

Creating a Regional Water Strategy for Central Florida

Best Practice Recommendations from the Water Resources Strategy Workshop

July 16, 2010

Best Practice Recommendations

- Create consistent, standard methodology for how all water suppliers/users report their use for water management district review
- Establish a meaningful water consumption target by utility service area to encourage conservation, ensure accountability and reduce per capita/per meter water use in Central Florida
- Focus on outcome based conservation practices (low flow toilets, Florida friendly landscaping, soil moisture sensors, etc.) and include requirements in consumptive use permits
- Require cost effective conservation practices for all water use categories, including self-supply category
- Document all conservation best management practices (BMPs) over time and evaluate data to determine progress

Best Practice Recommendations (cont.)

- Ensure that conservation efforts by all users do not result in penalty to the user through a reduction of water allocation from the water management district
- Modify local government codes to accept Florida friendly landscaping
- Provide per capita data to end users to encourage good habits (ex: Gainesville Green)
- Require the water management districts in the Central Florida Coordination Area to adopt, by rule, policies for the consumptive use and management of water that incorporate conservation goals, metrics and projects

NOTE: Best management practices will apply to every utility, regardless of size.

Best Practice Recommendations

- Develop and implement a regional coordinated campaign promoting simple behaviors that reduce water use
- Develop a communication plan to educate key audiences about the problem first, then the science based solutions
- Unite stakeholders behind the effort

Best Practice Recommendations (cont.)

- Targeted Messages:
 - Educate and work with local media to spread messages on water use
 - Homeowner association outreach
 - Educate homeowners on Florida friendly landscaping
 - Include educational outreach to K-12 students
 - Hotel/motel conservation program
 - Work with landscape professionals, nurseries and home improvement stores to educate homeowners on good landscaping choices (make it simple for the consumer)

Best Practice Recommendations (cont.)

- Targeted Messages (cont.):
 - Educate consumers on cost saving aspects of good choices
 - Educate consumers on rate increases associated with conservation
 - Educate business leaders/owners on issues and importance of efforts
 - Ongoing education to elected officials in the region (high turnover of elected officials makes regular education vital)

Best Practice Recommendations (cont.)

- Conservation Tools:
 - Promoting one-stop resources for local governments to obtain information/materials (such as Conserve Florida, IFAS Florida Friendly site)
 - Regional certification/education for landscape professionals
 - Allow users to monitor use in real time (ex: Gainesville Green)

Best Practice Recommendations

- Conduct survey across region to determine how utilities are using rate structure and if there is a correlation between rate structure and water use
- Implement increasing block (tiered) rate structure – contract blocks and steepen rates aggressively in higher use blocks
- Utility rate structures should provide sufficient revenue to allow the utility to finance incentives to retrofit customers' homes and businesses with water conservation devices (indoor/outdoor)
- Establish policies related to regional collaborative alternative supply development, including financing incentives provided by water management district

Best Practice Recommendations (cont.)

- Adopt inflationary escalation adjustment to rates
- Restore statewide funding for alternative water supplies to the water management districts
- Take advantage of federal, state and other funding opportunities available through grants/matching funds to fund regional water supply projects
- Require Water Management Districts to dedicate at least 1/10 mil to establish funding programs for conservation and development of alternative water supplies
- Create consistency in policy across districts on how water management districts can fund alternative water sources with ad valorem revenue

Best Practice Recommendations

- Require all local governments and home owners associations to review and amend their regulations in order to remove impediments to water conservation
- Require landscaping that implements Florida friendly principles and avoids the need for automatic irrigation systems
- Require new development to utilize best conservation practices (smart controllers, irrigation practices, water sense appliances, promotion of compact development)
- Create a guidebook of model regulatory language for local governments to use to require and enforce conservation measures for new and existing development (low impact development, green building, conservation development, etc.)

- Use modeling, empirical data and professional judgment to quantify and forecast the availability of groundwater supply
- Expand planning horizon for utilities to be consistent with the water management district supply plans
- Encourage water management districts to adopt policies to allow for recommendations made through this process
- Use adaptive management practices to respond to changing conditions
- Utilize an inclusive regional approach to conservation and alternative water supply
- Water management districts coordinate to adopt consistent policies and guidelines for the region

Best Practice Recommendations

- Upper Floridan aquifer is significantly constrained. Therefore, encourage diversification of all available sources, including but not limited to:
 - Stream flow, primarily flood flows
 - Reclaimed water
 - Brackish ground water
 - Lower Floridan aquifer where separated from upper Floridan aquifer
 - Surficial (shallow) aquifer
 - Sea water
 - Regional interconnects (inter-jurisdictional cooperation)
 - Land use transitions
 - Rain water
 - Storm water
 - Gray water
 - Process waste streams

Best Practice Recommendations (cont.)

- Compile a list of water sources by utility
- Optimize use of Upper Floridan aquifer
- Encourage development of regional alternative water supply projects, including but not limited to:
 - Off stream reservoirs
 - Desalination
 - Aquifer storage and recovery
 - Tail water recovery
 - Direct aquifer recharge
 - Rapid infiltration basins
 - Potable reuse
 - Irrigation with storm water and reclaimed water
 - Ground water credits
 - Regional systems (interconnects)
 - Conjunctive use (surface water/ground water interface)

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