

Lake County Water Alliance – Visioning Workshop

Priorities/Governance Visioning Survey

Purpose:

The purpose of this Lake County Water Alliance (Alliance) Priorities/Governance Visioning Survey (Survey) is to assist members in focusing on and defining the appropriate role of the Alliance with regard to water issues within Lake County. The Survey is a precursor to the Visioning Workshop that is tentatively scheduled for May, 2009. Survey results will also aid the consultant in designing the workshop, determining consensus or lack thereof on issues and determining member preferences on the future structure and governance of the Alliance.

This Survey requests members to identify and prioritize water issues for the Alliance to gauge individual member's interest in collaborating on water related initiatives that have been outlined by the Utility Working Group and others. The Survey will also give members an opportunity to outline any of their priorities that are not included on the list.

Background:

Governance has also been an issue with the Alliance that has been discussed at numerous Board and Utility Working Group meetings. The ultimate structure of the Alliance will be a function of the goals and priorities that the Alliance wants to pursue. Several governance structures that the Alliance can consider are also outlined as part of the survey. The potential benefits and liabilities of these structures are described.

The consultant will present the draft survey to the Board at the March Board meeting. The consultant will review the survey and explain the visioning process to the Board and responsibilities of individual members. Input from the Alliance will be incorporated into a final draft Survey.

The Alliance member and utility director/representative from each member government will review and complete the Survey. The intent of this completed Survey is to present it to their respective boards and attempt to achieve consensus so one document is submitted from each municipality as part of the visioning process.

The Alliance member and utility director from each member government will review the completed Survey with their respective councils to reach consensus on a common survey. The surveys will be amended as necessary to ensure a consensus document that can be presented as that municipality's priorities and recommended approach for the Alliance. As surveys are completed they will then be sent to consultant.

Note:

A number of issues, issues and initiatives revolve around alternative water supplies (AWS). At the March Alliance Board meeting a definition of AWS was requested to assure that members were all responding based on a common understanding. The following is the definition of AWS found in statute:

Alternative water supplies (AWS) are currently defined in Chapter 373.019, Florida Statutes, as:

“salt water; brackish surface and groundwater; surface water captured predominately during wet-weather flows; sources made available through the addition of new storage capacity for surface or groundwater, water that has been reclaimed after one or more public supply, municipal, industrial, commercial, or agricultural uses; the downstream augmentation of water bodies with reclaimed water; stormwater; and any other water supply source that is designated as nontraditional for a water supply planning region in the applicable regional water supply plan”

This definition was established in 2005 to clarify the Water Protection and Sustainability Program,¹ but no definition of AWS was present in 373.019 prior to 2005.

¹ Florida Department of Environmental Protection (2005). Request for the federal Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management's (OCRM) approval of the inclusion of the changes to Chapter 373, Florida Statutes (F.S.). 14 pages.

Potential Alliance Initiatives and Priorities:

Please check the boxes for the individual issues and initiatives that you believe are important and appropriate for the Alliance to champion. Following the issues and initiatives that you have checked, rate them as a High, Medium or Low priority for the Alliance to address.

A. St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) Issues:

- 1. *Controlling Domestic Self-Supply (DSS) Development* – A considerable amount of current and projected water use in Lake County is through unpermitted (CUP) DSS (individual homeowner wells). The SJRWMD has identified DSS as a major water resource issue that adds to the limitations on groundwater development for utilities within the County.

 H (High, Medium, Low)

- 2. *Recognizing Credit Offsets* – As land-use transition occurs within the County, water use on property often changes from agriculture to potable uses. The District does not recognize this prior use of the water in the CUP process and therefore this water is retired and not transitioned into a new use.

 H (High, Medium, Low)

- 3. *District Recognition of Water Development and Use in Recharge Areas* - The development and utilization of water within high recharge areas is not given adequate consideration by the SJRWMD through the CUP process.

 H (High, Medium, Low)

- 4. *Alternative Water Supply (AWS) Consensus* – The SJRWMD has a “one size fits all” mentality when it comes to future water supply development in the County. The District appears to require AWS whether it is technically, economically, environmentally or politically feasible. AWS is also required of all users regardless of the quantity of future water demand.

_____ (High, Medium, Low)

- 5. *SJRWMD Rule Consistency* – Should the Alliance play a role in reviewing and commenting on rule development at the District? Could the Alliance have more clout in the review, comment and change of proposed rule changes than individual Lake County governments?

_____ (High, Medium, Low)

6. *Inconsistency between WMDs (Boundary Issues)* – Boundary issues regarding important water management considerations such as groundwater availability are prevalent between the SJRWMD and the SWFWMD. These include groundwater modeling, environmental impact analyses, agricultural conversion credits, per capita calculations and recognition of conservation efforts. Should the Alliance take a role in lobbying for consistency?

M (High, Medium, Low)

7. *Minimum Flow and Level (MFL) Analysis of the Harris Chain of Lakes* – Without an analysis of the Harris Chain, the feasibility of surface water withdrawals for multiple purposes has not been determined. The SJRWMD however, is still issuing permits for withdrawals without the necessary studies being implemented. Should the Alliance establish a position on the necessity of the analysis and requesting the District to not issue CUPs until it is completed? The requirement to consider surface water withdrawals from the Harris Chain is also part of CUP conditions.

M (High, Medium, Low)

8. *County-Wide CUP* – Recognizing that the need for regionalization and interconnections of water supply systems will be required in the future, should municipalities of the Alliance seek a county-wide or joint CUP. The thought is that this will allow flexibility and water sharing among communities both water supply development and emergency backup. Or other sub-regional CUP's, such as for new water development, new wellfield development and optimization, maximum beneficial use of reclaimed water, etc.

_____ (High, Medium, Low)

9. *Study of Surface Water and Surface Water Options County-Wide* – The cost and amount of AWS required in the future will be a function of water conservation, the beneficial use of reclaimed water and the availability of surface water in the County. To-date a comprehensive analysis of surface water availability has not been completed for the area.

_____ (High, Medium, Low)

10. *Detailed Groundwater Modeling of Lake County* – The Lake County Water Supply Plan contemplated advanced modeling to further refine groundwater availability within the County but was never initiated, at the District's request. The SJRWMD has determined a lack of groundwater based on a regional,

steady-state groundwater models that are not considered state-of-the-art.

H (High, Medium, Low)

11. *District Recognition of Conservation Efforts by Alliance Members* – The Alliance could educate and promote existing and future conservation efforts with the District to ensure proper credit and recognition for established and proposed programs.

_____ (High, Medium, Low)

12. *Development and Support of Water Related Legislation* – The Alliance could act as an advocacy and lobbying organization for the development and support of progressive water management legislation for Lake County.

_____ (High, Medium, Low)

B. Water Conservation:

1. *Reuse of Stormwater* – The Alliance should play a role in educating and promoting the use of stormwater for irrigation purposes within Lake County. This includes capturing, storing and potentially treating for potable and non-potable use.

H (High, Medium, Low)

2. *Development of Water Conservation and Irrigation Management Programs* – Water conservation and the resulting water demand reduction will forestall the need for new sources of water within Lake County. Alliance sponsored public education programs and the development of model water and irrigation conservation programs and landscape codes would develop an effective and consistent County approach to water demand reduction.

M (High, Medium, Low)

3. *County-Wide Irrigation Enforcement Program* – Alliance initiated and sponsored outdoor watering enforcement programs could increase the effectiveness and decrease costs of monitoring and enforcing water restrictions.

_____ (High, Medium, Low)

4. *County-Wide Water Conservation Education Program* – A consistent and cost effective water conservation education program could be initiated and developed by the Alliance. This could take advantage of government access TV, websites,

weekly newspaper articles, commercial TV spots and other forms of communication.

_____ (High, Medium, Low)

C. Alternative Water Supplies (AWS):

1. *Alternative Water Supply Economic Feasibility* – Preliminary analyses of the development of AWS in Lake County has shown an 800 to 1,000% increase in the cost of water. The impact of AWS to current and future rate payers in the County has not been determined.

H (High, Medium, Low)

2. *Technical Feasibility of AWS* – The technical feasibility of AWS development within the SJRWMD is currently being assessed. Challenges from downstream third-parties bring to question the technical feasibility and environmental sustainability of surface water withdrawal projects.

_____ (High, Medium, Low)

3. *Regional Transmission Master Planning for AWS* – If AWS is required for Lake County utilities, an extensive regional transmission system will be necessary to bring water from remote sources. Transmission costs can be a significant percentage of the development costs of AWS. Master planning would help to develop the most efficient and cost-effective systems.

H (High, Medium, Low)

4. *Timing and Need for Projects* – A consistent and comprehensive dialogue on AWS development is needed for Lake County. The Alliance could be a more powerful force in the discussion with individual communities.

_____ (High, Medium, Low)

5. *Regional Reclaimed Water Systems* – The Lake County Water Supply Plan outlined the potential advantages of developing reclaimed water on a regional basis. The Alliance could facilitate the planning and development of such systems.

_____ (High, Medium, Low)

6. *Testing/Development of Lower Floridan Aquifer* – The lower Floridan aquifer within Lake County potentially could be a local groundwater source without environmental consequences if confinement is found.

_____ (High, Medium, Low)

D. Recommendations from the Lake County Water Supply Plan – September 2007:

1. **Groundwater Availability**

a. Request that the SJRWMD accurately determine the safe, sustainable groundwater yield from the area in Lake County not located within the CFWA. Perform an independent review of this analysis by an expert familiar with the regional groundwater models used in north-central Florida.

H (High, Medium, Low)

b. Request that the SJRWMD determine a threshold within the CFWA at which continued groundwater development will be allowed for the long-term water supply for smaller or low future demand municipalities. This added groundwater development must still meet all District CUP rule criteria. It would also require the local government to assure the SJRWMD that all feasible water conservation and beneficial reuse was implemented to maximize water resource protection.

_____ (High, Medium, Low)

c. For individual CUP renewals, identify the consumptive use allocations held by Agricultural and agricultural-related Commercial/Industrial properties (e.g., citrus processors) in the vicinity of the community that are likely to be discontinued during the duration of the proposed CUP. Coordinate with the existing permit holder and the SJRWMD relative to the possible transfer of these allocations.

_____ (High, Medium, Low)

d. Request that the SJRWMD require more aggressive conservation practices among private utilities in Lake, and rescind private utility groundwater allocations that show excessive water use (as measured by gross per capita rates). Ensure that reduced private utility per capita water consumption rates are incorporated in regional groundwater modeling efforts. Rulemaking by the SJRWMD may be required to meet this request.

_____ (High, Medium, Low)

e. Monitor the results of the groundwater modeling simulations performed using the SWFWMD's Northern District model.

_____ (High, Medium, Low)

- f. Request that the SJRWMD clarify, from planning and regulatory perspectives, how groundwater currently allocated for uses related to agriculture in Lake County could be used for other reasonable and beneficial purposes upon discontinuation of uses related to agriculture. Within the CFCA, this clarification will require coordination with regional groundwater modeling efforts.

M _____ (High, Medium, Low)

- g. Request that the SJRWMD retire inactive or underutilized (<25% of allocation typically used) Agricultural and Commercial/Industrial water uses, and eliminate their use in cumulative impact analyses.

_____ (High, Medium, Low)

2. Conservation and Reuse

Conservation

- a. Utilize the Plan to determine existing and potential water conservation and reclaimed water opportunities for individual Members. Determine potential offsets effectuated by these opportunities for cost-benefit comparison to AWS water supplies.

H _____ (High, Medium, Low)

- b. Request that the SJRWMD's Applicant Handbook for consumptive use permitting be revised to list reduction in per capita water consumption as a factor to be considered in determining the duration of a permit. Prepare measurable conservation goals in CUP applications in exchange for longer duration permits.

_____ (High, Medium, Low)

- c. Use the Plan to develop and coordinate aggressive, long-term conservation activities and programs with Lake County and other Members to support the progression of behavioral changes required for aggressive conservation.

_____ (High, Medium, Low)

- d. Coordinate an improved and consistent planning methodology for the estimation of retail service area population for use in the calculation of per

capita water consumption rates. Monitor the ongoing development of the SWFWMD Southern Water Use Caution Area (SWUCA) II population methodology and methodologies under consideration by other Florida WMDs.

 M (High, Medium, Low)

- e. Develop and implement more aggressive water conservation rate structures targeting medium and high-volume residential users. Individual utility rate studies will be required. Develop sources of cost-share funding for these studies.

_____ (High, Medium, Low)

- f. Establish effective watering restriction enforcement programs based on the SJRWMD watering restrictions. Ensure that the programs are self-supporting through their violation fee schedules.

_____ (High, Medium, Low)

Reuse

- g. Develop feasible surface water and stormwater withdrawals and storage to augment beneficial reuse production. Consider the use of mine facilities in the development of these opportunities.

_____ (High, Medium, Low)

- h. Conduct a yield study to determine the safe, sustainable withdrawal from the Upper Ocklawaha River Basin (UORB). . The study must include an accurate determination of current and proposed surface water use within the UORB.

_____ (High, Medium, Low)

- i. Encourage cost-share funding opportunities for construction of highly efficient reuse systems. Request that the SJRWMD establish a minimum beneficial reuse threshold for reuse funding that involves the potable offset provided by the proposed project.

_____ (High, Medium, Low)

3. AWS Development

- a. Utilize the Plan to determine potential AWS opportunities for individual Alliance Members. Determine potential supplies effectuated by these opportunities for cost-benefit comparison to conservation and reuse opportunities.

_____ (High, Medium, Low)

Outside-County AWS

- b. Actively pursue AWS development partnerships both among Alliance Members, with private utilities located in Lake County, and with public and private utilities located outside of Lake County, as appropriate.

_____ (High, Medium, Low)

- c. Request that the SJRWMD include the cost of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in the projected costs for preliminary design (PD) for the Lower Ocklawaha River project.

_____ (High, Medium, Low)

- d. Participate in a preliminary design (PD) planning effort facilitated by the SJRWMD.

_____ (High, Medium, Low)

- e. Submit a statement of interest to the WRWSA regarding partnerships for developing AWS.

_____ (High, Medium, Low)

- f. Request that the SJRWMD include the costs of a deep well brine concentrate disposal option in the order-of-magnitude and PD costs for the St. Johns River AWS projects.

_____ (High, Medium, Low)

- g. Develop a consistent Alliance position relative to both the Orlando Utilities Commission (OUC) and Villages agreements with Lake County for the development of AWS.

_____ (High, Medium, Low)

- h. Develop Alliance-based water supply planning partnerships with entities located outside of Lake County, as appropriate.

_____ (High, Medium, Low)

Within-County AWS

- i. Conduct a yield study to determine the safe, sustainable withdrawal from the Upper Ocklawaha River Basin (UORB). The study must include an accurate determination of current and proposed surface water use within the UORB.

_____ (High, Medium, Low)

- j. Request that the SJRWMD include a project involving the UORB as an AWS in the 2008 District Water Supply Plan. The project configuration will be dependent on the results of a yield study.

_____ (High, Medium, Low)

- k. Actively pursue AWS partnerships with private utilities in Lake County, as appropriate. Private utilities with established revenue sources, management structures, and CUP requirements comparable to Alliance Members are likely to offer superior AWS partnership opportunities when compared to agricultural or commercial/industrial users.

_____ (High, Medium, Low)

- l. Identify a viable AWS project involving the UORB and seek cost-share funding for the project.

_____ (High, Medium, Low)

4. Water Supply Management

- a. Submit a request to the SJRWMD and the SWFWMD to establish the North Central Florida Coordination Area (NCFCA) as a coordinated Planning area between the two WMDs.

_____ (High, Medium, Low)

- b. At individual municipalities with proposed developments entering the development review process, identify the consumptive use allocations held by the former Agricultural and agricultural-related Commercial/Industrial properties (e.g., citrus processors) within the property proposed for development.
- _____ (High, Medium, Low)

Within-County AWS

- c. Request that the SJRWMD establish a scientifically-based minimum flow for Lake Griffin, Harris, Eustis and Dora unit.
- H (High, Medium, Low)
- d. Support the ongoing restoration of the North Shore of Lake Apopka.
- M (High, Medium, Low)
- e. Extend utility service to unincorporated areas to ensure more efficient residential water use, by reducing uncontrolled groundwater withdrawals (domestic self supply).
- _____ (High, Medium, Low)

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- f. Develop a post-Plan framework for communication both among Members and their Elected Officials.
- _____ (High, Medium, Low)
- g. Develop a post-Plan funding source to Alliance-identified initiatives.
- _____ (High, Medium, Low)
- h. Update the Alliance Plan to maintain its relevance within a rapidly changing regional water supply context. Prepare minor updates annually and major updates every five years.
- M (High, Medium, Low)

Other: Please address other priorities and initiatives that are important to Alliance members below and submit with this survey.