

# Hunting season on horizon on SRWMD lands

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Hunting on these lands is managed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission as Wildlife Management Areas (WMAs).

The following is a list of areas available for hunting:

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- Troy Springs, northern Lafayette County
- Twin Rivers, eastern Madison County
- Mallory Swamp, southern Lafayette County
- Steinhatchee Springs, southern Lafayette, northern Dixie and eastern Taylor counties
- Lower Econfinia, western Taylor County
- Middle Aucilla River, eastern Jefferson, western

Madison and Taylor counties

- Aucilla, eastern Jefferson and western Taylor counties

- Log Landing, eastern Dixie County

- Devil's Hammock, southern Levy County

- Santa Fe Swamp, eastern Bradford County

Holton Creek is a mobility impaired hunting area. It is closed to the public during hunt dates, except to persons hiking the Florida Trail.

Persons using WMAs are required to have appropriate licenses, permits and stamps.

Additionally, new regulations apply to some areas beginning this season.

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## Citizens En'GAGE'd In Water Data Collection

Data collection specialists with the Suwannee River Water Management District (District) spend long hours installing, maintaining and collecting data from gages along our rivers, lakes, and streams, but they can't do it without the help of a few volunteers that supplement their efforts.

More than 30 volunteer observers help collect rainfall and water-level data from manual gages within the District's 15-county region. Observers take readings at least once a week and record the data in a log that is returned to the District.

Volunteer observers typically live or own property near the gage sites and have a vested interest in the information.

"They are folks who have an interest in river and lake levels for fishing purposes or who like to know how the levels affect their property, such as during a flood or drought event," said Donald Monroe, District hydrologic data collection specialist.

David Pharr, former owner and operator of the Canoe Outpost at the Spirit of the Suwannee Music Park in Live Oak, found that collecting water-level data was helpful to his customers.



*A staff gage along the Suwannee River.*

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Now, he and his wife, Debbie, enjoy weekend trips rafting along the river on their floating platform dubbed the "Clampett Mobile." The platform - which carries a tent, chairs, coolers, fishing poles, the family dogs and other items - floats down the river with the current.

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Kim Davis, who lives on the Santa Fe River, has a staff gage on her property. She reads the gage weekly while out walking her dogs. However, when the

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The water had risen 5 feet under her home, which luckily, was built on 10-foot stilts in the 1970s.

"There was no land in sight for two months at my house," Davis said, noting she had to use a gheeno boat to access her property.

Davis was able to assist the District in taking readings during that flood until the staff gage became submerged.

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"Having backup data is important in case of equipment failure and it also provides a means to check data against that which is produced from automated equipment," Monroe said. "The most critical time for this data is during a flood event when the public relies on this information."

The District provides water-level and rainfall data to the public through its website, [www.mysuwanneeriver.com](http://www.mysuwanneeriver.com) <<http://www.mysuwanneeriver.com>>. Flood warnings are posted during a flooding event. Such data is also used to compile reports for projects and for decision-making.

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## Submitted

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"We have reliable data observers, whose service to the District serves an important purpose," said Monroe. "The District appreciates all their efforts and hard work."

## Hunting season on horizon on SRWMD lands

Hunting will soon begin on nearly 100,000 acres of Suwannee River Water Management District-owned lands, including large tracts in Lafayette. Deer, hog, turkey and small game hunting is available on limited days from September-

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Continued From Page 1A

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# Water district proposes higher tax rate for 2011

The Suwannee River Water Management District approved a tentative budget of \$61.6 million on July 13 with a proposed property tax rate of 0.4934 of a mill.

District officials said the millage rate represents an increase of 0.0535 of a mill over the current fiscal year. Those who own property with a taxable value of \$100,000 will see an increase of \$5.35 in property taxes paid to the district. The property owner would pay a total of \$49.34 to the district.

Owners of property with a value of \$150,000 would see an increase of \$8.02, which would give them a total district tax bill of \$74.01.

If the proposed millage rate is adopted it would be the first time in more than 20 years the district raised the tax rate.

The tentative millage rate increase is earmarked to fund the district's minimum flows and levels (MFL's) program. This will offset funding reductions from the state that have paid for establishment of MFLs in the past.

Minimum flows and levels are set to protect natural resources from manmade impacts. The minimum flows and levels for rivers, streams, springs and lakes is the lowest level allowed before damage will occur to natural systems.

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## SRWMD, Alachua County use "Forever" funds to protect Santa Fe River

The Suwannee River Water Management District, under a joint participation agreement with Alachua County, has purchased 463 acres along the Santa Fe River.

The district and county closed on the property Aug. 4.

The parcel, purchased from Osceola Land and Timber Corp., will become an addition to the 737-acre Santa Fe River Ranch parcel owned by the district and located within the Pareners Branch Conservation Area. The property is located 1.5 miles southwest of Worthington Springs.

The parcel will provide surfacewater protection, as well as maintain the natural floodplain. The purchase also will expand recreational opportunities in the

area.

"This expansion of the Santa Fe River Ranch tract will protect an additional 1.4 miles of river frontage," said Joe Flanagan, the District's director of land acquisition and management. "This land purchase could not be made possible without Alachua County as a partner."

The district used \$1.87 million in Florida Forever funds for its share of the purchase. Alachua

County spent \$624,324 in Alachua Forever funds for its share of the purchase.

Though it was a joint acquisition, the district will assume lead land management and recreation responsibility of the property. The district plans to open the Santa Fe River Ranch parcel later this year for hiking, trail riding and bicycling.

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# County, water district buy land

By Christopher Curry  
Staff writer

The Suwannee River Water Management District and Alachua County have completed an approximately \$2.5 million purchase of conservation property along the Santa Fe River.

The 463-acre tract runs along the river for nearly 1 1/2 miles. A mix of swamp forest where river birch, cypress and tupelo trees grow and an upland forest area populated by spruce pine and oaks, the property is directly east of the water management district's 737-acre Santa Fe River Ranch and nearly one mile west of the point where State Road 121 and County Road 239 cross near the Alachua/Union county line.

The riverfront property will be an addition to the adjacent Santa Fe River Ranch, which the water management expects to open to the public later this year.

"Our plans are to not develop that property extensively but to allow some of these passive recreation uses such as biking, hiking and trail riding," said Terry Demott, acquisitions coordinator for the Suwannee district.

The purchase of the land from the Osceola Land & Timber Corp. was completed on Aug. 4. The property consists of three separate tax parcels, the largest of which Osceola Land & Timber purchased for \$2.48 million in 2006, Clerk of Courts records show. The Alachua County Property Appraiser's Office listed the market value of the property at approximately \$1.8 million, while the taxable value of the agriculturally zoned land was a little more than \$117,000.

The water management district and county purchased the property for \$2,494,324. The water management district used \$1.87 million in state Florida Forever conservation funds, and county government's Alachua County Forever program contributed \$624,324 generated by the half-cent Wild Spaces & Public Places sales tax that voters approved in November 2008. As state budget cuts have diminished the district's annual allotment of Florida Forever funds from about \$7.5 million to approximately \$1.5 million, Demott said it's become more vital to partner with the county on conservation purchases.

Meanwhile, the county expects that, by the end of the year, its full allotment of sales tax funding for Alachua County Forever will either be spent or

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## LAND: Purchase will help keep area by Santa Fe River safe

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land tied to a contract offer.

Initially projected to raise nearly \$17.1 million for conservation purchases, the tax is now expected to raise a little less than \$13.1 million toward that program. Ramesh Buch, project manager for Alachua County Forever, said about \$5.9 million remains, but that money will be gone if land owners and the County Commission approve contract offers already made.

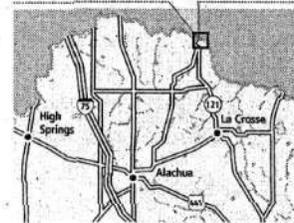
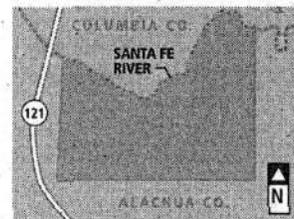
Protecting land along the Santa Fe River, particularly the Osceola Land & Timber tract, has emerged as a priority goal of the Alachua County Forever program.

The nonprofit Alachua Conservation Trust also has plans to buy and preserve undeveloped property along the river. The group has a \$4 million grant from the Florida Communities Trust to go toward the acquisition of property along the river.

"The important thing is to protect as much of the river corridor as possible, and that's what we're trying to do," said Robert Hutchinson, executive director of the trust. "A

### Land purchase

Land owned by Gainesville Regional Utilities located near State Road 121 south of the Columbia County line would be bought through the Alachua County Forever conservation program.



ROB MACK/Staff graphic

portion of the river is developed and a portion should stay undeveloped."

Hutchinson said the first priority is a nearly 100-acre property the city of Gainesville owns. The county made a prior attempt to buy that land, but city officials said they could not come down from the approximately \$570,000 asking price.

Contact Christopher Curry at 374-5088 or [chris.curry@gvillesun.com](mailto:chris.curry@gvillesun.com).

## Conservation easement protects wetlands near Suwannee River

From staff reports

The Suwannee River Water Management District commends Anderson Columbia Co., Inc., and Strickland Field Limited Partnership for a 10-year commitment to water resource protection.

The District purchased development rights on a 3,822-acre parcel owned by Anderson Columbia and Strickland Field Limited Partnership for \$2.3 million 10 years ago.

Under the terms of the conservation easement, landowners of the property have agreed to keep the property in its current natural state. The agreement restricts harvesting or alteration of forested wetlands. Silviculture activities in non-wetland areas must comply with best management practices to protect the environment.

"Anderson Columbia and Strickland Field Limited Partnership have proven to be dedicated

partners in conservation," said Joe Flanagan, the District's director of land acquisition and management. "Through these efforts 1,837 acres of cypress and wetland forests will permanently remain untouched."

The Dixie County property adjoins the Suwannee River estuary and the Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge.

Under the easement, the landowners retain hunting rights and rights to grow and harvest pine plantation on non-wetland acreage.

A conservation easement is a perpetual agreement that leaves the basic ownership and management of property with the private landowner but permanently restricts development and prohibits the alteration of wetlands. The District currently protects more than 125,000 acres of water resource lands using this tool.

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## Special to the Citizen

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## Letter To The Editor

SUBJECT: Clarification

This letter is to clarify comments made at the Nature Coast Regional Water Authority's (NCRWA) Water and Wastewater Feasibility Study in Old Town on June 24th. During the workshop, it was stated that the funding for the Feasibility Study came from a source intended for Dixie County.

According to Diane Scholz, a representative from the Office of Tourism, Trade, and Economic Development (OTTED), the funding source for NCRWA's Feasibility Study is from the Rural Infrastructure Fund Grant. This grant program is funded by the State Legislature from general appropriations.

The statement made at the workshop regarding the funding source for the Feasibility Study inadvertently referred to another matter. At one time the NCRWA Board discussed the possibility of applying for a federal Economic Development Grant associated with the 2004 hurricane season to assist in paying water and/or wastewater construction costs for Old Town residents and businesses. However, the NCRWA Board decided to finish the Feasibility Study prior to pursuing possible grants.

The Authority has and will continue to extend an olive branch to any community that wishes to partner with the Authority to ensure a long-term reliable water supply and wastewater service. The Authority sincerely believes that a partnership approach on common ground will benefit our communities. Some of these benefits are:

- Reduce water and wastewater cost to residents and businesses;
- Create local jobs;
- Strengthen local economies;
- Enhance economic opportunities;
- Improve fire protection;
- Ensure long-term reliable water supply;
- Improve water quality in the region;
- Protect the health of our communities;
- Avoid conflict and competition; and
- Establish and maintain a positive community environment.

Further, the State encourages and supports a regional water supply approach and provides various incentives to regional entities to accomplish their missions efficiently and effectively.

The next meeting of the Authority is scheduled for Wednesday, August 18th, at 2:00 p.m. at the Fanning Springs City Hall. We look forward to seeing you there.

Sincerely,  
Randy Durden  
Chair, Nature Coast  
Regional Water Authority

## Conservation Easement Protects Wetlands Near Suwannee River

The Suwannee River

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*Submitted.*

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The parcel will provide surfacewater protection, as well as maintain the natural floodplain. The purchase also will expand recreational opportunities in

the area.

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The District used \$1.87 million in Florida Forever funds for its share of the purchase. Alachua County spent \$624,324 in Alachua Forever funds for its share of the purchase.

Though it was a joint acquisition, the District will assume lead land management and recreation responsibility of the property. The District plans to open the Santa Fe River Ranch parcel later this year for hiking, trail riding and bicycling.

## Conservation easement protects wetlands near Suwannee River

*Submitted*

LIVE OAK, FL, August 4, 2010 – The Suwannee River Water Management District (District) commends Anderson Columbia Co., Inc., and Strickland Field Limited Partnership for a 10-year commitment to water resource protection.

The District purchased development rights on a 3,822-acre parcel owned by Anderson Columbia and Strickland Field Limited Partnership for \$2.3 million 10 years ago.

Under the terms of the conservation easement, landowners of the property have agreed to keep the property in its current natural state. The agreement restricts harvesting or alteration of forested wetlands. Silviculture activities in non-wetland areas must comply with best management practices to protect the environment.

“Anderson Columbia and Strickland

Field Limited Partnership have proven to be dedicated partners in conservation,” said Joe Flanagan, the District’s director of land acquisition and management. “Through these efforts 1,837 acres of cypress and wetland forests will permanently remain untouched.”

The Dixie County property adjoins the Suwannee River estuary and the Lower Suwannee National Wildlife Refuge.

Under the easement, the landowners retain hunting rights and rights to grow and harvest pine plantation on non-wetland acreage.

A conservation easement is a perpetual agreement that leaves the basic ownership and management of property with the private landowner but permanently restricts development and prohibits the alteration of wetlands. The District currently protects more than 125,000 acres of water resource lands using this tool.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 12, 2010

PAGE 4A - THE MAYO FREE PRESS, Mayo, FL

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COURTESY PHOTO

### Regulatory scientist honored for 10 years of service

Lake City resident Louis Mantini (center), a regulatory scientist at the Suwannee River Water Management District, was honored for 10 years of service at a district governing board meeting. Pictured are Governing Board Chairman Don Quincey (from left), Mantini and District Director of Water Supply and Resource Management Jon Dinges.



COURTESY PHOTO

### Banford resident recognized for 20 years of service

Banford resident Lloyd Baldwin (center), the Suwannee River Water Management District's senior systems administrator, was honored for 20 years of service at a district governing board meeting. Pictured are Board Chairman Don Quincey (from left), Baldwin and District Mission Support Director Melanie Roberts.

## SRWMD Employees Recognized For Years Of Service

Two employees of the Suwannee River Water Management District (District) were honored for years of service at the District's governing board meeting on August 10.

Lloyd Baldwin, senior systems administrator, was honored for 20 years of service. Baldwin oversees the District's servers, data storage systems and backup procedures, and provides technical support for GIS, database management and other activities related to computing. He also manages the District's local area network and Internet connection.

Baldwin earned his bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Florida. He spent several years in the private sector as a computer systems engineer and technical manager before joining the District.

Louis Mantini, a regulatory scientist in the department of water supply and resource management, was recognized for 10 years of service. He is a certified professional wetland scientist and currently serves as a reviewer in the District's environmental resource permitting program.

Mantini received a



*Lloyd Baldwin, the Suwannee River Water Management District's senior systems administrator, was honored for 20 years of service at a District governing board meeting in August. Board Chairman Don Quincey, far left, and the District's Mission Support Director, Melanie Roberts, present an award to Baldwin at the meeting.*



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bachelor's degree in microbiology from the University of South Florida in 1985 and followed with a brief career in culturing bacterial products for the food industry and agriculture. He subsequently earned a master's

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# METRO

## IN NEED OF HELP?

**SUPPORT GROUPS** Assistance is only a phone call or a website away C-7

**WHAT TO DO?** Check our events calendar C-6



**DISTRICT 6**  
Jabs fly between candidates in GOP primary race C-5

# Extra funds to help nab watering violators

## Enforcers able to work more hours

By **STEVE PATTERSON**  
The Times-Union

Despite tight times in some government offices, agencies in Jacksonville and St. Johns County will get state aid to boost enforcement of rules about watering lawns.

The St. Johns River Water Management District agreed this month to spend about \$200,000 on cost-sharing agreements with the two communities during the next three years.

Increasingly worried about straining groundwater supplies, the state agency wants local governments to

keep people from wasting water by running sprinklers excessively.

"They wanted, for lack of a better term, boots on the ground," said Vince Seibold, chief of Jacksonville's Environmental Quality Division.

The state aid will help the city extend the hours its employees can look for violators, he said.

Jacksonville began regulating lawn-watering two years ago. City employees check complaints that the public phones in, but many of those calls describe sprinklers running before dawn or other times when most workers are off-duty, Seibold said.

St. Johns County adopted watering restrictions this year and now needs to train and pay for an enforcement officer, as well as materials explaining the ordinance, said county spokeswoman Karen Pan.

Jacksonville checks about 50 reports of lawn-watering violations each month, Seibold said. But by July, inspectors had personally observed only about 20 violations during the entire year. Just one of those resulted in a \$50 ticket, because city ordinances mandate a warning for the first offense.

City employees checking overnight complaints will leave brochures and warnings when they find violations but won't try to talk to residents.

"We're not going to be knocking in on doors at 5 o'clock in the morning," Seibold said.

St. Johns' watering rules match those already set by the management district, Pan said.

She said the district had wanted St. Johns to adopt the ordinance for some time, but the county had delayed because of concerns about the cost of enforcing it.

The cost-sharing agreement with the water management district will probably be submitted to county commissioners for their approval next month, she said.

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## WHEN TO WATER, WHOM TO CALL

No lawn-watering is allowed between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Until Nov. 7, watering is allowed on these days of the week:

- Wednesday and Saturday for homes with odd-numbered addresses or no address
- Thursday and Sunday for homes with even-numbered addresses
- Tuesday and Friday for non-residential properties.

Violations can be reported in Jacksonville by calling (904) 630-2489 and in St. Johns County by calling (904) 209-0734

# State bets on basics to conserve water

## How much could we save?

A state water agency wants to forecast how much of Northeast Florida utilities' rising water needs could be met by conserving the water that's used now. These are early estimates of potential savings from several methods of conservation through 2030, and the cost to implement them.

### HOW TO READ THIS GRAPHIC

Drop in demand with conservation

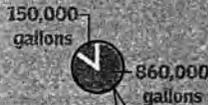
Capital cost for conservation

Predicted rise in demand by 2030

2005 water use

Predicted daily demand by 2030

BAKER\*



### How to save?

Water-saving measures in the study included using soil-moisture shut-offs on sprinklers; efficient irrigation systems; rain barrels; cisterns; high-efficiency showerheads; water conservation in businesses; and new laws for indoor water efficiency.

\* Baker County has a capital cost of \$288,073 with no drop in demand through conservation.

Source: St. Johns River Water Management District

PATRICK GARVIN/The Times-Union

## Conscious common measures can best lighten utilities' load, ease strain

By **STEVE PATTERSON**  
The Times-Union

Taking common steps to waste less water wouldn't totally meet the First Coast's rising water needs but would be a relatively cheap way to ease the pressure utilities face to find new resources, a state agency's ambitious research project suggests.

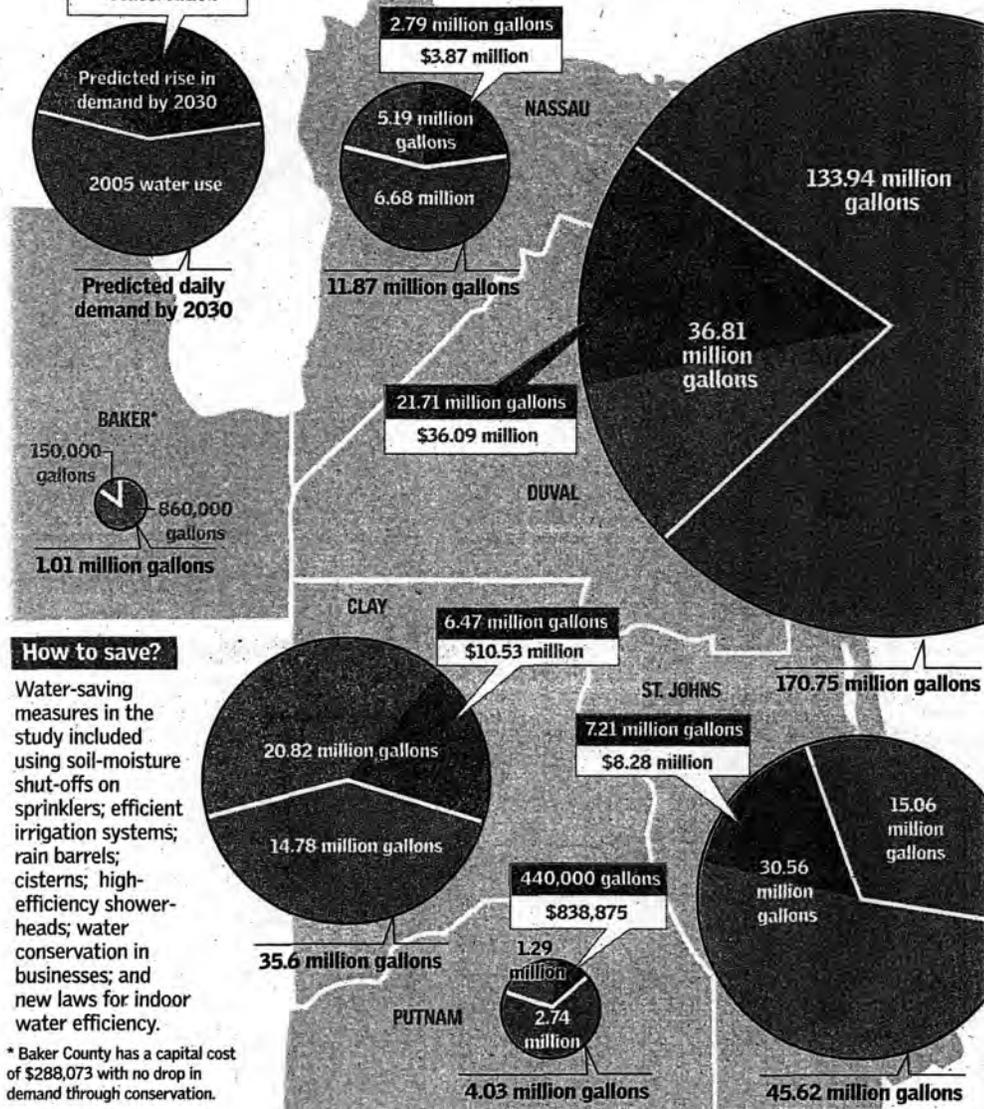
Half of JEA's new water needs for the next 20 years might be met through a broad spread of conservation measures, according to preliminary estimates by the St. Johns River Water Management District.

The forecasts say Northeast Florida's utilities and towns could, as a group, meet 41 percent of their increased needs by following a series of 10 conservation measures that could cost about \$60 million up front for capital investments.

In Duval County, say the estimates, the savings could represent 60 percent of new water needs — about 22 million gallons daily — for \$36 million.

By comparison, a 25-million-gallon desalination plant completed in Tampa in 2003 cost \$158 million to build. A system in Seminole County

**WATER** continues on A-9



# Water

Continued from A-1

to withdraw a million gallons daily from the St. Johns for irrigation is forecast to cost \$40 million, with more expense if it's enlarged to produce drinking water.

The new projections were welcomed by environmental activists who have worried utilities could either drain too much from the Florida aquifer or tap surface waters including the St. Marys River on the Georgia border or Black Creek in Clay County.

"It looks pretty promising to me," said Jimmy Orth, executive director of the St. Johns Riverkeeper.

"Historically, conservation has been discounted. ... What I'm hoping people will do is say, 'Yeah, it is cost effective,' especially when you compare it to the other alternatives."

"Conservation must always be the most aggressively pursued option," added Alex Kearns, chair of the St. Marys EarthKeepers, a St. Marys, Ga.-based group that opposes tapping the river.

The real costs and rewards of conservation have been largely speculative, with no agreement on whether measures that were effective in one town would work the same in another.

The management district has tried to address that with its new project, which tries to measure how factors like house

sizes, the age of homes and their plumbing fixtures, and the size of people's yards raise or lower water consumption.

District employees and a consulting company started working last year to combine address-by-address information from county property appraisers and other sources to help estimate the potential for lowering water use with different types of conservation steps; such as updating toilets and adding new moisture sensors to sprinkler systems.

"It's a very substantial step. ... There was nothing like this in our previous water supply planning," said Al Canepa, assistant director at the management district's department of resource management.

The estimates are still preliminary and will likely change somehow, Canepa said.

Final versions will be used to help the district and utilities plan water supplies for the next 20 years without overtaxing the already strained Floridan aquifer, he said.

Whether utilities will agree with the management district's estimates isn't clear, and the agency hasn't widely circulated the information yet.

JEA managers haven't reviewed the management district's figures yet, spokeswoman Gerri Boyce said.

The utility's general view is that "conservation will be the single most effective way of meeting our community's growth while sustaining the groundwater resource over

## WHAT THE STUDY COUNTED

Estimates on the potential water savings were based on efficient operations and maintenance routines for equipment and use of these added conservation steps:

- Soil moisture sensor shut-offs on sprinklers
  - Efficient irrigation systems
  - Rain barrels
  - Cisterns
  - A high-efficiency toilet replacement program
  - A urinal replacement program
  - Replacing commercial kitchen pre-rinse spray valves
  - High-efficiency showerhead replacements
  - Changes to land development laws limiting water use
  - Ordinances setting higher indoor efficiency standards
- The results also included "natural savings," improvements made when outdated equipment breaks and is replaced with more water-efficient items.

## "Conservation must always be the most aggressively pursued option."

### ALEX KEARNS

Chair of the St. Marys EarthKeepers, a St. Marys, Ga.-based group

time," she wrote in an e-mail.

The management district previously estimated JEA's daily water demand in 2030 could be 46 million gallons more than could be taken from the aquifer without causing environmental harm. The preliminary conservation figures estimate savings measures could offset 25 million gallons of that.

Canepa said the state agency's estimates aren't meant to be a directive for every community to adopt identical measures. The management district considered ten separate

options, from replacing household showerheads or urinals in businesses to using rain barrels and changing construction codes to require more efficient fixtures in new buildings.

What to do with those estimates is a local choice, he said.

"Water use is something that's very much decided at an individual level. The options that are chosen would ... have to be tailored by the utilities," Canepa said.

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## Suwannee River

### Clean Up

Current Problems, in partnership with the Suwannee River Water Management District and the Suwannee River Wilderness Trail, is planning a cleanup of the Florida portion of the Suwannee River, from the Georgia line to the Gulf of Mexico. The project will be made up of many small cleanups all along the river during the months of September, October and November. We are looking for all kinds of groups to join in this first-time effort to remove trash from the entire river. We want businesses, civic clubs, fishing and boating groups, churches, government agencies, non-profits, chambers of commerce, groups of friends.

Please call Fritzi Olson at Current Problems - 352-264-6827 - to commit to your favorite part of the river or to discuss the project further. You can also e-mail her - [aar@currentproblems.org](mailto:aar@currentproblems.org). We will help with scheduling, providing supplies and, in some cases, assist with arranging disposal. And of course, Current Problems is happy to assist you in planning how best to conduct the cleanup if you need.

# The Jasper



Today's Weather

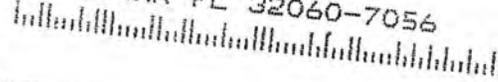
High  
9 F



: 40%

cloudiness early, with scattered showers and thunderstorms in afternoon. Humid. High 93F. SW at 5 to 10 mph. Chance of rain 40%. Go to the minute weather website at [www.nflaonline.com](http://www.nflaonline.com).

H 5-DIGIT 32060 000001  
SUBSCRIBER SUWANNEE RIVE 23-79  
9225 COUNTY ROAD 49  
LIVE OAK FL 32060-7056



139TH YEAR, NUMBER 37

THURSDAY, AUGUST 26, 2010

2 SECTIONS 28 PAGES

50c



## NEW WATER PLANT

City and county officials gather for the ribbon cutting at the State Road 6 and I-75 water treatment plant. County Engineer Greg Bailey said the project from concept to finish has been 2 and a half years in the making. Officials believe the plant, funded by a Economic Development grant, will spur development and job creation in the area, said Bailey. From left: Jasper City Council member Elaine Rozier, Hamilton County Commissioner Randy Ogburn, County Attorney John McCormick, County Coordinator Danny Johnson, Commissioner Mike Adams, County Clerk Greg Godwin, BOCC chair Ronny Morgan, Development Authority Director R.B. Davis, Commissioner Buster Oxendine, Commissioner Lewis Vaughn and Tourist Development Council's Shirley Smith. - Courtesy photo

**THURSDAY, AUGUST 26, 2010**

## **SRWMD, Alachua County use "Forever" funds to protect Santa Fe River**

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# Local & Capital

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TALLAHASSEE  
DEMOCRAT

MONDAY,  
AUGUST 30, 2010

Rebecca Cantley, content editor: 599-2391, rcantley@tallahassee.com | Jeff Burlew, senior government editor: 599-2180, jburlew@tallahassee.com

## Greensboro water supply nearly doubling

DEMOCRAT STAFF REPORT

The Northwest Florida Water Management District is helping to expand Gadsden County's water supply, officials said in a news release.

The governing board approved up to \$400,000 in grant funding to extend

### The Northwest Florida Water Management District approved up to \$400,000 in grant funding to extend a water main from the city of Gretna to the town of Greensboro.

a water main from the city of Gretna to the town of Greensboro. The \$2-million project is expected to facilitate economic development

in Gretna, particularly at the Interstate 10 interchange, officials said.

Also, Greensboro's water supply is expect-

ed to nearly double under the plan.

"The town of Greensboro has severely constrained groundwater yields from the Floridan Aquifer," said Douglas Barr, executive director of the water-management district. "This project is expected to nearly double

the town's existing supply capacity. Also, Gadsden County is a Rural Area of Critical Economic Concern and thus is a high priority for state assistance."

The city of Gretna is investing in water-supply improvements to meet future needs while sus-

taining water and environmental resources, officials said in the release.

It has completed engineering plans required to extend water to the I-10 interchange and Greensboro. More local and federal dollars are expected to help with the construction.

# State plans to evaluate water standards

Some environmentalists are frustrated with drafts of new rules.

By **STEVE PATTERSON**  
The Times-Union

While the federal government takes political heat for planning new clean-water standards in Florida, a state agency is drafting its own rules — and drawing fire from some environmentalists.

The debate over how to set the bar will reach the First Coast this week, when the Florida Department of Environmental Protection holds public workshops Tuesday and Wednesday in Bunnell in Flagler County.

Meetings like that are being held around the state while the agency works on proposals to control algae-feeding nutrients

## WHERE, WHEN TO BE HEARD

State-run workshops on water quality standards for coastal rivers will be held Tuesday at 1 p.m. and Wednesday at 9 a.m. at the Flagler County Commission chambers, 1769 E. Moody Blvd. in Bunnell.

in coastal waterways, including saltier parts of the St. Johns River as well as the St. Marys River in Nassau County, and Tolomato and Matanzas rivers in St. Johns County.

The state's work so far is getting knocks from some environmental activists.

"They're just rewriting reality. ... You're going to see the same thing in the Northeast and down the East Coast," said Linda Young, director of the Clean Water Network of Florida, after a hearing last week on standards for the Panhandle.

She said the state's plans represent "multiple layers of loopholes and convoluted science to justify endless increases in pollution."

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency already agreed last year to set standards on algae-feeding chemicals in Florida rivers to settle a lawsuit by a series of environmental groups.

EPA coastal rules, which will set numeric standards for nutrient pollution, won't be finalized until 2012.

Business groups, utilities and some local governments have ridiculed rules for freshwater

rivers that EPA proposed this year, saying those are too strict. Members of Congress have also opposed them.

The state and federal work represent "two simultaneous paths being followed here," said Dee Ann Miller, an EPA spokeswoman. She said the state and EPA work "may possibly, ultimately intersect."

But activists who sued the EPA in the first place say the state rules for coastal areas are just a way to try to undermine federal standards and encourage the EPA to write easier rules.

"I think it's DEP trying to demonstrate to those who are against those [EPA] numeric standards that they're with them, as opposed to being on the side of clean water," said St. Johns

**WATER** continues on B-3

## Water

Continued from B-1

Riverkeeper Neil Armin-geon.

Some environmental groups are encouraging their members to use the Flagler County hearings to speak up for waterways that aren't very polluted yet, but could get worse.

"We haven't degraded a lot of [river] systems in Northeast Florida," said Sarah Owen Gledhill, a Florida Wildlife Federation staffer based in St. Augustine. "It's more cost-effective to maintain those levels of water quality than to go back and fix them like we are with the St. Johns River now, or the Everglades."

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# New flow for St. Johns River at summit

## PROBLEMS

Algae blooms, spring water production and pollution are a few things organizers hope to address.

## SOLUTIONS

One leader encourages the community to speak up about issues to politicians so that the river becomes a priority.

By STEVE PATTERSON  
The Times-Union

In two weeks, people from every part of the 310-mile St. Johns River will meet in Jacksonville to share concerns and ideas about the river's health and its future.

Organizers want the St. Johns River Summit to become a starting point for a new, coordinated campaign to protect and restore the river.

But those ambitions will hinge on drawing a crowd that can help reach that goal.

"Depending on who's going to be there, our conversation will be tailored by that," said Renee Brust, an aide to Jacksonville Mayor John Peyton.

Peyton and other Northeast Florida political figures

## SUMMIT SPECIFICS

The St. Johns River Summit will be Tuesday-Wednesday, Sept. 15-16, at the Prime Osborn Convention Center, 1000 Water St. in downtown Jacksonville. Details are online at [www.stjohns-riversummit.com](http://www.stjohns-riversummit.com).

have spoken this summer of wanting an "Everglades-style" restoration effort, a campaign financed over years that tackles the river's overall health, rather than conditions in one or two counties.

But there would be less reason to push for that if the audience lacked the clout to do much about that vision.

"We don't know yet who's a yes and who's a no" on attendance, Brust said. "Depending on who all is going to be there,

that's going to make a big difference."

Summit organizers are focused on getting tangible results and have been working to line up high-powered participants.

"I think there will be news out of the summit," said Mark Middlebrook, executive director of the St. Johns River Alliance, the nonprofit planning the two-day meeting.

"I think everyone understands there needs to be a long-

range plan and sustainable funding for the river. That's what the river alliance is trying to help them do."

The river has a litany of troubles.

Many parts of it experience large algae blooms that state officials say reflect excessive levels of nitrogen and phosphorus, and can harm both fish and plants. A number of springs that help feed the river are producing less water than in decades past and showing signs of pollution. And residues from pesticides and industrial pollution have seeped into some creeks and streams that connect to the St. Johns.

Governments in 11 of the 12 counties that touch the St. Johns are represented in the alliance.

Officeholders from each of those counties are scheduled to take part, and the 12th county, Marion, is invited to send someone, Middlebrook said.

Scheduled speakers include Sens. John Thrasher, R-St. Augustine, and Thad Altman, R-Viera, who chairs the Senate Finance and Tax Committee. Orange County Mayor Richard Crotty and Kirby Green, executive director of the St. Johns River Water Management District are also scheduled.

Organizers hope to gather at least 500 people. A summit in 2003 drew about 1,000, but tougher financial times have made this year's \$50-per-person early registrations a harder sale. The summit seven years

RIVER continues on B-2

## River

Continued from B-1

ago led to extended discussions between advocates in different parts of the river and creation of some restoration work plans. It also played a role in the startup of the river alliance.

The summit will include meetings about science and research needs for the river and its value to tourism and recreation.

Those talks are expected to help produce a handful of goals that representatives from each county on the river will be able to accept and agree to support, Middlebrook said.

For politicians to make the river a priority, they'll first

have to hear from people in their own communities, said Barbara Ketchum, who last year organized the St. Johns Riverkeeper's Water Policy Group as a way to promote river issues to elected officials.

"Let our leaders know that something's important to us, and they will pay attention," Ketchum said, adding the river should be one of those priorities.

"Even if you live on asphalt roads and have sidewalks all around you, it's central to the soul of our community. ... As people become aware of it and want it to be healthy for generations to come, it follows naturally that our leaders will."

[steve.patterson@jacksonville.com](mailto:steve.patterson@jacksonville.com), (904) 359-4263