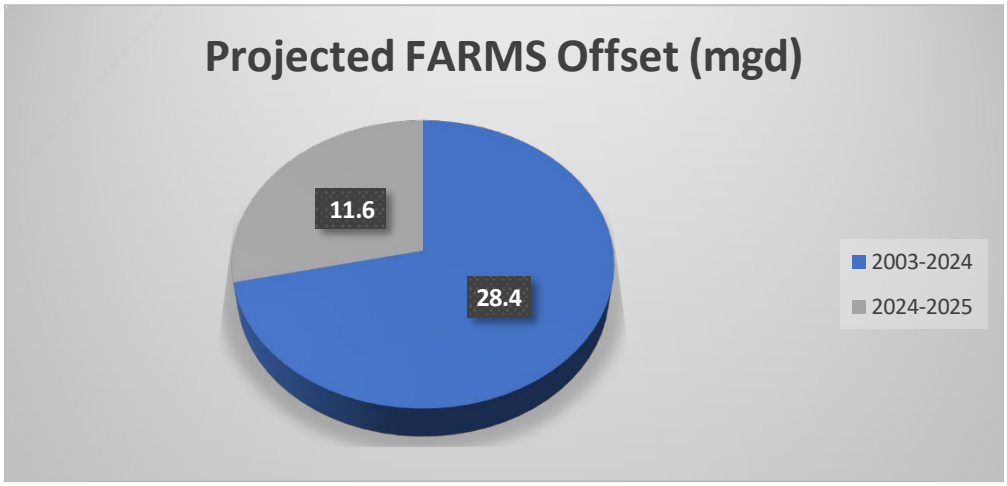
Based on the determination that the MAL is being achieved and the recommendation to eliminate the objective to reduce the January 2010 cold protection quantities by 20 percent, the Governing Board approved the initiation of rulemaking in 2020 to repeal the DPCWUCA Recovery Strategy. The recovery strategy was ultimately removed from District rules in 2022, while the DPCWUCA and protective measures continue to remain in place due to the area's cold protection water uses and unique geology that has the potential to lead to sinkhole formation and dry wells. In addition, current water use permitting criteria continue to be used, and status and trends are evaluated annually.

The installation of automatic meter (AMR) devices is a critical component of the regulatory program for the DPCWUCA and is slated to continue. Metering is critical for an empirical evaluation of pumping reduction, as opposed to only a review of permitted quantities. At the time of rule development, there were approximately 626 unmetered agricultural withdrawal points in the DPCWUCA that required flow meters. At the start of the DPCWUCA AMR installation program in 2013, there were 961 agricultural withdrawal points that required AMR devices. At the completion of phase one of the program, 541 withdrawals were equipped with flow meters and 852 sites were equipped with AMR devices. At completion of the flow meter reimbursement program on December 31, 2018, 541 flow meters were successfully installed. As of December 1, 2021, 771 withdrawals are equipped with AMR devices. The increase in AMR devices on withdrawal sites is due to water use permit modifications and issuance. Also, a decrease in AMR devices is due to AMR removals of devices no longer required by water use permit conditions.

In addition, in FY2024, one FARMS project and seven Mini-FARMS projects were approved in the DPCWUCA Priority area, resulting in an estimated 171,577 gpd reduction in groundwater use for daily supplemental irrigation.

***Objective: Southern Water Use Caution Area Recovery Strategy***

The District has a target of offsetting up to 50 mgd in groundwater withdrawals in the Southern Water Use Caution Area (SWUCA) by 2025, with 40 mgd to be achieved through the FARMS program. The District has offset approximately 28.4 mgd of groundwater in the SWUCA through FARMS projects that are operational, under construction and/or have contracts pending. In FY 2024, 48 Mini-FARMS projects and eight FARMS projects were approved in the SWUCA, resulting in an estimated 592,000 gpd reduction in groundwater use. The table below depicts current offsets and future FARMS targets for the period to 2025. The projection through 2025 has been capped at the 40 mgd target.




*Source: District FARMS staff, 2024*

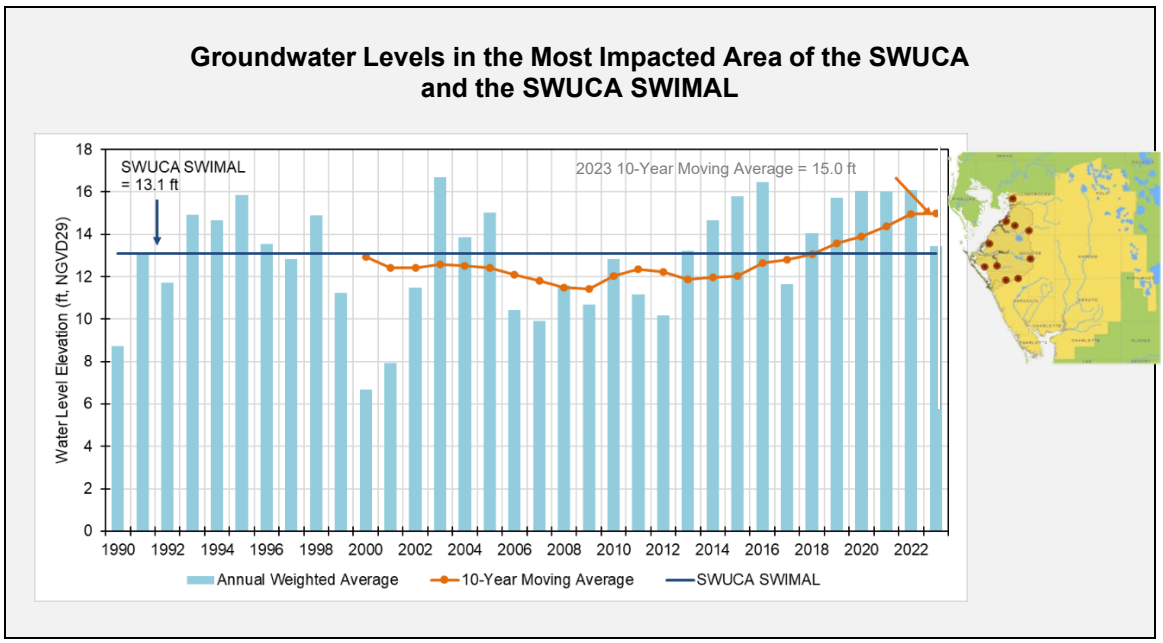
The two primary factors influencing water levels and flows in the SWUCA are rainfall and groundwater withdrawals. During the past decade (2012-2021) rainfall, the primary source of water to the hydrologic system, was, on an annual average basis, below and above the long-term average in the SWUCA for 4 and 6 years, respectively. Variations in rainfall directly affect surface water body levels and flows and can affect Upper Floridan aquifer water levels both directly and indirectly. Indirect effects of low rainfall on groundwater levels are associated with higher groundwater withdrawal requirements for activities such as agricultural and landscape irrigation during periods of lower rainfall. Estimated groundwater withdrawals (including metered

withdrawals) in the SWUCA have declined substantially from the higher rates that occurred from the mid-1970s through the early 2000s. By 2020, the 10-year moving average withdrawal rate in the SWUCA was 502 mgd, a value last observed in the early 1970s.

The Governing Board is provided with an annual update on the recovery's progress. In addition, three five-year assessments for the SWUCA recovery effort have been completed, with the most recent assessment completed in 2023 for the FY2017-FY2021 period. These assessments address the four major goals of the SWUCA Recovery Strategy, which are aligned with the regional objectives included in the District's Strategic Plan.

The water supply goal for the SWUCA Recovery Strategy is to ensure sufficient water supplies. Contributing to this goal, the District's RWSP and the Central Florida Water Initiative (CFWI) RWSP were updated in 2020, with work currently underway on updates for both plans scheduled to be completed in 2025. The District also continues to assist the Polk Regional Water Cooperative (PRWC) with development of regional water sources, including the final design and construction of two Lower Floridan Aquifer (LFA) wellfields with treatment facilities, and a regional transmission system. In addition, the District is assisting with two additional phases of the Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority's (PRMRWSA) regional integrated loop system. See discussions for the Heartland and Southern regions for additional information on the PRWC and PRMRWSA.

The status of the saltwater intrusion minimum aquifer level (SWIMAL) for the Most Impacted Area (MIA) of the SWUCA serves as an important indicator of recovery progress due to the regional nature of the aquifer and implications for requests for new groundwater withdrawals. One of the goals for this effort is the recovery of the SWIMAL by 2025. A status assessment completed in 2024 indicated that the SWUCA SWIMAL was being met. This success is based on the 13.1 ft Upper Floridan aquifer elevation associated with the SWIMAL being equaled or exceeded for five consecutive years, from 2019 through 2023.




*Source: District Environmental Flows and Levels staff, 2024*

The goal of achieving all established minimum lake levels in the SWUCA continues to be a challenge, but substantial progress is being made. Based on the 2024 MFLs status assessment, which used hydrologic data collected through 2023, minimum levels were met at 25 of the 32

(78%) SWUCA lakes with MFLs. In addition, MFLs for 10 of 10 freshwater river segments, 1 of 1 spring group, 6 of 6 estuaries within the SWUCA are currently met.

## Priority: Improve Lake Seminole, Lake Tarpon, Lake Thonotosassa and Tampa Bay

***Objective: Implement plans and projects for water quality improvement and to restore natural systems***

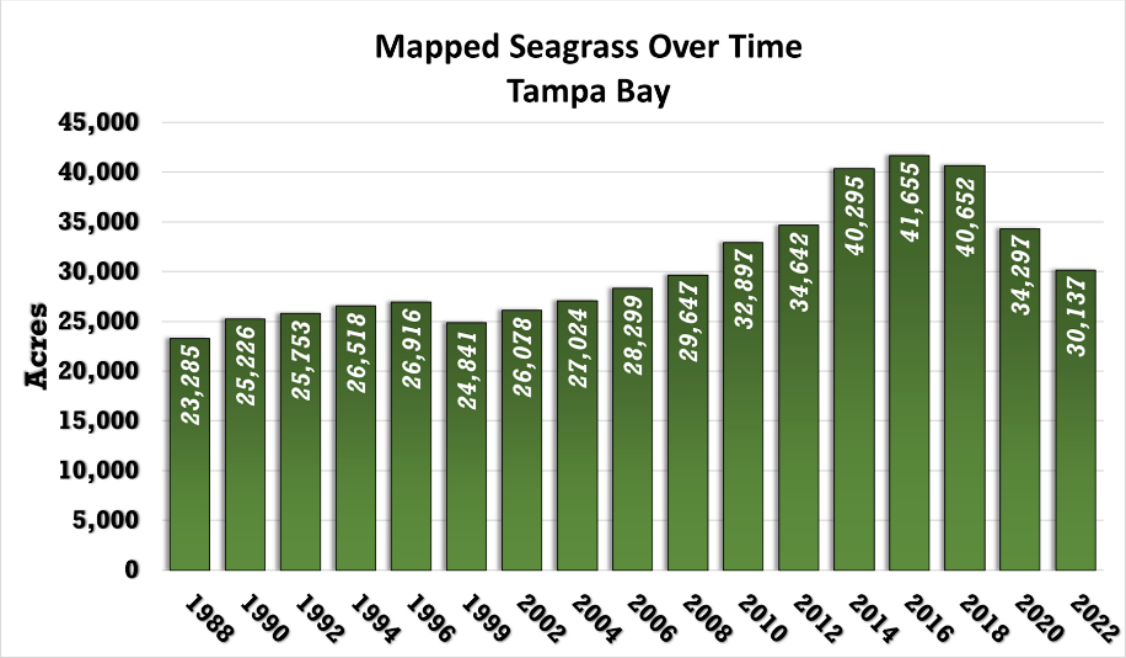
The District's Tampa Bay water quality priorities include those for Lake Seminole and three SWIM water bodies: Lake Tarpon, Lake Thonotosassa and Tampa Bay. The District is continuing to work with local governments on projects to assess these water bodies and identify and implement projects to improve their water quality and habitats. Specific projects and associated FY2023 milestones are discussed below.

**Lake Seminole:** A major concern for Lake Seminole is nutrients. The District cooperatively funded a project with Pinellas County for the design, permitting and implementation of four water quality treatment systems to improve the quality of runoff entering Lake Seminole. The objective is to remove 2,055 lbs of nitrogen per year. In FY2014, the District completed two of these projects, which removed 623 lbs of nitrogen per year. Another Lake Seminole project was completed in a previous fiscal year, bringing the total removal rate to 1,397 lbs per year. Construction of the last sub- basin Best Management Practices (BMPs) was completed and operational in FY2018. In addition to these stormwater projects, Pinellas County selected a contractor to complete the cooperatively funded Lake Seminole Sediment Removal project anticipated to remove approximately 900,000 lbs of total nitrogen from the lake. Site preparation for dredging began in 2019 and dredge removal of 930,000 cubic yards was completed in October 2020. The contractor has commenced dewatering activities in the dredged material management area, with reclamation of the site ongoing and scheduled for completion in 2024.

**Lake Tarpon:** In 2024, the District continued to work with a consultant to assist with the update to the Lake Tarpon SWIM Plan. The District, in coordination with Pinellas County, previously held two technical stakeholder workshops to coordinate the update with the activities of other agencies and local governments that manage water resources in the Lake Tarpon watershed. In early 2021, Pinellas County submitted a petition to DEP to propose Site Specific Alternative Criteria (SSAC) n place of the state-wide Numeric Nutrient Criteria FDEP adopted for the Lake. The District continues coordinating with DEP and the County to ensure that the SWIM plan update is consistent with both the approach, and the final SSAC. In 2024, DEP accepted Pinellas County's proposed SSAC and the District plans to move forward with the public meeting for the draft SWIM Plan in early 2025 followed by presentation to the Governing Board for approval. This update will follow the process identified in Chapter 373.451, Florida Statutes, for development of SWIM plans.

**Lake Thonotosassa**: As a result of the recommendation in the FY2017 Nutrient Source Tracking project, the District's FARMS program continues to work with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to enroll farmers in the Best Management Practices (BMP) program and provide education and outreach regarding Lake Thonotosassa water quality. Additionally, the SWIM program continues to evaluate nutrient reduction projects such as stormwater improvement, enhancement of wetland and aquatic habitats and maintenance/control of exotic plants along with public education and awareness of stormwater pollution prevention.

**Tampa Bay:** Since the 1980s, Tampa Bay has shown significant water quality improvements, resulting in a significant increase in seagrass acreage. In addition to their ecological and economic importance, seagrass habitats are also excellent indicators of the bay's overall health due to their sensitivity to water quality. Given the strategic importance of seagrass habitat to a healthy bay, the District has, since 1988, been using aerial photography to map seagrasses. The District maps seagrass from Tampa Bay to Charlotte Harbor every two years. The figure below shows the trend in mapped seagrass acres from 1988 to 2022 (latest information). From 1988 to 2016, seagrass habitat in Tampa Bay steadily increased, surpassing the 1950 estimate of 40,400 acres. In 2018, seagrass acreage declined slightly as compared to 2016 totals. Then in 2020, Tampa Bay experienced a sharp decline to levels not seen since 2010. Between 2018 and 2020, Tampa Bay lost approximately 16 percent (6,355 acres) of seagrass habitat with most of that loss occurring in Old Tampa Bay. During the 2022 seagrass mapping cycle another 12% loss was mapped. In 2024, the District began the next mapping cycle. The flight window for the 2024 seagrass maps opened on December 1, 2023, with acquisition being completed in March 2024. Aerial imagery is acquired using a high-resolution digital camera mounted on a fixed-wing aircraft flying at an altitude of 9,000 feet. Image post-processing was completed over the summer and photointerpretation completed in December 2024. Final draft seagrass maps for Tampa Bay are complete pending final accuracy assessment. Results from the 2024 mapping cycle will be released early 2025.




*Source: District SWIM staff, 2023*

**Notes**

- Tampa Bay experienced significant seagrass loss between 2018 and 2022, decreasing seagrass acreage to levels not seen since before 2010.
- In 2020, mapped seagrass acreage dropped to a 10-year low of 34,297 acres. Between 2018 and 2020, the bay lost 6,355 acres of seagrass representing a 16 percent decline.
- In 2022, mapped seagrass acreage dropped again to 30,137 acres. Between 2020 and 2022, the bay lost 4,161 acres of seagrass representing a 12 percent decline.
- The cause of this continued decline is complex and involves several likely factors including red tide, increasing nutrient loads, hurricanes, rainfall patterns and others.
- The District continues to work with partners to investigate the causes.
- The 2024 maps will be released in 2025.

The District's SWIM program continues its restoration work for Tampa Bay. Construction for the Balm Boyette Habitat Restoration and Palm River Restoration – Phase II East McKay Bay projects has been completed and both are now in a plant-maintenance phase. In addition, the District had several ongoing restoration projects in FY2024 in Tampa Bay, some co-funded with cooperators, including the Frog Creek Upland Restoration project, Kracker Avenue Restoration project, Boyd Hill Nature Preserve, Mobbly Bayou Preserve, Gully Branch Upland Restoration, Weedon Island Tidal Marsh Restoration, Roosevelt Creek Channel 5 Improvements as well as ongoing design for restoration sectors of the Little Manatee River Corridor, preliminary data collection to support design efforts on two additional restoration sectors of the Little Manatee River Corridor and on-going design and permitting for McIntosh Park Integrated Water Master Plan.

Construction was completed for three stormwater retrofit projects and another four are ongoing. Additionally, the District is co-funding nutrient source tracking projects with Pinellas County.

The District invested in and worked with the Tampa Bay Estuary Program to complete the Habitat Restoration Master Plan Update in August 2020. This document will continue to be used by the District for evaluating habitat restoration priorities in Tampa Bay.

***Objective: Update the Tampa Bay, Lake Tarpon and Lake Thonotosassa Surface Water Improvement and Management Plans***

**Lake Tarpon:** In 2024 , the District continued to work with a consultant to assist with the update to the Lake Tarpon SWIM Plan. The District, in coordination with Pinellas County, previously held two technical stakeholder workshops to coordinate the update with the activities of other agencies and local governments that manage water resources in the Lake Tarpon watershed. In early 2021, Pinellas County submitted a petition to DEP to propose Site Specific Alternative Criteria (SSAC) in place of the state-wide Numeric Nutrient Criteria FDEP adopted for the Lake. The District continues coordinating with DEP and the County to ensure that the SWIM plan update is consistent with both the approach, and the final SSAC. In 2024, DEP accepted Pinellas County's proposed SSAC and the District plans to move forward with the public meeting for the draft SWIM Plan in early 2025 followed by presentation to the Governing Board for approval. This update will follow the process identified in Chapter 373.451, Florida Statutes, for development of SWIM plans. The update to the Tampa Bay SWIM Plan was completed in FY2023 with final Governing Board Approval in early FY2024 on October 24, 2023. This update was the result of staff coordinating with many of the District's partners including the Tampa Bay Estuary Program, FDEP, FWRI, local governments, and Federal Agencies including the USEPA, USACOE, and NOAA.

In FY2019, the DEP developed and adopted a total maximum daily load (TMDL) for Lake Thonotosassa. The District will continue to coordinate with DEP regarding the TMDL prior to the next Lake Thonotosassa SWIM Plan update, which is projected to begin in FY2026.

Priority: Improve flood protection in Anclote, Hillsborough and Pithlachascotee rivers, Lake Tarpon, and Pinellas County coastal watersheds

***Objective: Implement Best Management Practices to reduce the impact of existing intermediate and regional system flooding in priority areas***

- ***Pithlachascotee River (Pasco County)***
- ***Anclote River (Pinellas/Pasco Counties)***
- ***Curlew Creek and Smith Bayou (Pinellas County)***
- ***City of St. Petersburg (Pinellas County)***

In 2020, Pasco County and the District entered into an agreement for the Griffin Park stormwater improvement project. Once implemented, this project will provide flood protection for the residential area by attenuating stormwater. The project is in the preliminary design phase and will reduce flooding impacts within the Pithlachascotee River watershed. For the Anclote River Watershed, there are two FY2018 BMP implementation projects that the District is cooperatively funding with Pasco County: Forest Hills Conveyance Improvements and Colonial Manor Drainage Improvements. Construction of the Forest Hills project was recently completed, and the Colonial Manor project is under construction.

Pinellas County has recently completed watershed management plans (WMP), cooperatively funded with the District, for the Anclote River, Curlew Creek and Smith Bayou watersheds. These studies include an alternative analysis that assesses potential BMPs for improved flood protection and water quality benefits. The District is also cooperatively funding a WMP with the City of St. Petersburg that will involve the analysis of implementation projects for improving flood protection within the city.

The City of Tampa has recently completed the Cypress Street large-scale flood protection project. In addition, the City is nearing construction completion of the Southeast Seminole Heights flood protection project and the Lower Peninsula project's design is now complete with construction commencing soon.

***Objective: Develop watershed management plans for priority areas to better support floodplain management decisions and initiatives***

- ***Curlew Creek and Smith Bayou (Pinellas County)***
- ***Lake Tarpon (Pinellas County)***
- ***Anclote River (Pinellas/Pasco Counties)***
- ***Hammock Creek (Pasco County)***
- ***Lower Peninsula (Hillsborough County)***
- ***City of St. Petersburg (Pinellas County)***
- ***City of Tarpon Springs (Pinellas County)***
- ***City of Oldsmar (Pinellas County)***

The District is currently participating in cooperative funding projects for all watersheds identified in this objective. The Curlew Creek, Lower Peninsula and City of Oldsmar WMPs were recently completed and the data produced through these studies are already being utilized for better planning and decision- making. Additional areas within the Tampa Bay Region were added to the priority list including Itchepackesassa Creek, South Creek, Klosterman, Coastal Zone 5, and Plant City watersheds. These studies are also under way.

***Objective: Update watershed management plans and develop alternative analyses to improve flood protection***

- ***Hillsborough River/Tampa Bypass Canal (Hillsborough County)***
- ***Pemberton Baker (Hillsborough County)***
- ***Alafia River (Hillsborough River)***
- ***Stevenson Creek (Pinellas County)***
- ***City of Seminole (Pinellas County)***
- ***City of Safety Harbor (Pinellas County)***
- ***City of Dunedin (Pinellas County)***

Hillsborough County has completed the cooperatively funding updates to the Hillsborough River/Tampa Bypass Canal, Pemberton/Baker Canal, Alafia River, Silver/Twin Lake, and Duck Pond WMPs. These WMPs provide additional information on current watershed conditions for use in the development of alternative analysis and BMP recommendations.

The City of Seminole is leading the effort, cooperatively funded by the District, to complete an update to its WMP. The City of Safety Harbor is also performing a WMP Update. The goal is to obtain the mutually beneficial objective of identifying BMPs to improve flood protection. In addition, WMP updates for the Pithlachascotee, East Pasco, and Cypress Creek (Pasco County portion), Starkey Road, Roosevelt Creek watersheds and Alternative Analysis for the Curlew Creek & Smith Bayou, Joe's Creek, and McKay Creek watersheds are all underway.

The District has identified the Stevenson Creek and the City of Dunedin WMPs as among the top 20 watersheds requiring updates in its five-year planning program. The ranking criterion is based on land use changes, number of Environmental Resource Permits, flood complaints and age of topography. Having identified the need, the District is currently working with local governments to determine the potential for future coordination on the WMP updates.

# Heartland Region Priorities and Objectives

## Priority: Implement Southern Water Use Caution Area Recovery Strategy

***Objective: Achieve a net reduction of up to 50 million gallons daily of groundwater use in SWUCA by 2025 with 40 mgd of offsets achieved through agricultural reductions via the Facilitating Agricultural Resource Management Systems Program***

See Tampa Bay Regional Priorities and Objectives for a discussion on this objective.

***Objective: Recover the SWUCA Saltwater Intrusion Minimum Aquifer Level of 13.1 ft NGVD for the Upper Floridan aquifer to slow the rate of saltwater intrusion in the MIA***

As noted for the Southern Water Use Caution Area Recovery Strategy objective of the Tampa Bay Region Priorities and Objectives, the SWUCA SWIMAL continues to be met. This success is based on the 13.1 ft Upper Floridan aquifer elevation associated with the SWIMAL being equaled or exceeded for five consecutive years, from 2019 through 2023.

In addition, the 2024 MFLs status assessment, which was based on hydrologic data collected through 2023, indicated that MFLs for 10 of 10 freshwater river segments, 1 of 1 spring group, 6 of 6 estuaries and 25 of 32 lakes within the SWUCA are currently met.

***Objective: Recover minimum levels at Polk County and Highlands County lakes by 2025***

Based on the 2024 MFLs status assessment, minimum levels are being met at 15 of 19 lakes within Polk County with adopted levels and at 9 of 12 Highlands County lakes with adopted levels.

***Objective: Assist in recovering the minimum flows for the upper Peace River through implementation of the Lake Hancock Lake Level Modification Project***

The District's Lake Hancock Lake Level Modification project became fully operational in 2014. Following an approximate one-year period during which inflows were stored in the lake, releases through the P-11 structure at the lake outlet to lower Saddle Creek were initiated in late-2015 to help achieve minimum flows in the upper Peace River. In 2020, the District established a reservation for the water stored in Lake Hancock and released to lower Saddle Creek to support river recovery efforts.

Based on the 2024 MFL status assessment, minimum flows for all three segments of the upper Peace River are being met. Annual assessments of MFLs status will continue and in addition, the District will continue monitoring the effectiveness of the Lake Hancock Lake Level Modification project through 2025 prior to evaluating other projects that may be needed for river recovery.

***Objective: Restore minimum flows to upper Peace River by 2025 with Minimum Flows being met 95 percent of the year for three consecutive years***

Minimum Low Flows are established for the upper Peace River at Zolfo Springs, Ft. Meade and Bartow as annual 95 percent exceedance flows that are met when the measured flow rate at the respective location is at or above the Minimum Low Flow for three consecutive years. The target flows associated with the Minimum Low Flows are 45 cubic feet per second (cfs) at Zolfo Springs, 27 cfs at Ft. Meade and 17 cfs at Bartow.

The minimum flow at Zolfo Springs was first met in 2005 but was not met again until 2016. Based on hydrologic data collected through 2023, the minimum flow at Zolfo Springs continues to met. The minimum flows at Ft. Meade and Bartow were first met in 2020 and also continue to be met.

***Objective: Ensure a sustainable water supply***

The District utilizes per capita water use information to help ensure a sustainable water supply in the future and to measure progress in conservation. Specifically, the goals are to achieve and maintain 150 gallons per day compliance per capita with all public supply utilities and to reduce the 2011 Heartland regional average unadjusted gross per capita (111 gpcd) by 4.3 percent by 2025. The District has been providing assistance on these per capita objectives in the Heartland Region. In 2011, there were three utilities in the Heartland Region with compliance per capita above 150 gpcd. Based on 2023 data, zero utilities in the Heartland Region had a per capita above 150 gpcd. The region's average unadjusted gross per capita has decreased by approximately 1.6 percent to 109 gpcd in 2023. The District continues to support the region through a combination of regulatory, economic, incentive-based and outreach measures, as well as technical assistance, to assist in meeting the per capita objectives.

The WISE program funded three conservation projects in the heartland region in FY2024. The estimated water savings for those projects is 6,348 gpd and the District funding is $29,356. One conservation project was funded in the region through the CFI program. Polk County's long running irrigation evaluation program received $72,500 of District funding and is expected to conserve 53,672 gpd. District staff have also had great success working with local governments and utilities to incorporate Florida Water Star (FWS) certification or criteria into their local building codes through ordinance or mandate. As of July 2024, there are 14 municipalities, two counties and one water utility requiring FWS standards in the District, with 15 of the 17 of these in the District's Heartland Planning Region.

The District's investigation of the LFA in Polk County was completed in 2023. This project assessed the LFA's viability as an AWS and sought to gain a better understanding of its characteristics and quality in Polk County. The District's LFA investigation near Crooked Lake was completed in 2022. The final reporting for the Frostproof and Lake Wales investigations have also been completed.

The District updated its RWSP and approved the 2020 CFWI RWSP in November 2020. The two plans provide consistent direction regarding water supply needs and availability in the CFWI area. The CFWI area covers five counties, including Polk and southern Lake in the District, as well as Orange, Osceola and Seminole counties. The 2020 CFWI RWSP details how to best meet the regional water supply needs for the region to 2040. As part of this planning effort, the CFWI teams identified potential AWS, reclaimed water and conservation project options. A number of AWS projects and conservation initiatives identified in the CFWI RWSP are currently being implemented. In FY2024, one FARMS project and 12 Mini-FARMS projects were approved in the CFWI which reduces agricultural groundwater use. The next updates to the District's RWSP and the Central Florida Water Initiative (CFWI) RWSP are expected to be completed by 2025.

The Strategic Plan identifies reclaimed water objectives of 75 percent utilization and resource benefit by 2040. With District assistance, as of 2023, this region is achieving 51 percent utilization and 79 percent resource benefit, which is on track to meet the interim 2030 goal of 65 percent utilization and resource benefit. As of 2023, the region has a beneficial reclaimed water flow of 18 mgd, while the objectives are 26 mgd by 2025 and 42 mgd by 2040. The regional water supply planning process updates these targets as needed.

***Objective: Assist the Polk Regional Water Cooperative in the development of 30 mgd of alternative water supply sources***

The PRWC was created in 2017 through an inter-local agreement to promote regional cooperation in the development of new alternative water supplies (AWS). A comprehensive water supply assessment initially identified the need to develop up to 30 mgd of AWS to meet demands while preventing significant harm to wetlands, waterbodies, and existing water resources. Two AWS projects with the potential to collectively provide 22.5 mgd of supply are being developed by the PRWC: the Southeast Wellfield and the West Polk Wellfield. The PRWC Regional Transmission Southeast Project will distribute new AWS to participating local governments. In FY2024, the District provided cooperative funding and technical guidance to the PRWC for the Southeast and West Polk LFA brackish wellfield projects, an additional test production well project to support the West Polk wellfield final design, and the regional transmission system to deliver the new water supplies to municipalities.

Through FY2023, $65 million was allocated for the Polk Partnership Fund to develop selected PRWC AWS projects. In FY2024, the Fund contributed approximately $30.5 million towards these projects. The Southeast Test Well #3 project and PRWC Demand Management Implementation program concluded in 2024. Construction activities have commenced on the Southeast Regional Transmission project and bidding for construction of the Southeast Wellfield began in late 2024. The West Polk Wellfield project is under final design. Initial construction phases for the two-wellfield projects are anticipated to provide a combined 10.0 mgd initial capacity for PRWC members by 2030 with expansion flexibility to address future demands.

The PRWC also previously completed feasibility assessments and design concepts for the potential development of AWS from Peace Creek and the Upper Peace River in 2022. The District is currently reevaluating the MFL for the upper Peace River, which may constrain the surface water availability. The PRWC may further evaluate these sources once the MFL is updated in 2025.

## Priority: Winter Haven Chain of Lakes and Ridge Lakes

***Objective: Implement plans and projects for water quality improvement and restore natural systems***

The Winter Haven Chain of Lakes is a SWIM priority water body comprised of 19 interconnected lakes located within and around the City of Winter Haven in north-central Polk County. The Chain consists of two “chains” of lakes – the Southern and Northern Chains. The watershed of the Chain of Lakes includes portions of the cities of Winter Haven, Lake Alfred, and Auburndale. Water quality in the Chain of Lakes varies from lake to lake and between the northern and southern chains. In 2010, a study (Winter Haven Chain of Lakes Water Quality Management Plan, PBS&J) was completed that characterized water quality and prioritized restoration projects to address water quality issues in the Chain of Lakes. It was found that most of the lakes in the Chain are impaired for nutrients. Stormwater treatment projects have been implemented for eight lakes (Conine, Howard, May, Lulu, Hartridge, Jessie, Cannon, and Mariana) in the Chain to reduce nutrient loads to the lakes. The District continues to partner with local governments to implement projects to improve water quality. A study identifying additional nutrient reduction opportunities for Lake Lulu is complete. Also complete is the low impact design BMPs to treat stormwater runoff in the Winter Haven Ridge area.

An assessment of Ridge Lakes was completed in 2003 for the development of management strategies. Assessments were performed for 105 lakes (i.e., 61 in Highlands County, 44 in Polk County) and updated in FY2019. Initial studies identified 26 lakes as threatened by the direct discharge of untreated stormwater. Of these 26 lakes, 11 were selected for additional analysis and implementation activities based on a variety of factors (cost, land ownership, feasibility, etc.). Since that time, projects have

been completed for lakes Isis, Tulane, Clinch, Verona, Clay, Menzie and Lulu. Projects for Lake June-in-Winter Catfish Creek and Lake Wales are ongoing.

The District also continues to partner with local governments to implement projects to improve water quality within the Peace Creek watershed. Completed projects include the Lake Gwyn East Surface Water Restoration project with Polk County that restored approximately 60 acres of freshwater wetlands to treat 378 acres of stormwater runoff. This project is complementary to the previous cooperatively funded Lake Gwyn West Surface Water Restoration project which was completed in FY2016. Ongoing projects include stormwater BMPs with the City of Lake Wales.

***Objective: Identify priority Ridge Lakes in need of further evaluation and data collection***

The District initiated a project to prepare and update the implementation plan for the Ridge Lakes Restoration Initiative in FY2017. The primary objective of this project is to create a planning document to identify additional projects in the Ridge Lakes watershed for water quality improvements and restoration of natural systems. The project was completed in FY2019. The plan was provided to stakeholders to guide future projects and priorities. Utilizing this plan to guide and set priorities, the District continues to partner with local governments to implement projects to improve water quality.

For example, in FY2018, the District, in cooperation with Highlands County, began a watershed study to determine pollutant sources and loading in the Lake June-In-Winter watershed. The study, which was completed in FY2020, included the development of a prioritized list of BMPs and natural system restoration projects to improve water quality. From this study, a water quality improvement project in Lake June-in-Winter Catfish Creek was submitted and approved for funding through the District's Cooperative Funding Initiative for FY2022 and is ongoing.

The District is co-funding feasibility studies to identify opportunities to improve water quality, provide flood protection and restore natural systems with Polk County with the Ridge to Rivers and the upper Peace River feasibility studies.

# Southern Region Priorities and Objectives

## Priority: Implement Southern Water Use Caution Area Recovery Strategy

***Objective: Achieve a net reduction of up to 50 million gallons daily of groundwater use in SWUCA by 2025 with 40 mgd of offsets achieved through agricultural reductions via the Facilitating Agricultural Resource Management Systems Program***

See the Tampa Bay Regional Priorities and Objectives for a discussion on this objective.

***Objective: Recover the SWUCA saltwater intrusion minimum aquifer level of 13.1 ft NGVD for the Upper Floridan aquifer to slow the rate of saltwater intrusion in the Most Impacted Area***

As noted in the Tampa Bay Region and Heartland Region Priorities and Objectives sections of this work plan, the 2024 MFLs status assessment indicated the SWUCA SWIMAL was, for the first time since its establishment, being met. Achieving the SWIMAL is the first step in meeting the SWUCA Recovery Strategy's goal of stabilizing regional groundwater level declines so that the long-term management effort can slow the rate of saltwater intrusion in the MIA.

To develop improved estimates of the rate of saltwater movement in the region, the District is continuing to refine its coastal monitoring network by strategically adding wells to collect data in areas of greatest groundwater quality change. This additional information, along with ongoing development of a saltwater intrusion model (i.e., a solute transport groundwater model) will improve the District's ability to distinguish between local variability and regional saltwater intrusion and contribute to a future reevaluation of the SWUCA SWIMAL.

The 2024 MFLs status assessment also indicated that MFLs for 10 of 10 freshwater river segments, 1 of 1 spring group, 6 of 6 estuaries and 25 of 32 lakes within the SWUCA are also currently met.

***Objective: Ensure a sustainable water supply***

The District utilizes per capita water use information to help ensure a sustainable water supply in the future and to measure progress in conservation. Specifically, the goal is to achieve and maintain 150 gallons per capita per day compliance with all public supply utilities and to reduce the 2011 to 2015 Southern Region average unadjusted gross per capita (84 gpcd) by 5.2 percent by 2025. The region has two utilities above 150 gpcd, and the regional average unadjusted gross per capita has increased by approximately 4.7 percent to 88 gpcd in 2023. The District continues to support the region through a combination of regulatory, economic, incentive-based and outreach measures, as well as technical assistance, to assist in meeting the per capita objectives.

The WISE program funded one conservation project in the Southern region in FY2024. The estimated water savings is 2,012 gpd and the District funding is $5,000. Two CFI funded conservation projects are actively being in FY2024 with Manatee County and City of Venice

The Strategic Plan identifies reclaimed water objectives of 75 percent utilization and resource benefit by 2040. With District assistance, as of 2023 , this region has achieved 66 percent utilization and 87 percent resource benefit, exceeding the interim 2030 goals of 65 percent utilization and resource benefit. As of 2023, the region has a beneficial reclaimed water flow of 50 mgd, while the objectives are 44 mgd by 2025 and 65 mgd by 2040. The regional water supply planning process updates these targets as needed.

The District continues to explore aquifer storage and recharge options and partnership opportunities in the SWUCA. Both surface water and reclaimed water sources exist in sufficient quantity for recharge and aquifer storage and recovery to provide recovery benefit. Preliminary stakeholder feedback on this issue indicates that utilities will be looking for ways to provide a benefit to their customers. The District continues to fund aquifer recharge feasibility and pilot-testing projects. One example is the cooperatively funded Southern Hillsborough Aquifer Recharge Program, which includes several recharge wells that have been in operation since 2016 and additional planned wells that will use reclaimed water to recharge non-potable portions of the Upper Floridan aquifer to improve aquifer water level conditions in the MIA of the SWUCA. Potential benefits include providing a saltwater intrusion barrier that may allow some limited new groundwater available for public supply use in south Hillsborough County to meet growing demand in the region.

The District is also working to develop AWS in the SWUCA. Alternative supply is an important tool in meeting recovery goals, specifically to offset projected increases in public supply groundwater demand. The SWUCA recovery strategy identified more than 50 mgd of potential AWS projects.

In the MIA, the District completed construction of a test recharge well and associated monitoring wells at Flatford Swamp in 2019. Construction of the associated surface facilities began in FY2020. The start-up and initial testing of the recharge well and surface facilities were completed, and the operational testing of the system is underway. The purpose of the project is to determine the feasibility of recharging the Upper Floridan aquifer with excess surface water from the Myakka River that drains into Flatford Swamp. Preliminary modeling of aquifer recharge shows that this project, if completely constructed, could increase aquifer levels in the MIA and contribute to achieving the SWIMAL.

***Objective: Assist the Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority in the development of 21 mgd of alternative supply sources***

In FY2024, the District provided additional funding for the PRMRWSA's regional transmission system Phases 2B and 3C as well as their Reservoir No. 3. During FY2024, the PRMRWSA commenced construction on both Phase 2B and Phase 3C pipelines after the Governing Board's approval of Third-Party Review results and continued with final design on their Reservoir No. 3 project. The PRMRWSA also commenced design of its surface water treatment plant expansion with a 24 mgd max day capacity to meet their reliability and supply goals for growing customer demands by 2028. These projects will provide additional capabilities for pumping, storage, and delivery of alternative water supplies throughout its four-county region, thereby reducing the member utilities' reliance on traditional groundwater sources in the SWUCA.

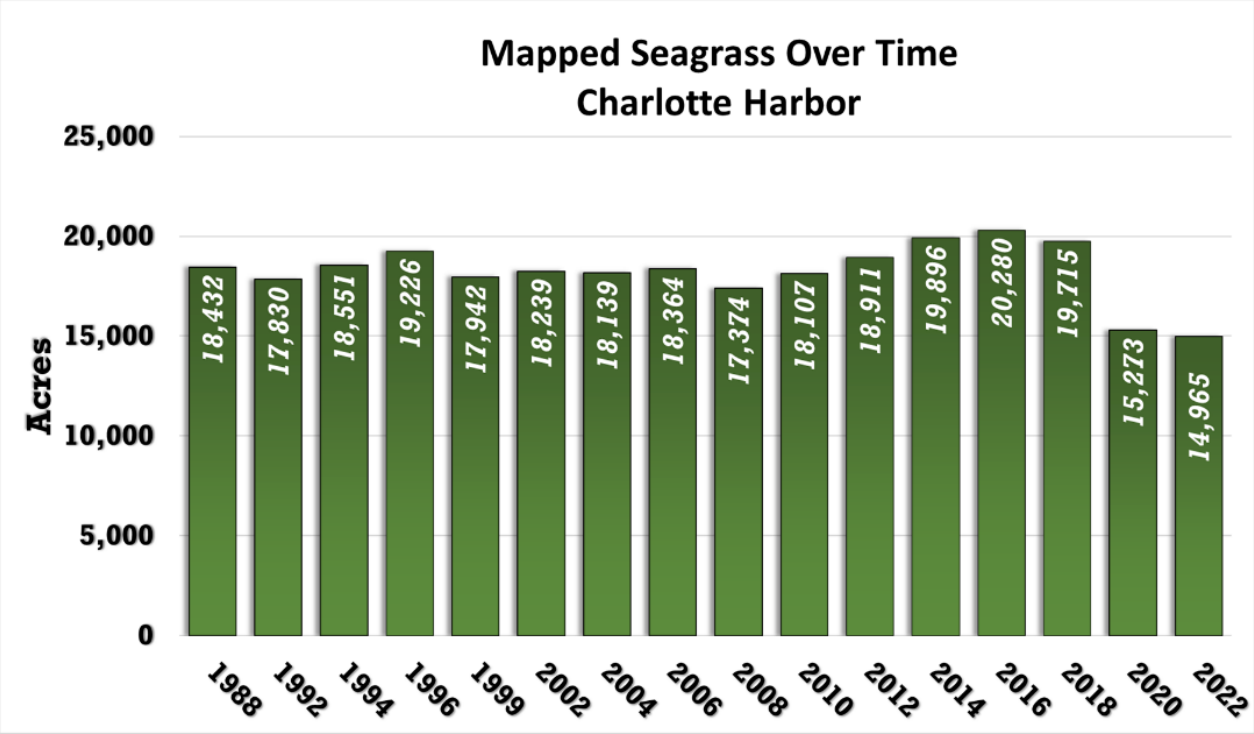
## Priority: Improve Charlotte Harbor, Sarasota Bay, Shell/Prairie/Joshua Creeks

***Objective: Implement plans and projects for water quality improvement and to restore natural systems***

The District continues to work with local governments on projects to assess the conditions of these water bodies and to identify and implement projects to improve water quality and habitat.

**Charlotte Harbor:** Charlotte Harbor was added to the District SWIM priority water body list during the first update in 1988. In 1993, in accordance with Section 373.453, Florida Statutes (F.S.), the Governing Board adopted the first Charlotte Harbor SWIM Plan. In November 2020, the Governing Board approved the most recent update to the Charlotte Harbor SWIM plan.

Seagrass extent in Charlotte Harbor began to decline in 2016 with major losses between 2018 and 2020. Since 2018, the Harbor is at all-time historic low acreage since mapping in this estuary began in 1988. Much of this loss is concentrated along eastern Charlotte Harbor, the area known as the East Wall. Coincident with these historic seagrass losses was a major expansion of filamentous macroalgae, much of which belongs to the genus *Dapis*. The cause of these losses is complex and involves several factors including the 2017-2018 Red Tide event, one of the worst in history according to NOAA. Between 2020 and 2022, the Harbor saw only a 2% loss (360 acres) with some areas showing signs of a slow recovery. In 2024, the District began the next mapping cycle. The flight window for the 2024 seagrass maps opened on December 1, 2023, with acquisition being completed in March 2024. Aerial imagery is acquired using a high-resolution digital camera mounted on a fixed-wing aircraft flying at an altitude of 9,000 feet. Image post-processing was completed over the summer and photointerpretation completed in December 2024. Final results for Charlotte Harbor, pending final accuracy assessment, for the 2024 mapping cycle will be released early 2025.

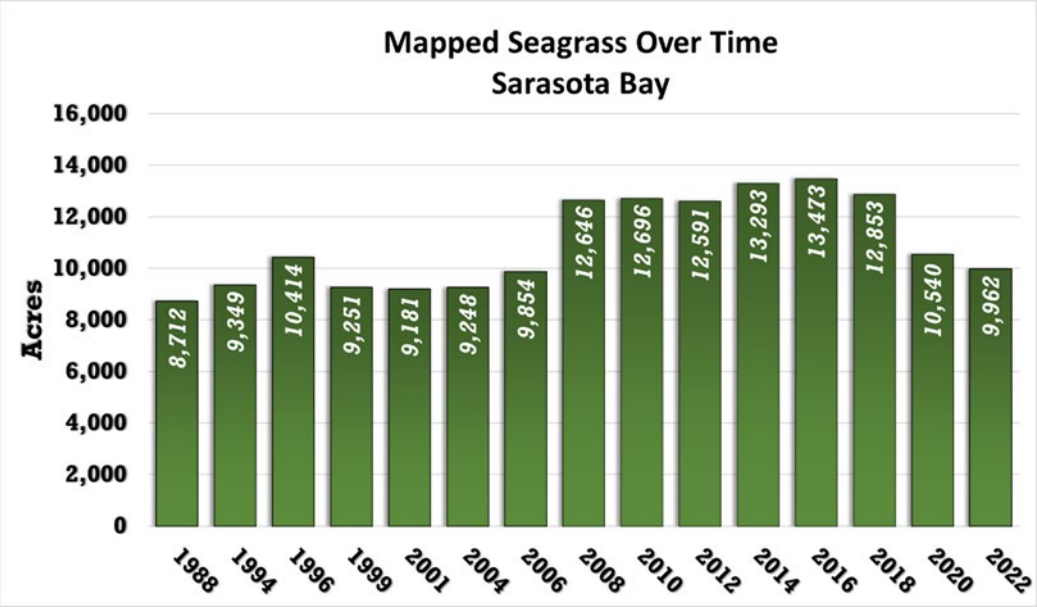



*Source: District SWIM staff, 2023*

The Charlotte Harbor Flatwoods Initiative (CHFI) is a multi-agency initiative lead by the South Florida Water Management District to restore flows, promote sheet flow enhancement, and restore wetland hydroperiods in Babcock Webb and Yucca Pens Wildlife Management Area (WMA; and improve the timing and magnitude of flows to tidal creeks west of Yucca Pens WMA. During 2022, District funded data collection contributed to the development of a baseline hydrologic model and scenarios to determine hydrologic benefits of remedying artificial drainage from the Yucca Pens WMA as well as storing and routing excess water from Babcock Web.

The Coastal Charlotte Harbor Monitoring Network (CCHMN) is an ongoing project to monitor water quality and establish long-term water quality monitoring stations in Charlotte Harbor and the estuarine areas of the Peace and Myakka Rivers. It is a collaborative effort that began in 2000, between the District, Charlotte County, and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. This data provides the basis for habitat restoration planning and management and water quality improvement projects.

**Sarasota Bay:**
Seagrass extent reached record high levels in 2016. Since then, the acreage in Sarasota Bay has been on the decline with the greatest loss between 2018 and 2020 of 18%. In 2022, the bay lost an additional 6% reaching a 15-year low of 9,962 acres. The cause of these losses is complex and involves several factors including nutrient runoff, and the 2017-2018 Red Tide event, one of the worst in history according to NOAA. Despite these losses, field verification of Sarasota Bay in 2022 suggested that some areas were beginning to recover but at coverages too sparse to be mapped. In 2024, the District began the next mapping cycle. The flight window for the 2024 seagrass maps opened on December 1, 2023, with acquisition being completed in March 2024. Aerial imagery is acquired using a high-resolution digital camera mounted on a fixed-wing aircraft flying at an altitude of 9,000 feet. Image post-processing was completed over the summer and photointerpretation completed in December 2024. Final results for Sarasota Bay, pending final accuracy assessment, for the 2024 mapping cycle will be released early 2025. Field work during the 2024 mapping cycle saw significant expansion of seagrasses in some areas.



*Source: District SWIM staff, 2023*

**Shell/Prairie and Joshua Creeks:** The intent of the Shell, Prairie and Joshua Creeks Reasonable Assurance Plan (SPJCRAP), adopted on February 7, 2012, pursuant to a DEP order, was to improve water quality within these watersheds with explicit emphasis on TMDL impaired sub-basins.

Specifically, the goal was to consistently meet Class I surface-water quality criteria in Florida's Surface Water Quality Standards rules (F.A.C. 62-302.530) for chloride, specific conductance and total dissolved solids (TDS). The target date for achieving reductions in the identified water quality parameters was 2014.

In April 2016, the District, along with the Shell, Prairie and Joshua Creek Stakeholders Group (SPJCSG), submitted the final performance monitoring report required under the SPJCRAP to DEP. This report documented water quality improvements resulting from regulatory and resource management actions specified in the plan. The DEP delisted Prairie Creek as impaired for TDS and specific conductance based on the findings in the final monitoring report and a request by the District and the SPJCSG. The final monitoring report also suggested that surface waters within WBIDs 2040 and 2041 naturally exceed DEP Class I drinking water standards. Management actions will continue

to be implemented in the Shell Creek watershed to address both water quality and quantity issues. DEP did not delist the two WBIDs in Shell Creek (2040 and 2041) as impaired, but the DEP has categorized them as a low priority for TMDL development, due in part to the continuing management actions that will be taken by the stakeholders. In FY2024, four Mini-FARMS projects and one FARMS projects were approved in the SPJC Priority area, resulting in an estimated 130,739 gpd reduction in groundwater use which reduces the TDS from reaching receiving water bodies.

***Objective: Develop and update plans and implement projects for water quality improvement***

The District's SWIM program continues restoration activities for Charlotte Harbor and Sarasota Bay.

In FY2024, design and permitting continue for the Cape Haze Ecosystem Restoration project. This project will create and enhance estuarine and freshwater wetlands and adjacent uplands on approximately 410 coastal acres within the Charlotte Harbor watershed. This is a continuation of the conceptual plan created under the Coral Creek Restoration project with two previous phases already completed.

***Objective: Assist local governments with implementation of Best Management Practices to achieve water quality standards***

The District uses its local government comprehensive plan amendment review program to communicate development strategies and practices for achieving greater water quality protection. This tool has assisted with the implementation of many District efforts. Examples of strategies communicated include the retention of native vegetation and preference for central sewer use when water bodies are at risk; incorporation of open spaces in flood prone areas; and use of clustering in more appropriate development areas. Most plan review feedback is provided for consideration and voluntary implementation. The District's review and feedback also helps in satisfying provisions in Chapters 373 and 163, F.S., which require technical assistance for the development of comprehensive plan amendments.

In addition, the District uses its CFI program to help fund BMP implementation. The funding of BMPs is used extensively for watershed management, SWIM and springs initiatives. The District, in cooperation with Sarasota County, funded and completed water quality improvements and urban upland and channel shoreline restoration in Hudson Bayou which contributes to improvements in Sarasota Bay. Also, through CFI, the City of Bradenton Beach completed design on stormwater retrofits in the area of Avenues B and C that will contribute to improvements to Sarasota Bay.

# All Regions

## Strategic Initiative: Develop and implement a capital improvement plan for District flood control and water conservation structures and associated facilities

***Objective: Development and implementation of Asset Management Program***

Minimizing flood risks is a component of the District's mission that is supported by the operation and maintenance of the District's 84 water control structures, 17 of which are Flood Control Structures. In 2018, the District Structure Operations staff began developing an Asset Management Program, which uses risk to prioritize how available resources are used within the program. The program consists of four elements: a Capital Improvement Program (CIP), Breakdown and Repair Program, Maintenance Management Program and Life Cycle Management Program. Work within each of the four elements will be prioritized by total risk which consists of the likelihood and the consequences of a failure. Each element is also evaluated for efficiency opportunities and the possibility of a reduction in responsibilities. Several steps towards the implementation of the Asset Management Program have already been initiated.

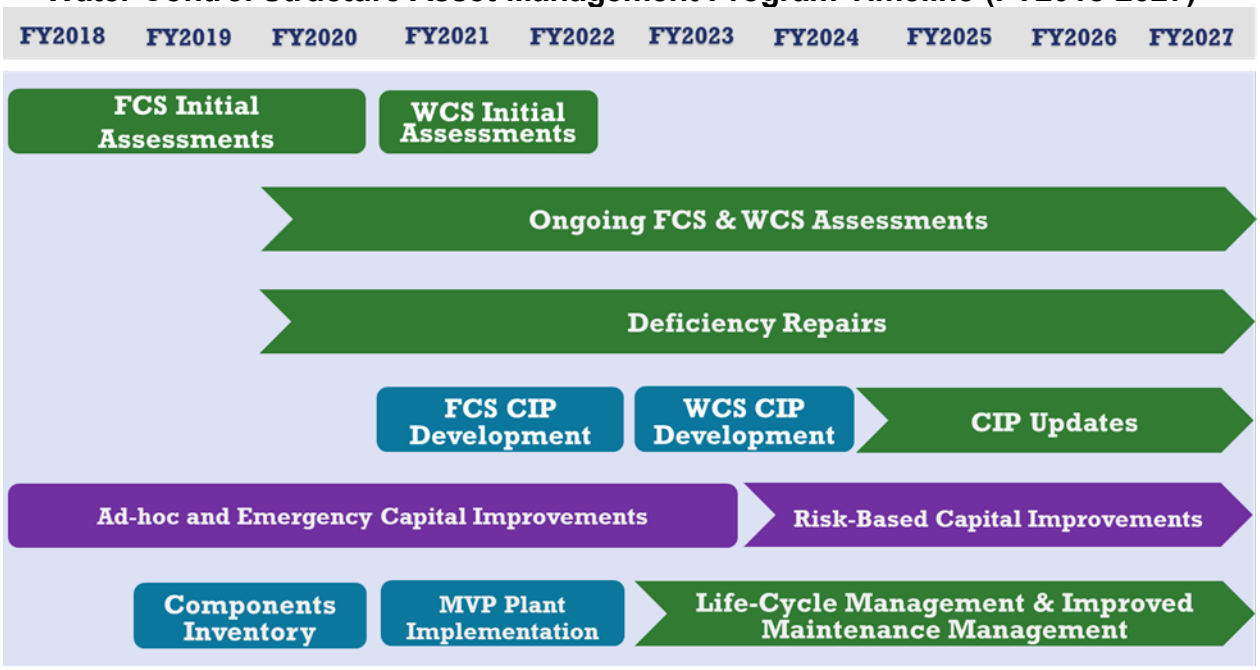
Below is a summary of the Asset Management Program activities to date:

- In FY2024, 100 percent of District flood control and water conservation structures requiring a routine assessment were completed
- In FY2024, the CIP for the District's water conservation structures was completed.
- In FY2024, Capital project activities for both flood and water conservation structures include:
    - Cement repair and cathodic protection at the Lake Tarpon Outfall Canal Structure 551 was substantially completed.
    - Replacement of the Golf Course Structure was substantially completed
    - Design was completed for the cement repair and cathodic protection at the Tampa Bypass Canal Structure 160.
    - Design of the S-160 Gate and Lift System Replacement has been started.
    - Design of the WC-2 Fixed-Crest Weir Conversion has been started
    - Feasibility study of the water control system replacement has been started.

***Objective: Minimize risk to the District and the public through effective asset management of the District's water control structures***

The CIP is a major component of the Asset Management Program. This Program will ensure that the rehabilitation or replacement of any of the District's water control structures is properly planned and budgeted. The CIP will serve as a long-term budgeting tool and will allow for the creation of a stable capital budget. It will also serve as a decision-making tool for competing resource needs within the Structure Operations Section and the District. Maintenance Management is essential to ensure asset life cycles are reached or exceeded. This ensures the District will maximize the benefits of its investment in assets for the taxpayers. Life Cycle Management of individual structure components will ensure components are replaced prior to the failure risk increasing beyond acceptable levels or an actual failure.

**Water Control Structure Asset Management Program Timeline (FY2018-2027)**




*Source: District Operations staff, 2023*

## Priority: Ensure long-term sustainable water supply

***Objective: Maximize beneficial use of reclaimed water***

The Strategic Plan identifies the objectives of 75 percent reclaimed water utilization and resource benefit by 2040. As of 2023, with District assistance, utilities within the District have achieved 56 percent utilization and 75 percent resource benefit, which is on the way to meeting the interim 2030 goal of 65 percent utilization and resource benefit. For 2023, Districtwide there was a beneficial reclaimed water flow of 216 mgd, while the objectives are 227 mgd by 2025 and 333 mgd by 2040. The regional water supply planning process updates these targets as needed.