

# **Withlacoochee Regional Water Supply Authority**

## **Fiscal Year 2019-20 Work Program**

### **1. Joint Funding of Water Conservation Projects with Member Local Governments**

The Authority will continue its grant program to assist local governments in improving water conservation within the region in order to extend the use of groundwater as long as possible. Fresh groundwater is the least expensive source available to meet growing demands, however there is a limit to this source due to environmental impacts and impacts on other existing legal users caused by withdrawals. As the limit to fresh groundwater resources is reached, alternative, more expensive water sources will need to be developed. At the present time, water conservation programs are the most appropriate way for the Authority to help local governments extend the use of lower cost groundwater supplies. During Fiscal Year (FY) 2019-20, the proposed budget anticipates appropriating \$130,000 toward local government water conservation projects. Proposals will be considered from local governments and public supply utilities in the Authority's jurisdiction. The grant program guidelines and application package may be found on the Authority's web page at [www.wrwsa.org](http://www.wrwsa.org). The water conservation activities co-funded by this grant program help participating utilities meet and surpass the maximum 150 gallons per person per day that is required by the SWFWMD and to meet the SJRWMD conservation requirements.

### **2. Regional Residential Irrigation Audit Program to Promote Water Conservation within the Region**

This ongoing program provides an opportunity for residential water utility customers to obtain site-specific evaluations for optimizing the use of water through landscaping techniques and efficient irrigation systems, and to implement recommendations provided by a professionally certified contractor. Contractors used for the site-specific evaluations are professionals certified by the Florida Irrigation Society (FIS) or another recognized certifying agency in the targeted region. The initiative includes program information, water conservation education, reporting and analysis by a consultant. This continuing project targets existing inefficient landscape and irrigation water use and results in significant water savings and can lead to water quality protection through reduced leaching of fertilizers and lawn chemicals. Results from the Pilot Project and Phases 2 and 3 indicate a total water savings of 48 million gallons per year for 532 residential customers, representing an average reduction in total water use of 29%.

The ongoing Phase 5 of the program began in FY2018-19, is scheduled to be complete in FY 2020-21 and includes an "Enhanced Program", whereby participants in certain utilities can elect to have the WRWSA's contractor assist in implementing certain recommendations. Phase 5 is planned to reach a total of 260 residential customers. This program is co-funded by the SWFWMD. Participating utilities incur only 25% of their respective portion of the project, leveraging local dollars with regional funds. This water conservation initiative helps participating utilities meet and surpass the maximum 150 gallons per person per day that is required by the SWFWMD.

### **3. Regional Water Supply Plan Update**

The Authority initiated an update to its Regional Water Supply Plan (RWSP) in FY 2017-18 and this effort will extend into the first half of FY 2019-20. This work effort includes updated water demand projections, evaluation of source options and potential water supply project options. The update of the WRWSA RWSP will include updating population projections; existing and future water demands for

public supply and other water use categories; traditional and alternative water supply availability; regional groundwater modeling; estimates of the amount of future demands that could be offset through enhanced water conservation efforts; reclaimed water availability and potential offsets; and recommendations regarding the WRWSA Regional Framework. The project entails significant coordination with and input by the water supply utilities within the WRWSA's region. The Authority's RWSP was last updated in 2014. This project is cooperatively funded by the SWFWMD.

#### **4. Advocacy on Behalf of the Authority and Its Member Governments**

For Fiscal Year 2019-20 the Authority's Legislative Consultant was removed from the budget. The Authority staff will work with member governments and the water management districts to develop a program for monitoring legislative activities and advocating for Board approved legislative priorities and for advocating with other key stakeholders.

#### **5. Continued Cooperation with Citrus County in Operation and Management of the Authority's Charles A. Black Water Supply Facilities**

The Authority and Citrus County completed negotiations at the end of FY 2015-16 of the new Water Supply Contract governing the operation and maintenance of the CABWSF. The new Contract allows for the continued operation of the facilities by Citrus County in a cost-effective manner ensuring a long-term water supply for the County and its customers while also providing for long-term financial stability for the Authority. Various provisions of the new Contract call for improved coordination between the County and Authority.

#### **6. Participation in Maintenance and Enhancement of the North-Central Florida Groundwater Model**

The first phase of this project was jointly funded by the SWFWMD, St. Johns River WMD, Marion County and the Authority. The project was initiated in fiscal year 2012-13. Phase 1 of the project entailed updating and expanding the SWFWMD's Northern District Groundwater Model to encompass all of Marion County and to incorporate the most recent hydrologic data. Phase 1 of the project was successfully completed. The intent is for both water management districts to utilize this common model for determining the availability of groundwater in the region, particularly in Marion County which is split by the districts' boundaries. The SJRWMD and SWFWMD continue to improve upon the model and seek the engagement of various stakeholders. The model has significant implications for groundwater availability in the region and the Authority's continued participation and coordination with member governments is essential to ensure water supply implications are considered as the model is updated. The Authority also engages with both Districts to ensure continued use and support of the model.

#### **7. Springs Protection and Restoration**

The Authority continues to work with the SWFWMD on its springs coast initiative. The SWFWMD has completed Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) Plans for the five first magnitude springs in the northern District. These SWIM plans call for action by not only the District but local governments and other stakeholders in the region to protect and restore these first magnitude springs. The Authority staff continue to actively participate in the Springs Coast Management Committee and monitor activities of the District and the Steering Committee for implications on water supply in the region.

## **8. Program Development and Technical Assistance**

- a) Support efforts to further define the hydrogeology of the region. Continue cooperation with the water management districts on the collection of hydrologic data to further refine the Districts' planning and regulatory models. Coordinate on efforts to better define the lower Floridan aquifer and the extent of fresh and brackish groundwater within the aquifer.
- b) Promote the WRWSA RWSP through coordination with WRWSA member governments to facilitate regional and sub-regional cooperation on water supply development and reclaimed water projects. Work with the WMDs in defining strategic priorities for the region and how these priorities may influence the ranking criteria for the Districts' Cooperative Funding Initiatives, including potential District funding for regional and sub-regional traditional and non-traditional water supply development that is consistent with the WRWSA RWSP.
- c) Participate in the SWFWMD and SJRWMD minimum flows and levels (MFLs) programs representing the interests of member governments. Provide technical assistance to WRWSA member governments in determining the potential impact to both the environment and potential water supply development based on proposed MFLs.
- d) Coordinate with FDEP, SJRWMD, SWFWMD and the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services on policy and rule development. Provide assistance to WRWSA member governments on FDEP and District rule development that may include Water Use Permitting, Environmental Resource Permitting, water conservation and future water supply development, including statewide consistency initiatives. Monitor water management programs and rule development in other parts of the state, including the Central Florida Water Initiative, for implications to the WRWSA and its member governments.
- e) Monitor and coordinate with the water supply planning and development activities in adjacent communities and regions, including but not limited to Tampa Bay Water, the Central Florida Water Initiative, the Polk Water Cooperative, and Lake and Levy counties for possible implications on water resource availability within the WRWSA region. Provide input to such activities when appropriate.
- f) Monitor applications for significant water use permits and permit modifications within the region for potential impacts on WRWSA and member government existing and planned water supply facilities and engage in the permitting process where appropriate.