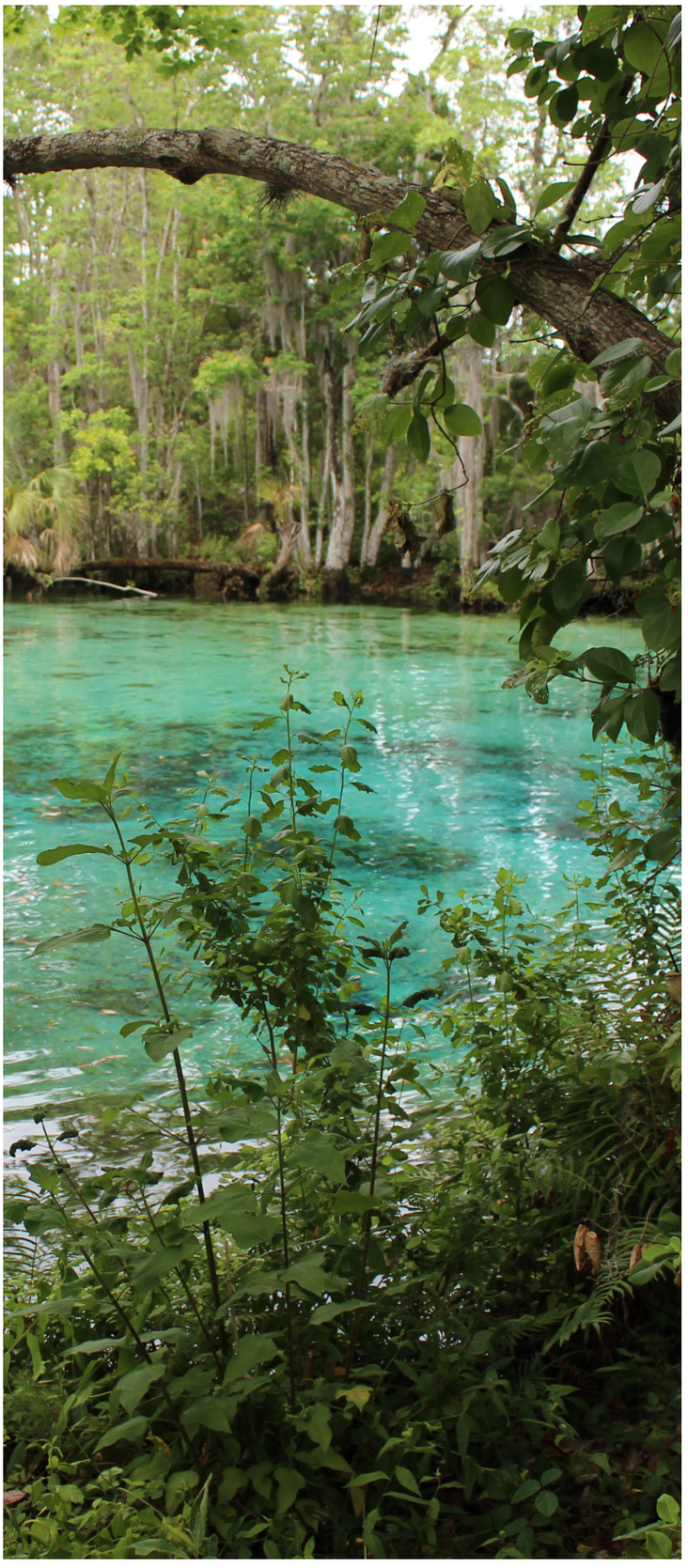
February 2024

FY2023
Water Conservation Summary Report



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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

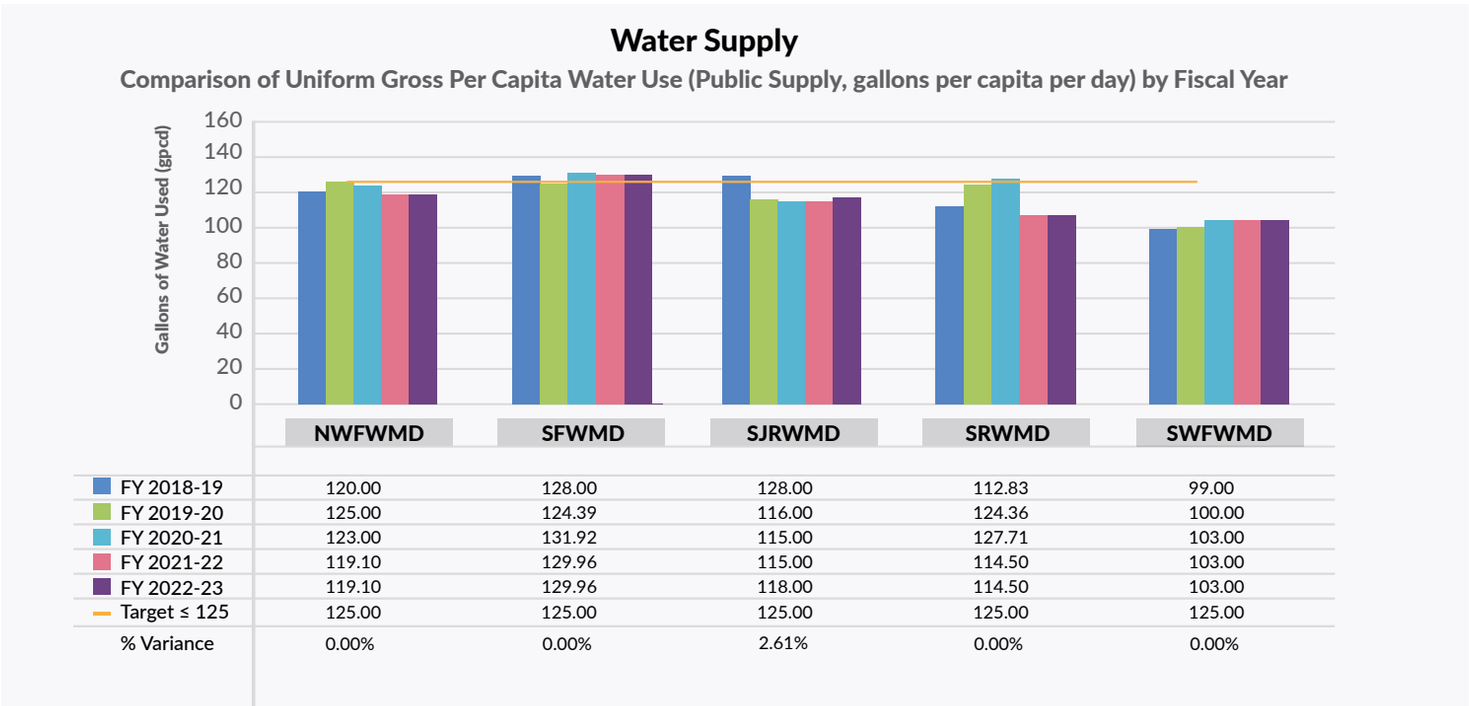
Water conservation is a key component of the District's mission to ensure the public's water needs are met and is one of the 11 Strategic Initiatives outlined in the District's 2023-2027 Strategic Plan. Within the Conservation Strategic Initiative, the District's goal is to enhance efficiencies in all water-use sectors to ensure beneficial use.

Water use data provides evidence of the District's continued commitment to water conservation. For several years, the District has maintained the lowest public supply per capita rate in the state, currently at 103 gallons per day (see Figure 1). While the population in the District has grown 133% over a 40-year period from 1982-2022, total water use has decreased by 23% due to the increased conservation and development of alternative water supplies. Conservation is generally one of the most cost-effective tools of water supply planning for population growth, allowing the deferral of development of more expensive traditional or alternative water supply projects.

This report summarizes the District's water conservation efforts, including annual accomplishments and measurable water savings, for Fiscal Year 2023 (October 2022–September 2023). Information on reclaimed water or source substitution can be found in the District's Annual Reuse Report.

The following report covers conservation efforts throughout the District, including cost-share funding, technical assistance, the Water Conservation Initiative, education and outreach, research and regulation.

Figure 1. Comparison of Uniform Gross Per Capita Water Use by Fiscal Year (Source: Water Management District Performance Metrics for the fourth quarter of FY2022-23 by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection)



	NWFWMD	SFWMD	SJRWMD	SRWMD	SWFWMD
FY 2018-19	120.00	128.00	128.00	112.83	99.00
FY 2019-20	125.00	124.39	116.00	124.36	100.00
FY 2020-21	123.00	131.92	115.00	127.71	103.00
FY 2021-22	119.10	129.96	115.00	114.50	103.00
FY 2022-23	119.10	129.96	118.00	114.50	103.00
Target ≤ 125	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00	125.00
% Variance	0.00%	0.00%	2.61%	0.00%	0.00%

NWFWMD = Northwest Florida Water Management District
SFWMD = South Florida Water Management District
SJRWMD = St. Johns River Water Management District
SRWMD = Suwannee River Water Management District
SWFWMD = Southwest Florida Water Management District

II. COST-SHARE FUNDING

Cooperative Funding Initiative

The Cooperative Funding Initiative (CFI) is a key program for building partnerships with external stakeholders, including local governments and regional water supply authorities. The CFI generally covers 50% of the costs of projects that help create sustainable water resources, enhance conservation efforts, improve water quality, restore natural systems and provide flood protection.

The District has provided CFI funding assistance since 1988, with the first water conservation program funded in 1991. Conservation projects are generally more cost-effective in comparison to other types of CFI projects related to water supply. In recent years, District staff have transitioned smaller utility-led conservation projects to the Water Incentives Supporting Efficiency (WISE) Program.

Common indoor conservation programs include toilet rebates for converting to high-efficiency models and conservation kits that include low-flow showerheads and faucet aerators. Common outdoor water conservation programs include irrigation system evaluations, landscape and irrigation enhancements and irrigation smart controllers. Additional program types eligible for CFI funding are line looping, advanced metering analytics, Florida Water Star℠ builder rebates, golf course irrigation enhancements and industrial/commercial-related water efficiency improvements.

Table 1. FY2023 CFI Conservation Projects

County	Project #	Cooperator	Title	Budgeted Total Costs	Budgeted District Share	Estimated Savings (gpd*)
Multi	Q306	Withlacoochee Regional Water Supply Authority (WRWSA)	WRWSA Irrigation Evaluation Program, Phase 7	$102,000	$51,000	24,756
Marion	Q311	Bay Laurel Center Community Development District	Bay Laurel Center CDD Water Conservation Program, Phase 2**	$383,800	$191,900	28,751
Citrus	Q320	Citrus County	Citrus County Water Conservation Program, Phase 6**	$42,700	$21,350	6,048
Manatee	Q319	Manatee County	Manatee County Toilet Rebate Project, Phase 15	$100,000	$50,000	17,403
Sarasota	Q304	City of Venice	City of Venice Toilet Rebate and Retrofit Project, Phase 9	$33,000	$16,500	5,293
Total				**$661,500**	**$330,750**	**82,251**

** Gallons per day*

***Project encompasses a multitude of water conservation initiatives.*

Facilitating Agricultural Resource Management Systems Program

The Facilitating Agricultural Resource Management Systems (FARMS) Program is an agricultural cost-share reimbursement program that reduces groundwater withdrawals from the Upper Floridan aquifer through conservation and alternative water supply best management practices (BMPs). The program is designed to serve as an incentive to the agricultural community to conserve groundwater use and promote resource sustainability. FARMS reimbursement can amount to 50-75% of total project costs for eligible BMPs.

FARMS is a public/private partnership developed by the District and the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS). FARMS includes both conservation and alternative water supply projects. Within FARMS is also the Mini-FARMS Program. Mini-FARMS provides cost-share funding for agricultural operations with smaller projects. Mini-FARMS reimbursement is 75% of total project costs not to exceed a reimbursement of $8,000. The Mini-FARMS cap will increase to $10,000 in FY2024.

In FY2023, FARMS approved two water conservation related projects with a total estimated savings of 112,700 gpd (see Table 2). Mini-FARMS approved 38 conservation-related projects with a total estimated savings greater than 373,500 gpd (see Table 3). More information on the FARMS program can be found in the FARMS Status Report.

Table 2. FARMS Conservation Projects Approved in FY2023

Project # / Name	County	Budgeted District Share Reimbursement	Estimated Water Savings (gpd)
H804 - FD Berries USA LLC	Highlands	$112,611	22,500
H816 - Marshall Tree Farm, Inc.	Levy	$31,707	90,200
Total		**$144,318**	**112,700**

The District's FARMs and Mini-FARMs program funded water saving technologies, such as weather stations and automated valves, to allow more water efficient irrigation practices.

Table 3. Mini-FARMS Conservation Projects Approved in FY2023

Project Name/#	County	Budgeted District Share Reimbursement
5K Farms WMD 368	Hillsborough	$6,750.00
Adam Young Strawberry Ranch WMD 356	Hillsborough	$1,687.50
Ag Metrics Group WMD 381	Hillsborough	$1,782.00
Arcadia Fruit Co WMD 370	DeSoto	$8,000.00
Arthur S Womack Family Charlottes Web 2 WMD 373	Hardee	$6,503.25
Arthur S Womack Family LLC Charlottes Web 1 WMD 372	Hardee	$8,000.00
Astin Farm 6059 WMD 358	Manatee	$8,000.00
Astin Farm 7451 WMD 359	Hillsborough	$8,000.00
Astin Farm 7451 WMD 360	Hillsborough	$8,000.00
Berry Red Farms WMD 350	Manatee	$1,800.00
Blackman WMD 389	Hardee	$1,687.50
Bonnie Blue Ranch Ph 3 WMD 375	Hillsborough	$5,404.50
Bountiful Lands WMD 377	Polk	$5,332.50
Burgin Farms WMD 367	Hardee	$1,777.50
Creekside Nursery Inc WMD 387	Pasco	$3,180.00
Eileen Blair WMD 369	Hardee	$4,828.50
Farm N 4 U WMD 378	Hillsborough	$3,375.00
Ferris Farms WMD 353	Citrus	$3,375.00
Florida Pacific Farms WMD 349	Hillsborough	$6,750.00
Frost Proof Farms WMD 383	Polk	$1,687.50
G&G Farms WMD 364	Hillsborough	$3,375.00
Gerald Williams 9456 - Three Sons Farms WMD 355	Hillsborough	$5,062.50
Gerald Williams 4363 - Three Sons Farms WMD 354	Hillsborough	$3,375.00
Green Haven Bamboo WMD 347	Hardee	$4,830.00
Heartland Ag Group WMD 382	Sumter	$3,375.00
Hernandez Farms WMD 365	Hillsborough	$8,000.00
Hinton Farms WMD 363	Hillsborough	$8,000.00
Hinton Farms WMD 392	Hillsborough	$4,860.00
J&L Triple B Ranch WMD 380	DeSoto	$5,321.25
Lake Placid Fruit and Nut WMD 384	Highlands	$3,375.00
Legacy Land Preservation Group WMD 374	Polk	$7,488.75
Passion Farms WMD 371	Hillsborough	$1,687.50
Picnic Tree Farm - Automation WMD 351	Charlotte	$7,523.44
Picnic Tree Farm - Fertigation WMD 352	Charlotte	$8,000.00
Sizemore Farms, Inc. 9887 WMD 361	Polk	$1,687.50
Sizemore Farms, Inc. 9887 WMD 362	Polk	$8,000.00
Three Sons Farms 10402 WMD 391	Hillsborough	$1,687.50
Womack Maxwell 2 WMD 385	Hardee	$6,099.75
Total		**$187,668.94**

III. UTILITIES SERVICES

Utilities Services Group

The District's Utilities Services Group assists public water utilities in increasing system efficiency and reducing system losses. It includes the following services:

- Leak detection surveys
- Water audit guidance and evaluation
- Meter accuracy testing
- Flushing reduction assistance

Since inception of the program in 1990, the leak detection team has conducted 162 leak detection surveys throughout the District, locating 1,637 leaks of various sizes, with an estimated 5.9 million gallons per day (mgd) of potential water savings. In FY2023, 16 water audits and four leak detection surveys were completed (see Table 4).

Table 4. FY2023 Utilities Services Group Activity

Program*	Quantity Conducted	Results
Water Audits	16	A water audit report was provided to each participating utility.
Leak Detection	4	Identified 17 leaks, with a potential estimated water savings of 14,940 gpd.

**Please refer to Table 1 for utilities services-related CFI projects.*

Mobile Irrigation Laboratory

The Mobile Irrigation Laboratory (MIL) is a cooperative project that is funded and managed by the District and operated by the United States Department of Agriculture — Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). The NRCS-MIL evaluates agricultural irrigation system efficiencies on a voluntary and confidential basis and provides help with new technology awareness. The District uses the MIL program to assist growers in reducing water use, which in turn provides cost savings to the grower. The water savings realized from implementing system improvements identified by the MIL evaluations can be significant per project and regionally benefits groundwater supply, while also helping to improve water quality.

The MIL has assisted with more than 1,600 systems since the project began and the agricultural community has provided a great deal of positive feedback concerning its value. The MIL project contract has been in place since the mid-1980s. Contracts are approved for five-year terms with funding at $50,000 per year, and a renewal contract is anticipated after FY2024.

Table 5. FY2023 Mobile Irrigation Laboratory Activity

Site Visits*	Total Acres Served	Potential Water Savings**
85	2,939	52 million gallons

**Site visits include, but are not limited to, system evaluations, catch can tests, pressure tests and new equipment installation and training.*

***Potential Water Savings are the annual savings that could be obtained if all improvements are implemented as recommended.*

Water Conservation Project Cost Model

The Water Conservation Project Cost Model is a calculator available on the District's website that illustrates the potential effectiveness of various water conservation programs. The model is designed to calculate estimated program costs and water savings benefits associated with different water users and conservation measures. As a result, it can assist utilities in choosing projects that will provide the greatest benefits. In addition to standard costs associated with implementing a conservation measure, the model provides an option to include the costs for research and development, and equipment or training, if applicable.

Water-Conserving Rate Structures

The District works with utilities to adopt water-conserving rate structures to reduce per capita water use. These efforts assist utilities in achieving a compliance per capita rate of 150 gallons per capita per day (gpcd) or less as identified in the District's Strategic Plan and Rule[1]. As the pricing of water can signal that potable water is an increasingly scarce and valuable resource, rate structures are one way to motivate customers to conserve. To estimate the effectiveness of a water-conserving rate structure, the District provides utilities with a free water rate simulation model, WATERATE2008. WATERATE2008 is a planning tool that simulates how changes in water and sewer rate structures impact water revenues and water demand. As part of the projection, the model allows a revenue neutral evaluation. This takes into account the decrease in water demand that results from an increase in price.

Local Government Comprehensive Plan Amendment Reviews

The District reviews local government comprehensive plan amendments pursuant to Chapter 163, Part II, F.S., and Section 373.711, F.S. Conservation is promoted through technical assistance comments and recommendations that focus on proposed policy language and updates to Ten-Year Water Supply Facilities Work Plans. In addition, consideration of Florida Water Star℠, Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ and other water-conservation programs, methods and techniques are encouraged for land use changes that involve increases in residential density.

[1] *Rule 40D-3.091 (a) which references the Water Use Permit Applicant's Handbook Part B (section 2.3.7.2)*

IV. WATER CONSERVATION INITIATIVE

The Water Conservation Initiative (WCI) is an ongoing effort designed to maximize assistance to public suppliers and promote the implementation of best management practices to achieve conservation objectives within the District's Strategic Plan. The WCI objectives include the following:

- Assist utilities in the District to reduce regional per capita, as identified in the Strategic Plan.
- Identify public supply Water Use Permits (WUPs) expiring on a two-year basis to ensure internal and external coordination occurs prior to and during permitting to comprehensively evaluate potential conservation measures.
- Take feedback received from utilities and develop recommendations to improve the District's conservation efforts.

Divisions within the District with representatives on the Water Conservation Initiative Team include Regulation, Resource Management, Employee, Outreach and General Services, and the Office of General Counsel. More information on the WCI can be found in the annual WCI Planning Report.

Table 6. Water Conservation Initiative Activities and Accomplishments for FY2023

County	Activity	Outcome
Districtwide	Completed the fifth year of the Water Incentives Supporting Efficiency (WISE) program.	Approved 10 projects in FY2023 with a total budget allocation of $134,822.33.
Districtwide	Completed the fourth year of the Conservation Education Program (CEP).	Developed and implemented projects with five project partners. The CEP budget for FY2023 was $30,000.
Inter-District	District Regulation and Water Supply staff coordinated on the review and discussion of Public Supply WUPs exceeding 150 gpcd.	Non-compliance letters were sent to utilities with a compliance per capita above 150 gpcd.
Inter-District	District Communications and Regulation staff supported the WISE Program.	Staff assisted with tradeshow/conference events and notified WUP applicants of WISE availability.
Inter-District	District Regulation and Water Supply staff coordinated on the review of water conservation plans and population projection calculations.	Coordinated review for seven public supply WUP applications.
Districtwide	Compiled information on District water conservation related efforts and activities.	Published FY2022 Water Conservation Summary Report.
Pasco and Polk Counties	District Communications staff worked with Government and Community Affairs and Office of General Counsel staff on Florida Water Star℠ (FWS) codes and ordinances.	Wrote FWS into cities of Frostproof, Lake Wales, Zephyrhills and Winter Haven building ordinances.
Hillsborough County	District Communications staff coordinated with internal staff and external project partners on the "Rainfall Signage" pilot project.	The "Rainfall Signage" project was completed. While the water saving objectives were not achieved, many lessons were learned that will be implemented in FY24 signage projects to help increase water savings.
Districtwide	Held utility water conservation coordinator meeting at Tampa Service Office.	Approximately 30 utility water conservation staff attended the meeting to learn about the District's CEP, discuss conservation trends and participate in a roundtable discussion.
Manatee County	District staff met with the City of Bradenton.	Staff exchanged information on conservation efforts and related District programs.
Levy County	District staff met with City of Williston.	Staff exchanged information on conservation efforts and related District programs.

Water Incentives Supporting Efficiency

The Water Incentives Supporting Efficiency (WISE) program is a cost-share program aimed to financially incentivize water conservation projects with nonagricultural water users. WISE was initiated under the WCI based on the District's recognition for the need to offer an alternative funding opportunity for smaller projects that may not be supported through the CFI. This includes projects implemented by utilities, hospitals, schools, prisons, homeowners associations, golf courses, hotels, manufacturers, food processing facilities and other commercial users.

In FY2023, the WISE program allocated $134,822.33 across 10 projects with a total estimated savings of 76,197 gpd. At a cost share of up to 50%, approved applicants were eligible to receive up to $20,000 per project in District funds.

Table 7. WISE Projects Approved in FY2023

Project #	Project Name	County	Budgeted District Share Reimbursement	Estimated Water Savings (gpd)
53	La Mirada Gardens Plumbing Fixture Replacement	Manatee	$15,195.00	7,250
54	City of Palmetto Toilet Rebate Program	Manatee	$9,500.00	3,869
55	IslandWalk at the West Villages Irrigation Controller Enhancement	Sarasota	$20,000.00	15,005
56	Wyndtree HOA Irrigation Controller Enhancement	Pasco	$4,975.00	13,808
57	Gandy Townhomes Irrigation System Enhancement	Pinellas	$5,000.00	1,203
58	Wellington HOA Irrigation System Enhancement	Hernando	$4,027.33	2,293
59	Pacifica Forest Lakes LLC Toilet Replacement	Pinellas	$20,000.00	9,737
60	Pensam Fountain Square LLC Toilet Replacement	Polk	$16,275.00	1,882
61	Continental Country Club R.O. Irrigation System Enhancement	Sumter	$20,000.00	11,340
62	Citrus County WaterSense℠-labeled Irrigation Controller Rebate Program	Citrus	$19,850.00	9,810
Total			**$134,822.33**	**76,197**

The District's WISE program supported irrigation enhancements at the Wellington community to improve outdoor water efficiency.

Conservation Education Program

The Conservation Education Program (CEP) provides utilities, Extension offices and homeowners associations with support for educational projects that enhance existing efforts to increase residents' knowledge and behaviors that lead to water conservation. The CEP was developed through the WCI in response to utility feedback that residential education is needed to help reduce water use. Through the CEP, the District works with project partners to promote, develop, implement and evaluate approved projects.

The District implemented the fourth year of the CEP in FY2023 with a budget of $30,000. The program supported five project partners in FY2023 to enhance conservation outreach efforts (see Table 8).

Table 8. CEP Projects FY2023

Project Partner	Main Project Type	Project Components
Town of Dundee Utilities	Educational Brochures	• Developed and purchased 2,500 educational brochures on water conservation for use with town hall monitor display
City of Davenport Utilities	Social Norms Based Water Use Mail Out	• Developed and sent four water use mail outs to high water users
City of Lakeland Utilities	Door Hangers and Magnets	• Developed and purchased 4,300 door hangers to promote irrigation evaluations and water restrictions • Developed and purchased 1,000 magnets on local water restrictions
Pinellas County Utilities and UF/IFAS Extension Pinellas County	Rain Sensors and Magnets	• Purchased 50 rain sensors to support irrigation evaluation program • Developed and purchased 300 magnets on local water restrictions
UF/IFAS Extension Polk County	Educational Signage and Micro-Irrigation Kits	• Developed and purchased two educational signs for Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ demonstration sites • Purchased 60 micro-irrigation kits to support workshops hosted by the Extension

V. EDUCATION & OUTREACH

Water Conservation Programs

Florida Water Star℠

The Florida Water Star℠ (FWS) program is a voluntary water conservation certification program for new residential and commercial construction and existing home renovation. The program encourages water efficiency in appliances, plumbing fixtures, irrigation systems and landscapes, as well as water quality benefits from best management practices in landscapes. The program was developed by the St. Johns River Water Management District in 2006 and became a statewide program in 2012.

Through the CFI, the District currently offers FWS rebates in select communities in partnership with local utilities. New homes and commercial buildings receiving FWS certification are eligible for the rebates. The following rebates were offered to builders within the District in FY2023:

- Polk County offered FWS rebates in the amount of $1,000 each. All rebates have been distributed.

- Tampa Bay Water offered rebates in the amount of $1,000 per home. During FY2023, District staff promoted the rebates through the Tampa Bay Builder Association and conducted a FWS Accredited Professionals training at Tampa Bay Water to promote the rebates.

In addition to rebates, during FY2023 the District worked with the cities of Frostproof, Lake Wales, Winter Haven and Zephyrhills to incorporate FWS certification and criteria into local building codes. At the close of FY2023, there were a total of 14 municipalities that incorporated FWS into local building codes. While most cities allow for affidavits to be signed for official FWS certification, the cities of Lake Wales and Zephyrhills require FWS certification for the builder to obtain their Certificate of Occupancy. District staff also attended approximately 40 builder, landscape and irrigation meetings to promote the FWS program.

An average FWS homeowner with outdoor irrigation can save up to 48,000 gallons of water each year. Since 2006, 4,660 properties have been certified by the District. In combination with those certified by the District, additional properties have or will meet FWS criteria based on local codes and ordinances. At build-out, more than 56,430 properties will be required to meet FWS criteria, saving approximately 2.7 billion gallons of water each year.

Florida-Friendly Landscaping™

Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ (FFL) is also part of the District's educational programs. It was created by the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) to educate residents about landscape and irrigation principles that save water and protect water quality. The District promotes the use of FFL to members of the building industry, managers of community development districts and boards, homeowners associations, residents, and landscape and irrigation professionals through development and distribution of program publications and materials and staffing educational booths at FFL workshops and events. The District has supported this program since 2001.

Community Awareness Campaigns

The District has many community-wide outreach programs and awareness campaigns that focus on water conservation, watersheds and water quality. These include:

- "**Skip a Week" Campaign**—To encourage reduced irrigation during the winter months of January and February.

- **Water Conservation Month**—Throughout the month of April, the District works with local government partners to share the importance of water conservation and increase efforts to conserve water.

- **"Watch the Weather, Wait to Water"**—To encourage residents to watch the weather during the summer months of June, July, August and September to offset irrigation with rainfall.

Publications and Materials

Free publications are available to download or order via *WaterMatters.org* for residents within the District. These publications include posters, student worksheets, teacher guides, bookmarks, recreation guides, informational brochures, tip cards and more on a variety of topics related to the District's mission, including conservation.

The District also supplies water-conserving items, such as leak detection tablets, sink aerators, low-flow showerheads and water-efficient spray nozzles at public events, presentations, workshops and to partner organizations. Education materials are provided concurrently to reinforce water conservation.

Youth Education

The District provides funding to school districts within our region to help support water conservation education both in and out of the classroom. These programs allow students to gain the background knowledge to make informed decisions about water resources in the future. They include field trips, teacher trainings, classroom project supplies and Splash! school grants. Many free resources also are available to teachers, including free publications and materials, water education videos, virtual watershed excursions and the Classroom Conservation Challenge.

Social Media

The District uses social media to promote conservation through regular posts, including tips to residents on how to conserve water through infographics, videos and promotion of free publications and additional resources.

News Releases

The District issues news releases to inform the media and the public about District-initiated news and events, including those involving water conservation, such as water restrictions and conservation campaigns.

Speaking Engagements

Through the Speakers Bureau, District staff share their expertise with a wide variety of audiences. Frequently requested topics include water resources and water conservation. The latter focuses on the limitations of our water supply and how residents can help conserve water both in the home and in the yard. Learning about leak detection, rain sensors and other conservation measures helps to ensure that residents are well-informed and can act to conserve water.

Decision-Maker Water Schools

The District provides small grants for decision-maker water schools, which have a large focus on conservation. These programs provide elected officials, community leaders and other decision makers with factual information about their county's water resources and encourages improved public policy and decision making regarding water resource issues.

District staff talked with students at the Water, Wings and Wild Things Festival about water conservation and becoming water stewards in their community.

VI. REGULATION

Water Use Permit Conditions

A Water Use Permit (WUP) allows the withdrawal of a specified amount of water, either from the ground (i.e. aquifers), surface (i.e. lakes, rivers or ponds) or alternative water supplies (i.e. reclaimed water or tailwater recovery). Upon submittal of a WUP application, the District's WUP Bureau evaluation staff determine if the use of water is reasonable and beneficial, does not interfere with any presently existing legal use of water, is consistent with the public interest and does not impact any sensitive environmental features. WUPs issued by the District contain standard and special conditions that mandate efficient use of water and conservation measures. Requirements include use of best management practices, leak detection and repair, inspections, water audits, water-conserving rate structures, a compliance per capita rate no greater than 150 gpcd and implementation of a Water Conservation Plan.

Additional special conditions are added for WUPs located within the Central Florida Water Initiative (CFWI) area dependent on the location, quantity and predominant use of the permit. The CFWI is a collaborative process between the Department of Environmental Protection, St. Johns River Water Management District, South Florida Water Management District, Southwest Florida Water Management District, the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS), regional public water supply utilities, and other stakeholders to address the current and long-term water supply needs of Central Florida without causing harm to the water resources and associated natural systems. The CFWI encompasses five counties, including Orange, Osceola, Polk, Seminole and southern Lake.

Water Conservation Plans

As part of the WUP process, all applicants for annual average quantities of 100,000 gallons per day or greater are required to implement a Water Conservation Plan. The plan must demonstrate that environmentally, technically and economically feasible water conservation measures applicable to the proposed use have been or will be employed. Water conservation measures that have been approved by the Governing Board by rule or water shortage order must be implemented. Where specific water conservation elements have been developed for specific use types, such as public supply or agriculture, these elements are incorporated into the permit.

For WUPs located in the CFWI area, all applicants are required to develop and implement an Annual Conservation Goal Implementation Plan (ACGIP) and submit a compliance progress report to the District as indicated by the reporting frequency on their WUP. Agricultural users with a total allocation less than 100,000 gpd may enroll in an adopted FDACS Best Management Practices (BMPs) program and utilize the FDACS BMPs as their annual conservation goal if the documentation supporting the enrollment and implementation of selected BMPs is maintained annually. Public Supply users with an annual average of 100,000 gpd or greater, and whose commercial water use is less than 30% of its total water use, are required to meet the annual conservation goal by demonstrating yearly progress toward a gross per capita daily water use rate of no greater than 115 gpd or a functional per capita daily water use rate of no greater than 100 gpd.

Year-Round Water Conservation Measures

Year-round water conservation measures are part of District rules (Chapter 40D-22, Florida Administrative Code). The rule primarily focuses on allowable irrigation practices, including lawn and landscape watering, that are in place when there is no drought or other declared water shortage. The District generally uses the term “measures” instead of “restrictions” to distinguish the year-round practices from stricter watering limitations that can be imposed during a water shortage. These practices are meant to reduce wasteful irrigation habits and to help condition lawns for drought survival.

Water Shortage Plan/Orders

Water shortage orders are temporary water use restrictions and other requirements that are declared in accordance with a state-mandated water shortage plan. This plan is included in a District rule (Chapter 40D-21, Florida Administrative Code) that describes how the agency will monitor hydrologic conditions and make decisions to manage the impact of droughts and other water shortages. Management strategies include four phases of response and additional actions that can be implemented in emergency situations.

VII. RESEARCH

Water Conservation Research

The District provides annual funding to the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS) primarily for research projects involving agricultural best management practices, including those targeting water conservation. Additionally, funds have been awarded to research that relates to public supply conservation. UF/IFAS is a federal-state-county partnership that provides research and development for Florida's agricultural, human and natural resources, as well as related food industries.

From FY2005 through FY2023, the District has provided a total of $11.7 million in funding toward 60 UF/IFAS research projects. In FY2023, the District provided $286,181 in support of research projects, all of which involved water conservation.

Table 9. Current Governing Board-Approved Conservation Research Projects

Project #	Project Name	Crop Type/ Use	Funding Years	Total Project Cost	FY23 District Funding Allocation
B136	Florida Automated Weather Network Data Dissemination and Education	General Agriculture	FY2020-2024	$500,000	$100,000
B423	Micro-Irrigation for Reducing Water Use for Bare-Root Strawberry Establishment and Freeze Protection	Strawberry	FY2020-2024	$301,629	$101,181
B424	Water-Nutrient Smart Production Systems with Compact Bed Geometry Technology: Water, Production, Economics	Tomato	FY2020-2024	$299,000	$50,000
B425	Top Dressing Lawns for Reduced Irrigation	Urban Landscape	FY2020-2023	$58,000	$35,000
Total				**$1,158,629**	**$286,181**

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