

ATV trails open at Mallory Swamp

- With summer almost here, families looking for outdoor recreational opportunities may want to head to Mallory Swamp for some great all-terrain vehicle (ATV) riding.

About 35 miles of trails are open for ATV riding from late April to late September at the Mallory Swamp tract, owned by the Suwannee River Water Management District. The tract is located in southeastern Lafayette County.

"ATV riding at Mallory Swamp offers summer fun for families," said Edwin McCook, District land management specialist. "However, we strongly caution all riders to practice safety and be aware of all regulations for the area.

Riders 16 years of age or younger must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian.

All persons operating an ATV are required to review and sign a daily special use authorization (SUA) and have that document in their

possession while riding at Mallory Swamp. An SUA is available at the ATV parking area at the information kiosk.

All riders are expected to follow the rules and regulations outlined in the SUA.

To access the tract from Mayo, travel south on SR 51 to CR 360 and turn left. Travel 11 miles southeast on CR 360. The pavement ends and the road becomes dirt (Crapps Tower Road). Continue 4 miles to the entrance into Mallory Swamp. Follow the signs to the trail.

Other recreational activities at Mallory Swamp include wildlife viewing, fishing, hunting, bicycling, hiking and horseback riding on administrative roads.

The District acquires and manages lands for flood control, water quality protection and natural resource conservation. District lands are open year-round for public use.

More information about Mallory Swamp is available at www.mysuwanneeriver.com. Click on the "Recreation" button, "Best Recreational Opportunities" link and "Mallory Swamp."

Mayo Free

Vol. 122, No. 13 USPS 334-600 THURSDAY, JUNE 3, 2010, Lafayette County, Florida

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SEE ATV, PAGE 7A

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SRWMD Funding Helps Farmers Buy Tools To Protect Water Quality

Suwannee River Water Management District (District) Governing Board voted May 13 to provide \$210,000 to the Suwannee River Partnership (SRP) to fund crop tools that will assist farmers in protecting the environment.

The program will provide 75 percent cost share to farmers for purchasing the tools, up to \$10,000 per farmer. Cost share funds will be offered to eligible farmers in Gilchrist, Levy, Dixie, Alachua, Columbia, Union, Bradford, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lafayette, Madison, Suwannee and Taylor counties.

SRP staff will select farmers based on location within spring sheds on a first-come, first-served basis.

The funds will help cover costs for technology and equipment used to implement best management practices (BMPs). BMPs help improve nutrient and irrigation management through tools, such as soil moisture probes, precision fertilizer application equipment and GPS mapping equipment.

"This program will give farmers the tools they need to help protect our springs, rivers and ground water," said Darrell Smith, SRP coordinator.

Smith said past experience has shown farms using a combination of these tools reduce nitrogen inputs by an average of 50 pounds per acre per year. By improving irrigation management, farmers save an average of 1.5 million gallons of water per crop season.

SRP staff will work with farmers to select crop tools that are most effective at conserving water and managing fertilizers and they will provide training to farmers as needed.

The SRP is a program made up of various partners, including public agencies, organizations and agricultural producers. It is funded by partners and other public entities, including the District.

For more information about the crop tool cost share program, contact Darrell Smith at 386-362-1001.

Lake Louise permit denied, though project far from dead

By Jeff Waters

jeff.waters@gaffnews.com

The Suwannee River Water Management District's Governing Board on Tuesday denied the county's request for a permit to build a boat ramp and access road to Lake Louise. However, the board may reapply at a later date.

The District's six-member Governing Board voted to deny the county's permit to build the boat ramp. This was the county's second attempt at securing a permit.

Governing Board Chairman Don Quincey said that the board denied the permit request without prejudice because the county simply needed to supply the District with more information before a permit could be approved.

"The board denied the permit without any repercussions," he said. "The

SEE LAKE, PAGE 3A

Continued From Page 1A

county can come back and reapply."

Most of those in attendance wore white shirts to show their support of the Lake Louise project.

Suwannee resident Bruce Campbell is an avid fisherman who wants to be able to enjoy the lake, now closed to the public.

"People that own property out there are under the feeling that they own the lake, they do not," Campbell told the *Democrat*. "They're trying to block ac-

cess and I can understand that they're trying to protect the water but that water belongs to the people of the county."

To the board, Campbell said the process has "gotten ridiculous. This can be worked out, you can't keep stonewalling it, let's get this project worked out."

Jerry Corbett said not having public access to the lake "cheats people out of their rights" and called Lake Louise one of the few places left in the county that holds water.

"I can understand their

(lakefront landowners') feelings of not wanting it public," Corbett said. "But if I was one of those homeowners I could not allow it, that is taking too much rights away from the people."

George Burnham has opposed the lake being opened to the public since the project's inception in 2006. He spoke to the Governing Board on "behalf of the taxpayers of the county."

"We're concerned about the costs already incurred on this project," he said. "As a homeowner and tax-

payer I urge you to take the recommendation of the staff and deny the permit. No one has spoken yet on behalf of the taxpayers."

Board member David Flagg asked Suwannee Parks and Recreation Director Greg Scott why the county wasn't supplying the District the requested information, resulting in the two denials.

"Twice we sent in the information, and they wanted more information," Scott responded.

He said the first response from the District consisted of only two pages requesting more information. After that permit was denied, the District sent another response, consisting this time of 12 pages.

Dennis Price, who filled out the application for the permit, told the board he was concerned that the permit was denied so quickly. He said based on his experience, the District is being too demanding.

Scott said he understands the permitting process takes time. However, "it appears that the (District) staff is being overly thorough on the process," Scott said.

Governing Board member and Suwannee County resident Carl Meece said he didn't "see why they would have prejudice in this case, if there is then we need to ferret it out."

Meece said the county and the District staff need to work together in a timely fashion and "work it out with staff and if they approve, we'll approve it if staff recommends it."

Scott said the county will

be applying for another permit to move forward with the project.

The Lake Louise project has been controversial and the debate surrounding it oftentimes heated since 2006 when former county employee donated three acres of land to the county to build the boat ramp and access road. She has recently asked for the land back because she said the county failed to uphold its end of their agreement. She said the county was to construct the access road within a year so she could have access to her remaining acreage and eventually sell the land. She said due to health reasons she needs to sell her remaining acreage immediately so her family wouldn't be left with the burden of trying to sell it.

CITIZEN

CHIEFLAND



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CHIEFLAND CITIZEN

Water district meeting leaves city still asking questions

By MARK SCOHER
news2@chieflandcitizen.com

Chiefland city officials got no definite answers from the Suwannee River Water Management District's Governing Board Tuesday about the fate of a 122-acre plot of land surrounding the city's 33-acre well site.

Mayor Teal Pomeroy, one of three city officials attending the board meeting in Live Oak, said, "Chiefland thinks it's in our best interest to control that site." Pomeroy asked if purchasing

the site or leasing it for recreational use would be something the board would consider.

Board Chairman Don Quincey, of Chiefland, told Pomeroy no decision or discussion on the matter would happen during the meeting. "We will discuss it at some future date," he said.

Pomeroy also asked the board if SRWMD would comment on whether or not the agency, in conjunction with the Nature Coast Regional Water Authority, is planning to put a well on the 122-acre site to supply water to the cities

and counties in the NCRWA service area.

The city has been requesting public records from NCRWA on the matter since March, but it has not received the records. That's why the city commission asked to be put on Tuesday's agenda. They were hoping to get some answers in person, Pomeroy recently said.

But Quincey offered no answers and said the city would have to get the information at a later date from SRWMD Executive Director David Still.

See CITY 14A

CITY

Continued from 1A

"We can have a workshop on this at some point," Quincey said.

Chiefland City Attorney Norm Fugate told the water board the city has invested about \$300,000 of Chiefland taxpayer money for the well and the site.

"The property was purchased for a Chiefland well field," he said.

The 33-acre site was purchased by the city in March of 2009 for about \$132,000. Fugate said the city was under the impression that the terms of the original agreement would also allow the city to lease the remaining 122 acres with an option to purchase. The original property, about 155 acres, was purchased with money from the city and the Florida Forever fund. About 20 percent was paid for by the city.

"Our concern is that the remaining 122 acres will be used as a well site for Nature Coast Regional Water Authority," Fugate said.

Quincey said SRWMD is obligated to protect the water in the district. "We're gonna' uphold our mission to protect the water," he said.

Quincey said he also wanted to remind the city that he initially begged the city not to purchase the 33 acres, saying it was already under the protection of SRWMD.

"I'm still disappointed to this moment that you spent the taxpayers' money like that."

After the meeting, Pomeroy said despite not getting any solid answers, the experience "was a good start. I look forward to a good dialogue with them."

Fugate said he believes purchasing the 33-acre site was a good idea. The city bought the land for \$4,000 an acre, he said. Land is hard to buy at that price, anymore.

Chiefland tells water district it still wants to buy well site

By Terry Witt
Staff Writer

With the rhetoric toned down a bit, Chiefland Mayor Teal Pomeroy said he felt the tone of discussions was positive Tuesday when he talked to the Suwannee River Water Management District Governing Board about leasing a 122-acre tract north of the city limits for a future well site.

Pomeroy, who attended the meeting with City Manager Grady Hartzog and City Attorney Norm Fugate, told the board the city remained committed to the idea of leasing the property with an option to eventually purchase it from SRWMD.

Governing board members suggested Pomeroy arrange a meeting with SRWMD Executive Director David Still to talk about the city's request, and Pomeroy has agreed. A workshop was also suggested, but Pomeroy said he is not sure he wants a workshop.

"They didn't promise anything, but they didn't close the door," Pomeroy said.

The city has had an interest in purchasing the 155-acre tract about a block north of the city limits since 2004. When the tract was purchased, SRWMD used \$160,000 of city money along with Florida Forever conservation funds to buy the land.

But confusion resulted when the current city commission thought it had

been given a lease with an option to buy the entire acreage. The city thought it had provided \$1,000 per acre for a lease/option package.

But the actual wording gave the district total ownership of the tract, and gave the city the option to purchase 33 acres. Pomeroy, who was on the city commission at the time the contract for purchase was signed, said he still doesn't know why or how the lease option was changed from 155 acres to 33 acres.

But he said the city is committed to leasing the remaining 122 acres with an option to purchase the land. However, he said he has also committed himself to being less outspoken about what has angered him at times in the past.

"I said I had been a little too outspoken in the past and I would tame it down, but we were still committed to securing the site," Pomeroy said.

When the 155 acres was purchased, the property was called the Chiefland Wellhead Protection Area. The city was told the property was being purchased by SRWMD to preserve land for a future Chiefland well.

SRWMD has also supported the idea of the Nature Coast Regional Water Authority using the 122 acres for a well site to provide member cities with water. Chiefland is not a member, but Trenton and Fanning Springs and Gilchrist County are members.

See **Water**, Page 3A

Water, from Page 1A

The city opposes using the land for an authority well site. The Authority has hired three engineering firms to study potential well sites. The feasibility study is expected to be finished this summer.

Pomeroy walked away from

Tuesday's meeting feeling better about the situation.

"I believe they will help us toward that end (securing the 122 acres). I didn't get anything from them, but it was positive," Pomeroy said.

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Taylor News-Herald

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Friday/Saturday

June 11-12, 2010

If oil spill reaches Taylor coast

Volunteers, workers will be needed

Local officials met Wednesday with state representatives from Volunteer Florida and Workforce Florida to discuss programs which will become available for Taylor County residents should the Gulf oil spill come close to the county's coast.

"We got a very clear understanding of what's been

happening to the west of us," said Taylor County Emergency Management Coordinator Dustin Hinkel.

As for volunteers, the state has six registered in Taylor County, although Hinkel said their list is much longer. The county, with help from the Taylor County Chamber of Commerce, have been the local

points of contact for volunteers.

Hinkel recommended those who wish to volunteer to contact his office (838-3575) or the chamber (584-5513), but to also take the extra step and register with the state as well.

"They expressed to us that no volunteers should handle the oil," he added. "Clearing and handling the oil must be

handled by trained, paid personnel."

Should the oil threaten the Taylor County coastline, local residents, through the Agency for Workforce Innovation and Workforce Florida, will be able to access two employment programs: Qualified Community Responders and Vessels of Opportunity.

Workforce announced Thursday it was posting 200 jobs for oil clean-up efforts (see related story).

"What we got out of the meeting is they are focused on getting local communities involved," Hinkel said.

That is why, he continued,

→ Please see page 6

SRWMD declares emergency

WORKERS, VOLUNTEERS Continued from page 1

some of the programs are not being offered here yet. As the oil comes our way, they will come here," he said.

At the moment, the oil forecast remains positive for

Taylor County, at least for the time being.

"The oil is still very, very far away," Hinkel said, adding that recent talks with the U.S. Coast Guard confirmed that.

On Thursday, the Suwannee River Water Management District issued an emergency order in response to the oil spill for the coastal communities of Jefferson, Taylor, Dixie and Levy counties.

The order authorizes only BP and its contractors and governmental units and their contractors to undertake specific prevention, containment and recovery activities.

SRWMD Declares Emergency Order In Response To Oil Spill

The Suwannee River Water Management District (SRWMD) has issued an emergency order in response to the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill in the Gulf of Mexico. The order is for the District's coastal communities of Jefferson, Taylor, Dixie and Levy counties.

The order authorizes only BP and its contractors and governmental units and their contractors to undertake specific prevention, containment and recovery activities. This will allow prevention, containment and recovery actions due to the spill to occur in an expedited manner without the need to obtain certain permits in advance from the District.

The order is effective until June 30, 2010 unless renewed or modified by the District.

The District also passed a resolution that identifies District assistance available to the state in response to the spill. Such assistance includes water quality monitoring, mapping, manpower, equipment and other services.

"The District is taking the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill very seriously," said District Executive Director David Still. "We are committed to implement all necessary action to prevent harm to our coastal communities."

The District will continue to monitor the situation closely to ensure that impacts to water resources are minimized.

The District's Governing Board approved the order and resolution at a board meeting June 8.

For more information about the emergency order call Jon Dinges, District Director of Water Supply and Resource Management, at 386-362-1001. More information on the state's response to the oil spill is available at <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/deepwaterhorizon/default.htm> <<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/deepwaterhorizon/default.htm>>.

Bronson fights federal FEMA flood study

By Terry Witt
Staff Writer

Bronson town officials were shocked last week in a teleconference when they learned a federal agency had decided not to spare a portion of the town from being designated as a high risk flood area.

The town is fighting back.

Town council members voted Monday to submit a public records request for the computer model used by URS Corporation to conclude that Bronson's western business district should be designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency as a high risk flood area.

The Suwannee River Water Management District hired URS to conduct the flood study on behalf of FEMA. SRWMD is a cooperating partner with FEMA, but the federal agency will make the final determination on the flood map designation.

Councilman Berlon Weeks has been frustrated with the new flood map designation. He said the town has never flooded. The designation would mean home and business owners in the flood zone would be required to purchase flood insurance, which is more costly than normal property insurance.

He is also frustrated because URS Corporation is using a sophisticated computer modeling system that isn't available to the town or its engineers, Mittaur & Associates, which means the town has little scientific information to refute URS's claims.

Weeks won council approval Monday to instruct Town Attorney Steve Warm to submit a public records request to URS for the computer model it used in determining western Bronson is a high risk flood area.

He also said the town recently was billed \$4,200

by Mittaur & Associates for work associated with defending against the URS flood mapping plan. He wants the bill forwarded to the SRWMD for payment.

SRWMD and FEMA were part of the teleconference with URS, Weeks, Bronson Clerk Kelli Brettel and County Commissioner Chad Johnson last week.

During the conference, FEMA announced it has decided not to remove western Bronson from what is known as a Zone-A designation, meaning the western part of Bronson would remain a high risk flood area. But FEMA instructed URS to run its computer model again using information provided by Mittaur & Associates that raises questions about the accuracy of the URS model.

Weeks noted that the town has provided three tours of a drainage ditch that runs behind the west half of Bronson and connects to Chunky Pond. The ditch is the point of contention. URS computer models show the ditch overflowing and topping a series of culverts in a 100-year storm and flooding western Bronson. Mittaur & Associates used information from the ditch tours to ask that Bronson be removed from the A zone designation.

Town officials point out that the ditch connects to Chunky Pond, a massive drainage basin that would take storm water from a major storm event and distribute it for miles through prairies and swamps south of town. But URS says its computer models say the pond isn't big enough to prevent western Bronson from flooding in a 100-year storm event.

The ditch has seven or eight culverts strung along approximately two miles. The remains of spoil banks can be seen in some locations. But Weeks said the FEMA official in the teleconference, along with URS officials, insisted on calling the ditch a tributary. Weeks said the FEMA official knew nothing about the tours of the ditch or the

information those tours revealed.

Weeks said URS doesn't make a distinction between a manmade drainage ditch that dries up when rainfall is in short supply and carries water away from town in wet weather, versus a naturally flowing stream that runs all year.

He said the entire FEMA study of Bronson started without input from the town. He said FEMA held a scoping meeting to determine what areas of the county were considered flood prone. The meeting was reportedly the basis for targeting Bronson and the Long Pond area of Chiefland, but Bronson and the drainage ditch are not mentioned in the minutes of the meeting.

As part of his public record request, Weeks' motion also instructed town officials to contact FEMA and make a records request for any information it might have about storm water levels triggered by Hurricane Elena in 1985. The storm dropped two feet of water on Levy County, but Bronson never flooded.

Steve Minnis, governmental affairs director for SRWMD, who was part of the teleconference, said he was also surprised by FEMA's decision not to pull Bronson out of Zone A. SRWMD had submitted a special needs report to FEMA questioning the accuracy of the URS computer model and asking that Bronson be pulled out of the zone. Minnis said he was frustrated by what happened in the teleconference. He thought FEMA would move Bronson back to its old flood designation.

"That's what was conveyed to me. I was surprised. I wasn't happy. We still have concerns," Minnis said.

Minnis said URS did meet minimum requirements for the flood study, but SRWMD is not satisfied with those numbers. "We don't believe the minimum standards reflect what's out there," he said.

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SRWMD declares emergency in response to Gulf oil spill

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NCRWA plans well north of Chiefland

By Terry Witt
Staff Writer

Chiefland city commissioners learned Monday that the Nature Coast Regional Water Authority has designated a 122-acre tract of land adjoining the city's future well site north of town as the proposed location of a regional well field to supply Fanning Springs, Old Town and Cross City with water.

The NCRWA released a 270-page draft feasibility study late last week showing the so-called Drummond Tract situated at the corner of County Road 341 and 346 as the site of the regional well field. The well field is connected by 27,500-feet of 10-inch water main to Fanning Springs.

Consultants who drafted the report said the well field could produce 500 gallons per minute or more for NCRWA members.

According to the study, the Levy County Regional Well Field would provide water service to Fanning Springs, Old Town and Cross City. The Gilchrist County Regional Well Field near Bell would provide water to Bell, Trenton, Lancaster Correctional Institute and the future Seminole Electric generating plant east of Bell.

The study goes into a range of alternatives for ways to deliver water between member cities. NCRWA currently has no customers nor does it have any revenues or ways to generate revenues. The study also points out this fact and notes it would probably have to rely on state or federal grants to build wells, wastewater treatment plants and water lines.

Chiefland refused to join NCRWA last year and has generally opposed the idea of transferring water from land located a block north of the Chiefland city limits to Fanning Springs, Gilchrist County or Dixie County.

The city says the 122-acre Drummond Tract was part of a 155-acre parcel of land purchased by the city and Suwannee River Water Management District as the Chiefland Wellhead Protection Area and should be preserved for exclusive use as Chiefland drinking water source.

Chiefland commissioners voted 4-1 Monday to hire attorney John Fumero, who has expertise in water issues to help the city work through the politically sensitive issues involved in opposing the NCRWA proposal and possibly convincing the Suwannee River Water Management District to give the city a lease on the property with an option to purchase.

Mayor Teal Pomeroy was authorized to meet with Fumero and City Attorney Norm Fugate on the morning of the day Pomeroy plans to meet with SRWMD Executive Director David Still concerning the Drummond Tract. Pomeroy met with the SRWMD governing board last week. He was advised to set up a meeting with Still to talk about the property.

City officials thought they had a lease with an option to buy the entire 155-acre Drummond Tract until last year when they looked at the fine print and discovered the lease applied only to 33 acres of the property. The city has purchased that smaller tract in the meantime, but the city doesn't want NCRWA pumping water on the adjoining acreage.

Commissioner Rollin Hudson opposed hiring Fumero, saying he felt City Attorney Norm Fugate was qualified to handle the work.

The NCRWA was formed on June 8, 2009 by an agreement between charter members Dixie and Gilchrist County, Bell,

See **Water**, Page 4A

Water, from Page 1A

City, Fanning Springs and Trenton. Most of its territory is in Gilchrist and Dixie Counties. The organization's bylaws say its purpose is to provide cost-effective alternatives for water, wastewater and reclaimed water within its service territory. A \$300,000 Rural Infrastructure Fund Grant through the state Office of Tourism, Trade and Economic Development was used to fund the study.

NCRWA plans to meet in regular session at 2 p.m. this Wednesday at Fanning Springs City Hall. Its agenda includes approval of a series of town meetings to discuss the feasibility study. The agenda shows the days and

times of the town hall meetings, but not locations of the meetings.

The Town Hall meeting dates and times are 6 p.m., Thursday, June 24 in Old Town; 7:30 p.m. Thursday, June 24 at Fanning Springs; 6 p.m. on Thursday, July 1 in Bell; 6 p.m., Thursday, July 1 in Trenton; Wednesday, July 21, Fanning Springs.

Pomeroy said Fumero told him he wouldn't take the job to start a fight with SRWMD. He knows the officials there. He has drafted several of the state water laws that exist today and has worked for at least one other water management district. Pomeroy said he doesn't want to fight, but rather

is willing to talk civilly to Still with Fumero at his side.

"I think this would be Chiefland's best chance if they are going to work with us..." Pomeroy said.

Fugate wants to talk to Fumero about a couple of issues. He said the Drummond Tract was originally purchased by SRWMD with Florida Forever money as the Chiefland Wellhead Protection Area. He believes the state money spelled out that it was to be used for preserving a Chiefland Wellhead Protection Area and there is a question now about whether the land is being used for that purpose.

He said the second issue is whether

SRWMD should be involved in promoting and supporting development of the NCRWA, a water and wastewater supply authority, when it has the legal authority to be involved in supply issues. He said he wants to talk in more detail to Fumero about this issue.

Pomeroy noted that a hospital is about to be constructed in Chiefland and he said other longer range development is expected north of town. He said the city needs a reliable and stable source of water for the future and the 122 acres is needed for that purpose.

He is also worried that building a large well next door to Chiefland's could affect the city's water supplies.

SRWMD declares emergency order in response to oil spill

The Suwannee River Water Management District (District) has issued an emergency order in response to the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill in the Gulf of Mexico. The order is for the District's coastal communities of Jefferson, Taylor, Dixie and Levy counties.

The order authorizes only BP and its contractors and governmental units and their contractors to undertake specific prevention, containment and recovery activities. This will allow prevention, containment and recovery actions due to the spill to occur in an expedited manner without the need to obtain certain permits in advance from the District.

The order is effective until June 30, 2010 unless renewed or modified by the District.

The District also passed a resolution that identifies District assis-

tance available to the state in response to the spill. Such assistance includes water quality monitoring, mapping, manpower, equipment and other services.

"The District is taking the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill very seriously," said District Executive Director David Still.

"We are committed to implement all necessary action to prevent harm to our coastal communities."

The District will continue to monitor the situation closely to ensure that impacts to water resources are minimized.

The District's Governing Board approved the order and resolution at a board meeting June 8.

For more information about the emergency order call Jon Dinges, District director of water supply and resource management, at 386-362-1001. More information on the state's response to the oil spill is

available at <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/deepwaterhorizon/default.htm>.

Buchanan honored for 20 years of service at SRWMD



Paul Buchanan, the District's GIS program coordinator, was recently honored for 20 years of outstanding service. Governing Board Chairman Don Quincey, far left, and the District's Mission Support Director Melanie Roberts presents an award to Buchanan at a governing board meeting June 8.

Paul Buchanan, of the Suwannee River Water Management District (District), was recently honored for 20 years of outstanding service. District Director of Mission Support Melanie Roberts and District Governing Board Chairman Don Quincey congratulated Buchanan at a governing board meeting June 8.

Buchanan has worked at the District since April 1990. His current position is geographic information systems program coordinator. In this capacity, his responsibilities include overall administration of geographic information systems (GIS) activities, such as spatial data analysis, map production and GIS data storage management. He is

also involved in the District's global positional system activities, as well as the digital processing of digital aerial photography, satellite imagery and LiDAR data.

Buchanan graduated from the University of South Alabama in 1987 with a B.S. degree in geography. In 1990 he received an M.S. degree from the University of South Carolina in geography with an emphasis in GIS and remote sensing.

Buchanan has met the standards and requirements as established by the GIS Certification Institute for a certified geographic information systems professional. He is also a certified floodplain manager.

Water lawyer to consult with city

By MARK SCOHIER
news2@chieflandcitizen.com

City commissioners voted unanimously Monday night to hire an outside attorney for consultation with Chiefland's city attorney on matters related to local water rights.

The subject came up in response to City Manager Grady Hartzog's review of a recently released water and wastewater feasibility study commissioned by the Nature Coast Regional Water Authority and the Suwannee River Water Management District.

Hartzog told commissioners one of the options in the study, which at this point is only a draft, shows a well with a pipeline running west being placed on a 122-acre plot of land that surrounds Chiefland's 33-acre well-site, confirming fears expressed by the city commission that water could potentially be piped out of the area for use by the NCRWA, which serves several other cities and counties.

Just last week at a SRWMD board meeting, Mayor Teal Pomeroy asked the board if SRWMD and the NCRWA had any plans to sink a well near the Chiefland site.

"There was nothing mentioned when we met before the board last week," Pomeroy said during Monday night's meeting.

At last week's meeting, SRWMD Board Member Don Quincey, of Chiefland, told Pomeroy, who was accompanied by Hartzog and City Attorney Norm Fugate, that it would be an issue discussed at a later time.

Pomeroy told the commission Monday night that the outside attorney, John J. Fumero, has an extensive background in water-related legal issues and has worked with various water districts.

Fugate told the commission that hiring attorneys

See **CITY 11A**

Thursday, June 17, 2010

Chiefland Citizen

CITY

Continued from 1A

with a specialty could sometimes be a good idea.

Fugate, who will be working with Fumero, said he especially wants to delve into issues related to the Florida Forever funds that partially paid for the initial purchase of the Chiefland well site. The city paid the remainder—about \$300,000.

Fugate also said he wants to consult Fumero on the cozy relationship between NCRWA and SRWMD, stating he was unsure of the legality of the relationship.

Pomeroy said he's hoping to work with the two organizations on the matter but also said he's afraid another well in such close proximity to Chiefland's well will have a negative affect on the amount of water the city is permitted to withdraw.

Restrictions on water could be bad for the growth of Chiefland, he said.

Pomeroy said he's hoping to consult with Fumero before the upcoming NCRWA meetings.

In other matters:

• Chiefland Police Chief Robert Douglas presented Chiefland Police Capt. Al Graves with a service pin honoring him for five years of service to the department.

Douglas said Graves has kept on top of new laws that make working as a police officer "a very strenuous job" and has provided good leadership to the other

members of the department.

Graves thanked Douglas and the commission for the opportunity to work for the department. He said he's worked at other departments in the past but said his heart wasn't in it. "But I got here, and it fit," he said.

• Commissioners voted unanimously to hold the 2010/2011 city budget meetings on July 12, 26 and Aug. 9, if needed. The dates correspond to regular commission meetings, with the budget portion being held afterward.

Hartzog told the commission that with recent tax cuts, "A lot of the wants and wishes that we have are gonna' be rough. It's gonna' be a tough year."

• Commissioners voted unanimously to get rid of outdated or broken city equipment.

"Most of what we have here is junk, but we're not allowed to get rid of it unless we bring it before the commission," Hartzog said.

Some of the equipment will be auctioned. The items include several computers, monitors and two vehicles, which will be auctioned at Weeks Auction, in Ocala. A third vehicle, a 1999 Chevrolet Blazer, will be returned to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection in compliance with the agency's rules for getting rid of donated items.

SRWMD declares 280 acres of public land as surplus

The Suwannee River Water Management District's Governing Board on June 8 approved several parcels of District-owned lands to be declared as surplus and for the District to enter into a contract with a group of brokers to market the properties.

The board approved about 280 acres for surplus on parcels in Hamilton, Gilchrist, Dixie, Madison and Suwannee counties.

The surplus lands approved by the board are scheduled for appraisal and marketing, along with seven other tracts that were previously approved. Proceeds from land sales will be used to fund future purchases of property with a greater environmental value.

"Rather than selling entire parcels, we are simply redefining tract boundaries," said Joe Flanagan, District director of land acquisition and management. "Sellers are sometimes unwilling to divide property that is offered to the District. Therefore, when the District purchases environmentally sensitive lands, they sometimes come with portions of property that have minimal conservation value."

"The surplus lands program will allow us to ac-

quire land that better meets the District's water resource values," Flanagan added.

The District will evaluate all District-owned property to identify portions of land no longer needed for conservation purposes. Land that does not have one or more of the following characteristics will be considered for surplus: river frontage, floodplain acreage, wetlands acreage, aquifer recharge areas, adequate public access and management practicality.

To date, about 700 acres have been declared surplus out of the 160,000 acres of District-owned land.

The District may retain certain ownership rights of property that is sold to ensure environmental qualities remain preserved.

Properties considered for surplus are reviewed by the District's Surplus Lands Committee before consideration by the Governing Board. The public is encouraged to provide input in the process. The next committee meeting is scheduled for June 22 at 1:30 p.m. at the District's headquarters in Live Oak.

Flood map appeal period begins soon

Bradford County residents and others whose properties were affected by the proposed base flood elevations set for the Digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps will soon have an opportunity to appeal or protest the proposed changes.

Two public notices of the proposed base flood elevations, are scheduled for publication in the Bradford County Telegraph June 24 and July 1. A 90-day appeal period begins when the second notice is printed.

Those who appeal must provide data indicating that the proposed changes are scientifically or technically incorrect.

Property owners were given a chance to view their properties in relation to the new flood zone designations last November.

The maps—created by the Federal Emergency Management Agency in partnership with Bradford County and the Suwannee River Water Management District—are part of FEMA's plan to modernize all flood hazard maps nationwide to provide better and more accurate floodplain mapping.

They replace the existing flood insurance rate maps prepared by FEMA and adopted in 1984.

Once adopted, the new maps will be used to determine which

properties are located in special flood hazard areas for flood insurance and development purposes.

The maps were prepared for the city of Starke and the unincorporated areas of Bradford County. Proposed changes have been made to 3,300 parcels or about 20 percent of properties in

Bradford County.

Anyone wishing to appeal may call Nora Thompson, Bradford County zoning director, at 904-966-6223, or Rick Johnston from the water management district at 386-362-1001.

More information about FEMA floodplain mapping is available at www.srwmd.state.fl.us.

Permit Required For Night Use On SRWMD Lands

Those who like to gig frogs after dark are required to obtain a night use special use authorization (SUA) before doing so on lands owned by the Suwannee River Water Management District.

Edwin McCook, District land management specialist, said the District's recently updated land management rules require SUA authorization for night use on all public lands. The new rules also allow the District to enforce the requirement.

McCook said requiring SUAs for night use enhances safety and protects District property.

"Regulating what visitors do at night reduces vandalism, drinking and other similar activities," he said. "These efforts will help make District lands a safe place for visitors and lower the cost of maintaining these lands for all taxpayers."

Frog gigging is permitted at Mallory Swamp Wildlife

Management Area (WMA) located in southern Lafayette and northern Dixie counties.

Camping is another night activity available with SUA authorization. Primitive camping is available to canoeists and boaters by river access on most District lands. Drive-in camping, which includes RV access, is available at the Goose Pasture tract in southeastern Jefferson County and at Otter Springs Park & Campground in Gilchrist County.

District lands are open to the public during daylight hours only, unless an SUA is obtained. Visitors may arrive an hour and a half before sunrise and leave an hour and a half after sunset.

SUAs are free and allow public use on District lands until 1 a.m., with the exception of camping. To obtain an SUA call Edwin McCook at 386-362-1001 or email recreation@srwmd.org.

More information about recreational opportunities on District-owned lands is available at www.mysuwanneeriver.com/recreation <<http://www.mysuwanneeriver.com/recreation>>. More information about Otter Springs is available at www.ottersprings.com <<http://www.ottersprings.com>>.

Bronson enlists county in fight against flood plan

By Terry Witt
Staff Writer

Bronson's fight to overturn a federal plan that would label much of the western business district as a high risk flood zone got a boost Tuesday when the Levy County Commission agreed to draft an agreement that allows the county and town to cooperate on the issue.

Commissioner Danny Stevens' motion also said the board would send a letter to the Federal Emergency Management Agency making simple statements about how the county and the town feel about the digital flood risk maps the agency plans to adopt.

The county commission listened to a plea by Bronson Town Councilman Berlon Weeks before deciding to get involved.

"We need help. We're running into a wall," Weeks said.

The Suwannee River Water Management District is a cooperating partner with FEMA in designing new flood risk maps for areas of the county that allegedly are at high risk of flooding, but town officials and longtime town residents say Bronson has never flooded.

They say a manmade ditch that runs behind the western business district and connects to Chunky Pond carries storm water away from the town. URS, a private company hired by SRWMD to conduct the flood study, claims the ditch would flood Bronson in a 100-year storm event.

URS Corporation has thus far refused to alter its conclusion that the ditch behind the western Bronson business district is a tributary the McGee Branch stream that would flood Bronson in a 100-year storm.

The town says the ditch was built in the 1930s by the Works Progress Administration for mosquito control and is not a tributary. They say it is a ditch. SRWMD says URS has changed the name of the tributary to the Bronson Stormwater Ditch under pressure from Bronson, but still maintains the ditch would flood Bronson in a big storm.

SRWMD filed a document with

FEMA questioning the accuracy of the flood map study and noting the town is willing to replace a half dozen or more culverts along the ditch to make the water flow more freely to Chunky Pond, a large natural drainage area south of town.

The ditch was once maintained by county mosquito control, but no maintenance has been done since the 1960s, according to Matt Weldon, mosquito control director for the county. The ditch passes through private property. To clean it out and maintain the ditch for mosquito and flood control would require permission from landowners.

Commission Chairwoman Nancy Bell noted that people throughout the county are questioning the accuracy of the new flood maps, including residents in the Long Pond area near Chiefland and in Rosewood between Chiefland and Cedar Key. She said meetings were held by FEMA to gauge where flood problems might exist in the county, but she said few people knew about the meetings or what it could mean to them.

Commissioner Lilly Rooks said residents and businesses in a designated federal flood zone that have homeowners insurance would also be required to purchase flood insurance if the federal designation remains. Flood insurance is more expensive than standard house or business building insurance.

Steve Minnis, governmental affairs director for SRWMD, said FEMA has asked URS to plug more data into its flood computer models to determine if the flood elevations can be changed. The new flood models are to be released in about two weeks.

One of the problems Bronson faces is that URS is using sophisticated computer models to make its claim that the town would flood in a 100-year storm. The town has no means to generate scientific data to counter the claims.

Bronson Town Attorney Steven Warm has made written public records requests under federal and state law asking for any information, documents or even computer models used by URS, SRWMD or FEMA to reach its conclusions.

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Mallory Swamp. - Photo courtesy SRWMD

SEE PERMIT, PAGE 5A

PERMIT

Continued From Page 1A

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Friday, June 25, 2010

Madison Enterprise-Recorder 13

Outdoors

SRWMD Declares Public Lands As Surplus

The Suwannee River Water Management District's Governing Board, on June 8, approved several parcels of District-owned lands to be declared as surplus and for the District to enter into a contract with a group of brokers to market the properties.

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Surplus Lands Committee before consideration by the Governing Board. The public is encouraged to provide input in the process. The next committee meeting is scheduled for June 22 at 1:30 p.m. at the District's headquarters on the corner of U.S. 90 and C.R. 49 in Live Oak. For more information contact Joe Flanagan at 386-362-1001.

The District acquires and manages lands for flood control, water quality protection and natural resource conservation. District lands are available for public use for recreational opportunities, such as hunting, fishing, hiking, camping and horseback riding.

CARES honors farmers for sustainable practices

TALLAHASSEE DEMOCRAT

Monday, June 28, 2010

Tallahassee.com

75 Cents

Awards encourage environmental stewardship

By Dave Hodges
DEMOCRAT BUSINESS EDITOR

Sidney Koon, a farmer in Lafayette County, knows the importance of a good balance in his business operation, where care for both his land and his crops can be achieved in a sustainable manner.

Koon's Farm Inc. totals 2,200 acres and produces corn and peanuts. The business is one of 24 in the Suwannee River Basin being honored Tuesday by CARES, the County Alliance for Responsible Environmental Stewardship.

"We are always looking for ways to save money and make ourselves more efficient," Koon said. "These days, our profits are so thin on what we make, we have to be efficient."

Darrell Smith, coordinator for the Suwannee River Partnership that sponsors CARES, said the improved practices being utilized are having a big impact. "We have some progressive or demonstration farms where they are reducing their nitrogen use by 50 pounds per



Sidney Koon, whose family farm is near Mayo, programs the control panel for a irrigation pivot used at a peanut field. Advances in irrigation scheduling and delivery have enabled farmers to reduce the amount of water they use.

TALLAHASSEE.COM

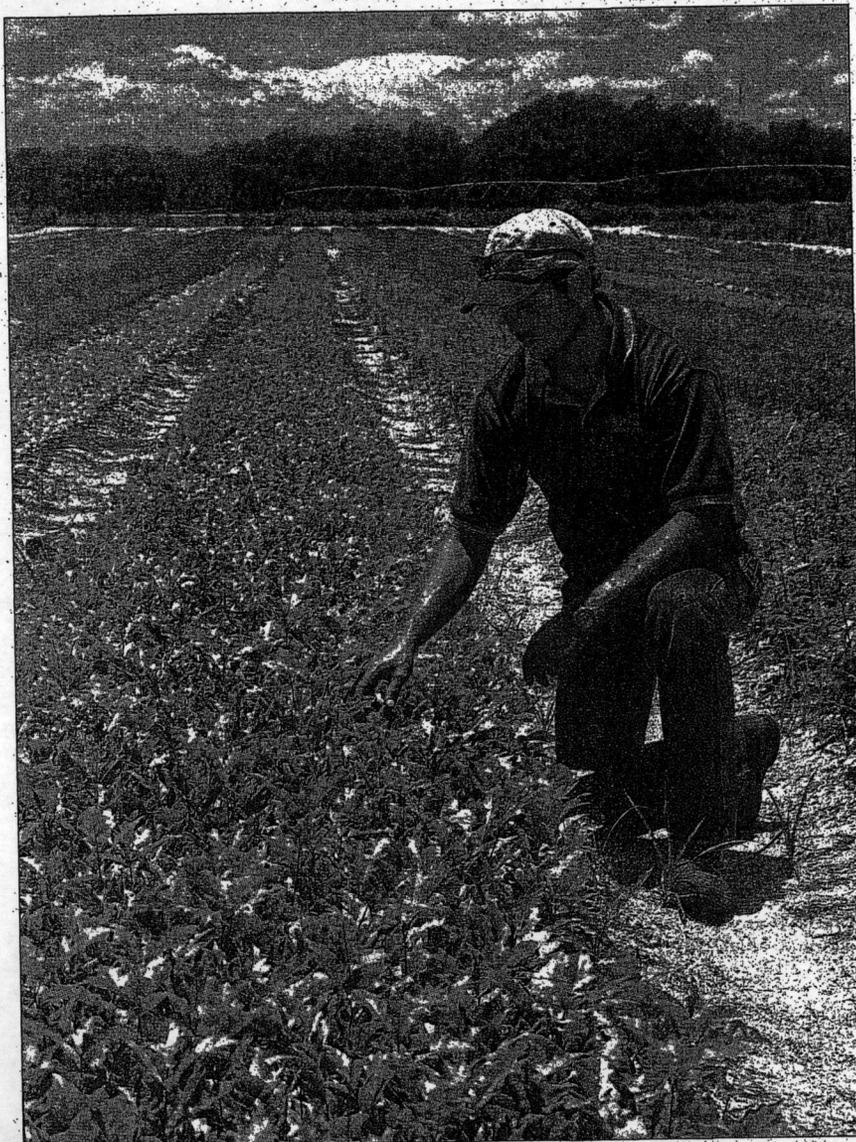
■ View photos and video.

acre," he said. That amounts to 2,500 tons less per year across the whole program.

The change in water usage

is equally dramatic. In the last five to six years, the program has had 325 to 350 irrigation systems retrofitted to make them better. "We estimate they save a billion gallons of water

Please see FARMS, 2A



Photos by DAVE HODGES/Democrat

Matt Buchanan of Central Florida Lands & Timber Nursery Inc. in Buckville checks oak tree seedlings that will eventually be used in landscaping and environmental mitigation projects. The nursery is one of the 24 farms and ranches in the Suwannee River Basin being honored by CARES, the County Alliance for Responsible Environmental Stewardship, for their sustainable practices.