

**Regional Water Supply Plan Presentation
Public Meeting
July 23, 2015
Inverness, Florida 5:30 p.m.**

Board Meeting Room Participants:

Scott Adams, County Commissioner
Bernard Berauer, Citizen
DJ Boone, Citizen
Pat Brady, Citizen
Duane Brooks, Citizen
Tom Bruening, Citizen
Bob Coleman, Citizen
Brian Coleman, Citrus County Sheriff's Office
Maxine Connor, Citizen
Mike Czerwinski, Citizen
Burt Eno, Citizen
Paul Ferman, Citizen
Larry Hartman, Too Far
Frank Heath, Citizen
Dan Hilliard, Citizen
Wayne Hilton, Citizen
Jerry Hummel, Citizen
Jeff Kinnard, Citizen
Betty Knieper, Citizen
D. F. Koonce, Citizen
Sandra Koonce, Citizen
Mr. Kreyling, Citizen
Jerry Krull, Citizen
Laura Lee, Floral City Matters
Betty Martin, Citizen
Bud Osborn, Citizen
John Outlaw, Citizen
Richard Owen, WRWSA
Peter J. Redstan, Citizen
Brad W. Rimbey, Citizen
Mary Schops, Citizen
Keith Schwett, Citizen
AB Sidibe, Citrus County Chronicle
Jack Speakman, Citizen
Arlene Speakman, Citizen
Chris Sweazy, SFWMD
Avis Washington, Citizen
Ray Wright, Citizen
Greg Youngren, Citizen

District Staff:

Mike Bartlett
Jonathan Bilby
Carole Estes
John Ferguson
Mark Fulkerson
Mary Margaret Hull
Doug Leeper
Josh Madden
Tamera McBride
Jason Mickel
Amy Poxson
Patricia Robertshaw
George Schlutermann, Project Manager
Kevin Wills
Jay Yingling
Chris Zajac

From 3:30 to 4:30 p.m., tables and posters were set-up to facilitate discussion with the public about: reclaimed water, water conservation, evaluation of water resources and protection, population and water demand projections, and water supply options/projects and funding.

From 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. District staff answered questions at the various tables and booths.

At 5:30 p.m. Chris Zajac, Government Affairs Program Manager and George Schlutermann, Project Manager conducted a welcome, overview of the workshop, and a presentation about the RWSP.

Following the presentation, a panel of speakers consisting of Richard Owen (WRWSA), Jason Mickel (Water Supply Section Manager), and George Schlutermann (Project Manager) answered questions from the public.

Audience Comments, Questions and Answer:

Larry Hartman, President Too Far

Question: Regarding clarification of terminology used in the plan, does “surface water” mean lakes, rivers and streams?

Answer: Yes.

Question: The Northern Region portion of the Regional Water Supply Plan is currently labeled *Draft*, does this mean the plan is not finalized?

Answer: Yes.

Question: How much influence and change does the public input have on the plan?

Answer: Comments have the potential to affect plan content and are appropriately incorporated throughout the comment and review period. Staff will respond to all questions and comments submitted during the comment/review period. All comments will be included in a Comments & Response document and presented to the Governing Board.

Question: With the minimum flows and levels that exist now, how will that restrict taking water from an area in anticipation of an increase in population?

Answer: Minimum flows and levels are set per state law and are one of the factors considered when reviewing water use permit applications.

Question: Can we get to a point where no more water can be withdrawn?

Answer: Yes, but we can reduce our use of groundwater by implementing water conservation programs and developing alternative water supplies.

Question: Before taking water from Citrus County, will all resources in a certain region be exhausted? In other words, is the Local Sources First concept applicable for the region?

Answer: Provisions addressing “local sources first” are included in the Florida Statutes and would require development of local water sources before developing sources outside that jurisdiction. It should be noted that the statutory provisions regarding local sources first address regional water withdrawals based on governmental regions, not watersheds.

Question: Have environmental studies been completed to assess area sea grass populations?

Answer: Yes, the District is a leader in sea grass monitoring and has conducted numerous studies to track the extent of sea grasses throughout the region.

Question: Will we ever get to the point that there will not be adequate water supply and no further increases in population?

Answer: The Southwest Florida Water Management District does not have the authority to regulate increases in human population size. Although we cannot predict and do not foresee restrictions being made regarding population increases in the area, the current draft regional water supply plan outlines our best efforts for anticipating and meeting future water demand projections.

Comment: Instead of building a 600-acre reservoir to store water withdrawn from the Withlacoochee River, it would make more sense and cost less to clean-out or dredge Lake Tsala Apopka to enhance the holding capacity of the lake.

Question: Is there serious consideration to build an off-stream reservoir adjacent to the Withlacoochee River?

Answer: The Withlacoochee River Watershed Initiative included a scenario that tested the benefits of a hypothetical reservoir that could be used to alleviate flooding in the Arrowhead community. The results of the modeled scenario indicated that flooding would not be significantly reduced if a reservoir existed in the area. Development of a reservoir for this region should be considered a conceptual project at this time, and if pursued would involve a long term, multi-jurisdictional planning process that would include all stakeholders prior to design and construction activities.

Question: What is the breakdown of the amount of water used by citizen and the amount by businesses in Citrus County?

Answer: Public supply water use in Citrus County in 2010 was about 21 million gallons per day (mgd) and projected water use in 2035 is about 28 mgd. The industrial/commercial and mining/dewatering use in 2010 was about 1 mgd and the total projected water use for these two categories in 2015 is similar (about 1 mgd). The second largest use type is recreational land use. Information concerning water use types and quantities is available in the 2014 Estimated Water Use Report available on the District's website.

Comment: I would like to thank staff for their time and expertise. Would also like to invite District staff to come to a Too Far meeting and educate members on the 2014 Estimated Water Use Report.

Brad Rimbey, Citizen

Question: What quantities of water withdrawals are associated with electric utility consumptive use permits?

Answer: These quantities are included in the industrial commercial element of the actual use and projected water use estimates.

Comment/Question: Impacts of 2010 groundwater withdrawals have recently been reported as 2.1% and 2.2% of the respective natural flows in the Chassahowitzka and Homosassa river systems. Given that the minimum flow established for these systems allow up to a 3% change in natural flows and that results derived with the primary modeling tool used for assessing withdrawal impacts may include an approximated 6% error or uncertainty margin, why has a Springs Coast water use caution area not been established? It is recommended that a water

use caution area be established when withdrawal impacts are within 1% of allowable percentage-of-flow reductions associated with established minimum flows and levels

Answer: Chassahowitzka natural flow is -2.1 and Homosassa is -2.2.

Question: Seeing that both are close to hitting their MFLs, why has a Springs Coast water use caution area not been established? Recommended that be done if it reaches within one percent of hitting the MFL.

Answer: Regarding the potential for a Springs Coast WUCA, the District's Governing Board directed staff to include the northern six counties in the 2010 RWSP update process to ensure that a proactive, preventive approach was taken to water management in the Northern Planning Region. The goal was to develop measures, including conservation and reclaimed water, and optimize groundwater withdrawals to sustainably meet future demands while preventing unacceptable impacts to the resources. As per Chapter 373, Florida Statutes, the District's Governing Board can determine if regional action is necessary to address cumulative water withdrawals that are causing or may cause adverse impacts to water resources and related natural resources. The District's Governing Board may declare an area a WUCA by adopting a rule or issuing an order that imposes special requirements for existing water users and permit applicants to prevent or remedy impacts to water and related natural resources.

On October 30, 2012, the District's Governing Board directed staff to initiate rule-making to adopt minimum flows for the Homosassa and Chassahowitzka River Systems at 97% of natural flows. The Governing Board motion also included the following:

"Direct staff to develop the framework for a Water Use Caution Area for Hernando and Citrus Counties, including options with associated costs, with such framework being developed with stakeholder input and being presented at its June meeting."

The Governing Board subsequently delayed action on the development of a framework for a WUCA due to the pending legal proceedings. As the legal process continued, the District continued the development of the 2015 RWSP.

As part of the 2015 RWSP development process, which included stakeholder input, staff evaluated the need for a WUCA in the District's northern six counties. Results from this effort, as summarized in the 2015 RWSP, indicate sufficient water supply is available in the Northern Planning Region of the District through the 20-year planning period. Therefore, development of a WUCA in this region is not currently necessary. It should be noted that many of the provisions of a WUCA, such as enhanced conservation strategies, per capita goals, and improved utilization of reclaimed water, are already in effect and being implemented within the region.

In addition to the development of an updated 2015 RWSP for the Northern Planning Region, the District and other entities in the region are involved in additional water resource assessments and planning efforts. For example, a number of spring and river system minimum flows and levels (MFLs) will be established or reevaluated in the planning region during the next five years. A goal for these efforts is to ensure that future water supply demands will be met without adversely impacting proposed or established MFLs. The District updates the RWSP every 5 years to include the latest and best available information.

Keith Schwett, Citizen/Too Far Member

Question: By what form does a proposal become a project? Is the public notified?

Answer: For a proposed project to become reality, it will be fully noticed and a public meetings would be held. The project would be vetted on Board agendas for both agencies (District and WRWSA). It is important to note that demands in Citrus County can be met until 2035 by utilization of Upper Floridan groundwater.

Ben Berauer, Citizen

Question: Why are conservation efforts not included in the demand projections?

Answer: Water conservation is the prevention and reduction of wasteful or unnecessary uses of water to improve efficiency of use. Conservation is one of the primary solutions identified in the plan that will extend the available supply of water to support existing and future needs. Conservation opportunities exist across all water use sectors. For planning purposes, we consider conservation a source of water. Projections are conducted factoring an average of previous actual use not assumptions of future use.

Commissioner Scott Adams thanked staff for holding the event locally for residents to participate.

Question: What is the Withlacoochee Regional Water Supply Authority doing to protect the local resources and keep them in the county?

Answer: The Water Supply Authority completely supports maintaining the Local Sources First provisions of state statutes. The Authority water supply plans show future needs met by local sources and there are no plans for transferring water outside the region.