

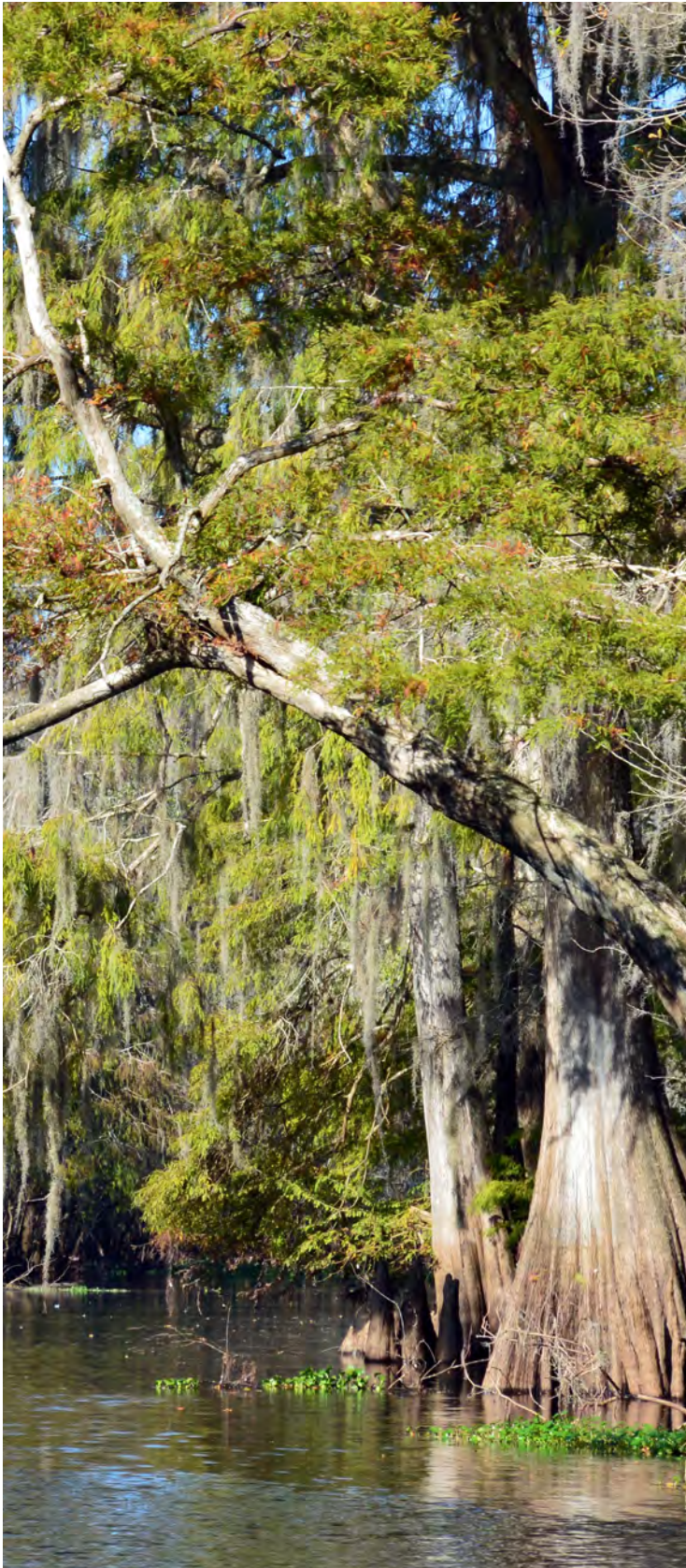


# FY2022

## Water Conservation Summary Report

Southwest Florida  
*Water Management District*





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# I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

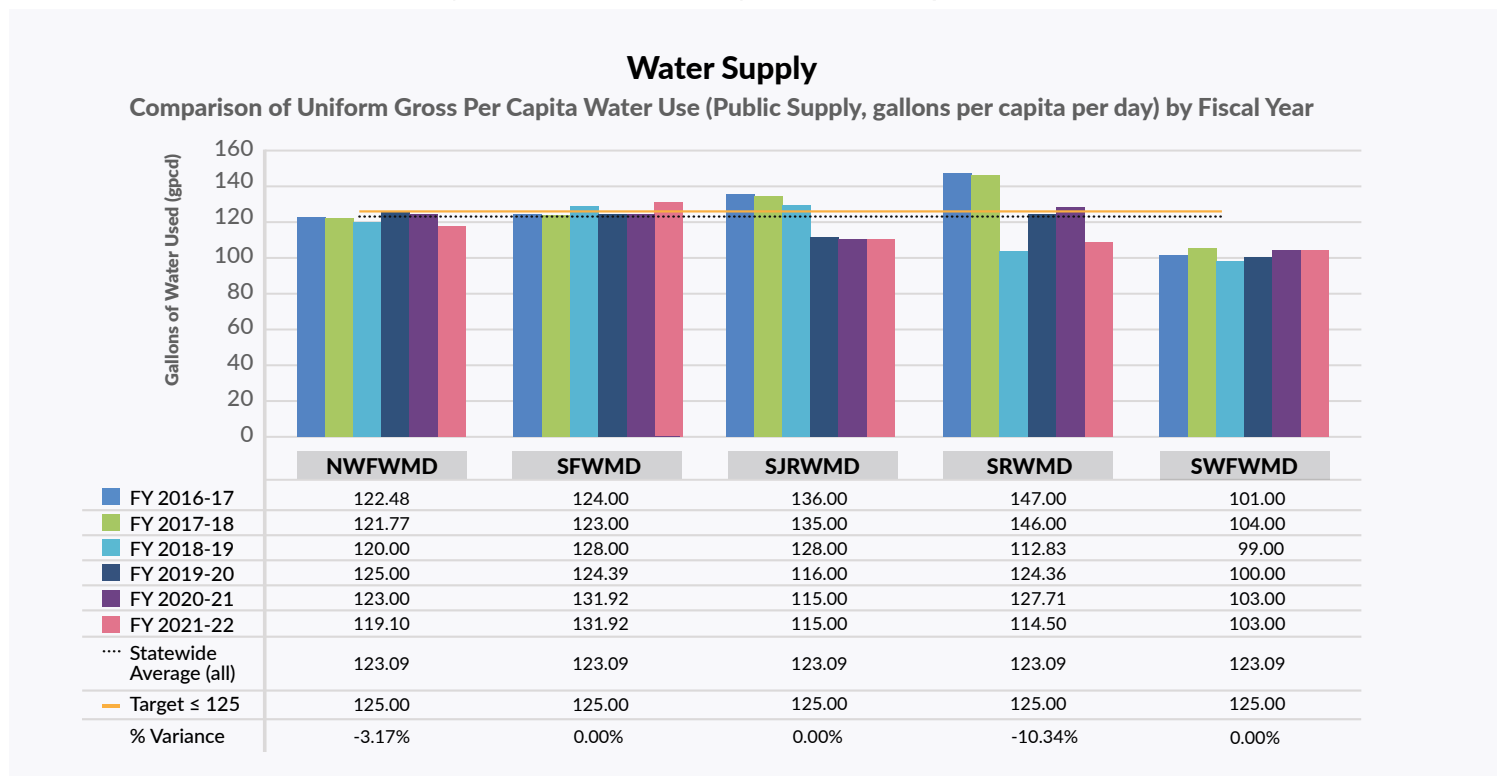
Water conservation is a key component of the District's mission to ensure the public's water needs are met and is one of the 11 Strategic Initiatives outlined in the District's 2021-2025 Strategic Plan. Within the Conservation Strategic Initiative, the District's goal is to enhance efficiencies in all 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 130 percent over a 39-year period from 1982-2021, total water use has decreased by 23 percent due to 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 2022 (Oct. 2021–Sept. 2022). 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 FY2021-22 by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection)**



**NFWMD** = 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 percent 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. In recent years, District staff have actively worked to encourage more conservation programs, particularly retrofit programs and outdoor water conservation. Conservation projects are generally more cost-effective in comparison to other types of CFI projects related to water supply.

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<sup>SM</sup> builder rebates, golf course irrigation enhancements, and industrial/commercial-related water efficiency improvements.

Table 1. FY2022 CFI Conservation Projects

County	Project #	Cooperator	Title	Budgeted Total Costs	Budgeted District Share	Estimated Savings (gpd*)
Pinellas	Q245	Pinellas County	Pinellas County AMI Metering Analytics Project	\$278,828	\$139,414	111,100
Citrus	Q254	Citrus County	Citrus County Water Conservation Program	\$93,200	\$46,600	16,740
Pinellas	Q259	City of Tarpon Springs	Tarpon Springs Water Conservation Program Phase III	\$30,000	\$15,000	3,744
Polk	Q266	Polk County	Florida Water Star Builder Reimbursement Program	\$40,000	\$20,000	5,260
Polk	Q267	Polk Regional Water Cooperative	PRWC Demand Management Implementation**	\$205,358	\$102,679	64,622
Marion	Q255	Bay Laurel Center Community Development District	2022 Bay Laurel Center CDD Water Conservation Program	\$329,500	\$164,750	27,492
Pinellas	Q256	City of St. Petersburg	Phase 10 Sensible Sprinkling	\$100,000	\$50,000	54,900
<b>Total</b>				<b>\$1,076,886</b>	<b>\$538,443</b>	<b>238,858</b>

\* Gallons per day

\*\*Project encompasses a multitude of water conservation initiatives in partnership with member governments.

## 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 percent 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 of 100 irrigated acres or less. The same principles of the FARMS program apply.

In FY2022, FARMS approved four water conservation related projects with a total estimated savings of 115,700 gpd (see Table 2). Mini-FARMS approved 55 conservation-related projects with a total estimated savings greater than 225,000 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 FY2022*

Project # / Name	County	Budgeted District Share Reimbursement	Estimated Water Savings (gpd)
H799 – Lykes – Lake Placid Grove – Phase 3	Highlands	\$66,866	28,000
H809 – Shawn Pollard Blueberries	Hardee	\$50,125	17,000
H802 – Berry Patch Ridge	Polk	\$241,572	40,000
H807 – Sizemore Group Automation	Hillsborough	\$182,857	30,700
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$541,420</b>	<b>115,700</b>



*An electronic unit that can control irrigation system valves remotely and allow for reduced irrigation run times. Installed at M & R Blueberry Farm in DeSoto County through the FARMS program.*

Table 3. Mini-FARMS Conservation Projects Approved in FY2022

Project Name/#	County	Budgeted District Share Reimbursement
Hollidale Farms — Bunker Grove WMD 278	DeSoto	\$5,400.00
Hollidale Farms — Lemon Grove WMD 279	DeSoto	\$5,400.00
Hollidale Farms — Hensen Grove WMD 280	DeSoto	\$5,400.00
Hollidale Farms — Gator Grove WMD 281	DeSoto	\$5,400.00
Hardee Fresh, LLC WMD 289	Hardee	\$7,680.25
Bobby Lee WMD 290	Hardee	\$8,000.00
17 Landscape Supply Automation WMD 291	DeSoto	\$8,000.00
17 Landscape Supply Irrigation Conversion WMD 292	DeSoto	\$8,000.00
Rice Road Properties East WMD 294	DeSoto	\$8,000.00
Rice Road Properties West WMD 295	DeSoto	\$8,000.00
Craig Griffith Gould WMD 296	Highlands	\$8,000.00
Griffith Twitty West WMD 297	Highlands	\$8,000.00
Griffith Twitty East WMD 298	Highlands	\$4,083.75
CitriSun Irrigation Conversion WMD 299	DeSoto	\$8,000.00
CitriSun Automation WMD 300	DeSoto	\$8,000.00
FC Farm Group WMD 301	Hillsborough	\$5,700.00
Ag Metrics Group WMD 302	Hillsborough	\$1,425.00
Thayer Berry Hill WMD 303	Polk	\$1,350.00
Parkesdale Farms WMD 304	Polk	\$7,125.00
Blessed Farms Corp WMD 305	Hillsborough	\$4,275.00
Bell Farms FL WMD 306	Hillsborough	\$7,125.00
Lott Farms WMD 307	Hillsborough	\$5,700.00
Parnell Road, LLC WMD 309	Hardee	\$8,000.00
Jam B Holdings, LLC WMD 310	Polk	\$8,000.00
Hardee Fresh, LLC Ph2 WMD 311	Hardee	\$8,000.00
Cannon and Sons WMD 313	Citrus	\$5,700.00
G&G Farms WMD 314	Hillsborough	\$2,850.00
Hinton Farms 10408 WMD 315	Hillsborough	\$4,275.00
Hinton Farms 20461 WMD 316	Hillsborough	\$7,125.00
Bonnie Blue Ranch Ph2	Hillsborough	\$6,893.83
Windmill Farms Mason Block WMD 318	Hardee	\$8,000.00
EW Simmons Farm WMD 320	Hillsborough	\$6,750.00
Hancock Citrus — Bass Block WMD 321	Highlands	\$4,259.25
Hancock Citrus — Bobcat Block WMD 322	Hardee	\$4,259.25
Hancock Citrus — Canelli Block WMD 323	Hardee	\$4,259.25

[continued...]

**Table 3. Mini-FARMS Conservation Projects Approved in FY2022 [continued]**

Project Name/#	County	Budgeted District Share Reimbursement
Hancock Citrus — Kingham Block WMD 324	Highlands	\$4,259.25
Hancock Citrus — Racetrack Block WMD 325	Hardee	\$4,259.25
Jam B Holdings Weather Station WMD 328	Polk	\$8,000.00
Beth Simkha, LLC Automation WMD 329	Highlands	\$8,000.00
Beth Simkha, LLC Weather Station WMD 330	Highlands	\$8,000.00
Oak Ridge Fish Farm Ph1 WMD 331	Hillsborough	\$8,000.00
Oak Ridge Fish Farm Ph2 WMD 332	Hillsborough	\$8,000.00
Shawn Pollard Blueberries Wauchula WMD 333	Hardee	\$8,000.00
Shawn Pollard Blueberries WMD 334	Hardee	\$8,000.00
Green Haven Bamboo Automation WMD 335	Hardee	\$8,000.00
Green Haven Bamboo Valves WMD 336	Hardee	\$7,739.25
Hancock Citrus — Hancock Trust WMD 337	Hardee	\$4,259.25
Hancock Citrus Post Plant WMD 338	Hardee	\$4,259.25
Hancock Citrus Collins Block WMD 339	Hardee	\$4,259.25
Sizemore Farms Blackberries WMD 340	Hillsborough	\$8,000.00
Bobby Lee Weather Station WMD 342	Hardee	\$4,484.25
Mavens Farms, LLC WMD 343	Highlands	\$7,987.50
Big Mikes Bamboo WMD 344	Hardee	\$5,887.50
FC Farm Group WMD 345	Hillsborough	\$1,687.50
Jurnigan Farms, LLC WMD 346	Hillsborough	\$1,687.50
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$339,205.33</b>



A solar powered soil moisture probe installed at Thayer Berry Hill in Polk County through the Mini-FARMS program. The probe provides real-time data on water and nutrient levels to allow the grower to efficiently manage their irrigation and nutrient scheduling.

### 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 158 leak detection surveys throughout the District, locating 1,620 leaks of various sizes, with an estimated 5.9 million gallons per day (mgd) of potential water savings. In FY2022, 34 water audits and three leak detection surveys were completed (see Table 4).

*Table 4. FY2022 Utilities Services Group Activity*

Program*	Quantity Conducted	Results
Water Audits	34	A water audit report was provided to each participating utility.
Leak Detection	3	Identified 66 leaks, with a potential estimated water savings of 58,500 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 1,550 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 through 2024.

*Table 5. FY2022 Mobile Irrigation Laboratory Activity*

Site Visits*	Total Acres Served	Potential Water Savings**
95	2,949	76 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<sup>1</sup>. 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<sup>SM</sup>, Florida-Friendly Landscaping<sup>TM</sup> and other water-conservation programs, methods and techniques are encouraged for land use changes that involve increases in residential density.

<sup>1</sup> 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 Summary Report.

*Table 6. Water Conservation Initiative Activities FY2022*

County	Activity	Outcome
Districtwide	Completed the fourth year of the Water Incentives Supporting Efficiency (WISE) program.	Approved 10 projects in FY2022 with a total budget allocation of \$99,120.62.
Districtwide	Completed the third year of the Conservation Education Program.	Developed and implemented projects with three partner utilities. Total FY2022 budget 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 16 public supply WUP applications.
Districtwide	Compiled information on District water conservation related efforts and activities.	Published FY2021 Water Conservation Summary Report.
Polk County	District Communications staff worked with Government and Community Affairs and Office of General Counsel staff on Florida Water Star <sup>SM</sup> (FWS) codes and ordinances.	Wrote FWS into cities of Haines City, Auburndale, and Eagle Lake building ordinances.
Hillsborough County	District Communications staff coordinated with internal staff and external project partners on the "Rainfall Signage" pilot project.	Signage was installed and rainfall data was updated on a weekly basis for one year. During FY2023, quantifiable water savings and self-reported behavior change will be determined to gauge project effectiveness.
Charlotte County	District staff met with the City of Punta Gorda.	Staff exchanged information on conservation efforts and related District programs.
Citrus County	District staff conducted leak detection and community education for Walden Woods in Citrus County.	Identified 40 leaks with a potential estimated savings of 28,080 gpd and enhanced community awareness of water conservation.

## 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 small utilities, hospitals, schools, prisons, homeowners associations, golf courses, hotels, manufacturers, food processing facilities and other commercial users.

In FY2022, the WISE program allocated \$99,120.62 across 10 projects with a total estimated savings of 51,136 gpd. At a cost share of up to 50 percent, approved applicants were eligible to receive up to \$20,000 per project in District funds.

*Table 7. WISE Projects Approved in FY2022*

Project #	Project Name	County	Budgeted District Share Reimbursement	Estimated Water Savings (gpd)
38	Peak Campus Flow Management Device	Hillsborough	\$6,312.50	3,151
39	Peak Campus Plumbing Fixture Upgrade	Hillsborough	\$4,837.55	3,104
40	Gateway North Apartments Flow Management Device	Pinellas	\$7,150.00	1,353
42	Wellington at Seven Hills HOA Irrigation Enhancement, Phase 3	Hernando	\$4,825.25	3,614
43	Cypress Trace HOA Irrigation Enhancement	Pinellas	\$9,781.57	3,957
45	Riviera TFL, LLC Plumbing Fixture Upgrade	Hillsborough	\$20,000.00	15,010
48	IslandWalk HOA Irrigation Controller Upgrade	Sarasota	\$20,000.00	11,446
49	Continental Country Club Irrigation Enhancement	Sumter	\$19,225.00	5,012
51	Holiday Inn Express Inverness Showerhead Upgrade	Citrus	\$2,062.50	883
52	Wellington at Seven Hills HOA Irrigation Enhancement, Phase 4	Hernando	\$4,926.25	3,606
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$99,120.62</b>	<b>51,136</b>

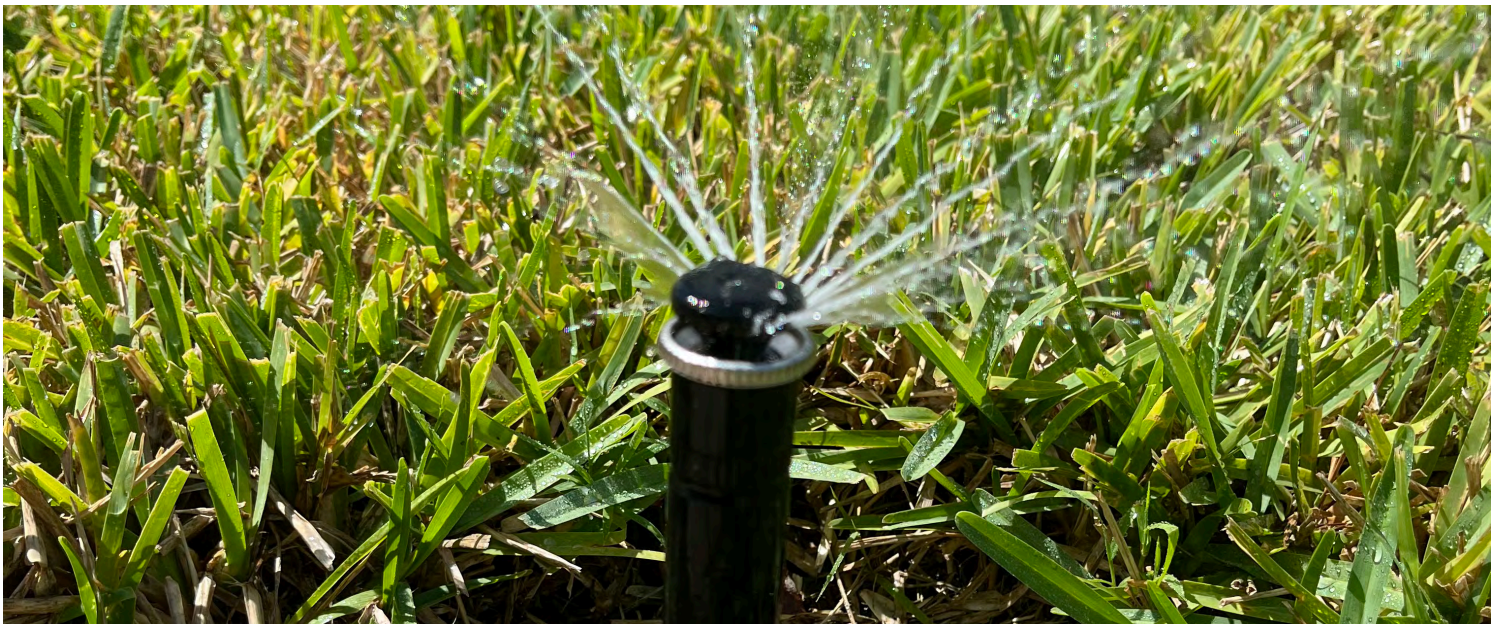
## Conservation Education Program

The Conservation Education Program (CEP) provides utilities 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 participating utilities to promote, develop, implement and evaluate approved projects.

The District implemented the third year of the CEP in FY2022, allocating \$30,000 in support of three conservation education projects that encompassed multiple outreach components (see Table 8).

Table 8. CEP Projects FY2022

Project Partner	Main Project Type	Project Components
City of Auburndale Utilities	Social Norms Based Water Use Mail-Out	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three water use mail-outs to high water users</li> <li>• One supplemental mailing on rebates and incentives</li> </ul>
Town of Dundee Utilities	Social Norms Based Water Use Mail-Out and Monitor Displays	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three water use mail-outs to high water users</li> <li>• Developed 11 graphics for monitor displays in Town Hall and the Building Department</li> </ul>
Sarasota County Utilities and UF/IFAS Sarasota County	Social Norms Based Water Use Mail-Out, Conservation Giveaways and Educational Signage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four water use mail-outs to high water users</li> <li>• One supplemental mailing</li> <li>• Provided rain sensor replacements to support irrigation evaluations</li> <li>• Provided toilet conservation kits</li> <li>• Funded educational signage for rain barrel and Florida-friendly plants at Extension office</li> </ul>



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

## V. EDUCATION & OUTREACH

### Water Conservation Programs

#### Florida Water Star<sup>SM</sup>

The Florida Water Star<sup>SM</sup> (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 FY2022:

- Polk County offered FWS rebates in the amount of \$1,000 each.
- Tampa Bay Water offered rebates in the amount of \$1,000 per home. During FY2022, 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 FY2022 the District worked with the cities of Haines City, Auburndale and Eagle Lake to incorporate FWS certification and criteria into local building codes (total of 11 cities). 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 and up to 6,560 gallons of water each year without irrigation. Since 2006, 2,820 properties have been certified by the District. In FY2022, the District certified 390 properties.

*Table 9. FY2022 Florida Water Star<sup>SM</sup> Certified Properties List*

County	Activity	Estimated Annual Water Savings (gallons) of Certified Homes
Marion	Certified 386 properties	18,595,885
Sarasota	Certified 4 properties	26,240
<b>Total</b>		<b>18,622,125</b>

## 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.

In FY2022 the District sponsored two water schools with a total of approximately 40 attendees.



*District staff talked with students at the Museum of Science and Industry's first annual Tampa Bay Water Days event.*

## VI. 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 FY2022, the District has provided a total of \$11 million in funding toward 58 UF/IFAS research projects. In FY2022, the District provided \$406,475 in support of research projects, all of which involved water conservation.

*Table 10. Current Governing Board-Approved Conservation Research Projects*

Project #	Project Name	Crop Type/ Use	Funding Years	Total Project Cost	FY22 District Funding Allocation
B416	Improved Irrigation Management on Mature Citrus Trees Productivity in High Planting Densities	Citrus	FY2020-2022	\$192,015	\$49,015
B420	Compact Bed Geometries for Watermelon in Southwest Florida	Watermelon	FY2020-2022	\$282,460	\$92,460
B136	Florida Automated Weather Network Data Dissemination and Education	General Agriculture	FY2020-2024	\$500,000	\$100,000
B421	Rainfall Signage to Reduce Residential Irrigation	Urban Landscape	FY2021-2023	\$125,000	\$75,000
B423	Micro-irrigation for Reducing Water Use for Bare-root Strawberry Establishment and Freeze Protection	Strawberry	FY2020-2024	\$301,629	\$90,000
<b>Total</b>				<b>\$1,401,104</b>	<b>\$406,475</b>

## VII. 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, 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 Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (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 percent 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.



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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](mailto: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](http://WaterMatters.org/ADA).