

## LOCAL GOVERNMENTS PROCLAIM APRIL AS WATER CONSERVATION MONTH

The Suwannee River Water Management District (District) has joined with hundreds of local governments and agencies throughout Florida in adopting proclamations proclaiming April as Water Conservation Month.

The District adopted its proclamation earlier this month and recognizes the following local governments for encouraging wise water use in their communities by adopting their own Water Conservation

Month proclamations: Counties - Alachua, Baker, Bradford, Columbia, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Jefferson, Lafayette, Levy and Suwannee; Cities and towns - Archer, Branford, Brooker, Chiefland, Horseshoe Beach, Lake City, Monticello, Perry, Starke and Waldo.

The proclamations call upon residents, businesses and visitors to protect our precious water resources by practicing and promoting conservation measures both indoors and outdoors.

The District reminds all citizens within its boundaries to follow the mandatory,

year-round landscape irrigation rule which allows lawn and landscape watering once per week during Standard Time (fall/winter) and twice per week during Daylight Saving Time (spring/summer), but not between the hours of 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Residents may choose up to two days of the week to water, but should water only as often as needed.

Landscape irrigation accounts for the largest percentage of household water use in Florida. Therefore, the greatest amount of water savings can be achieved by reducing outdoor irrigation and following other Florida-

Friendly Landscaping™ principles.

Ways to save water indoors include checking for leaks; installing low-flow, water efficient showerheads, faucets and toilets; and purchasing water-efficient appliances such as clothes washers and dishwashers when shopping for new ones.

More information about the water conservation rule is available at [www.mysuwanneeriver.com](http://www.mysuwanneeriver.com).

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# Drop Savers get recognized by City Council

Winners from first Water Conservation Poster Contests lauded.

By **ANTONIA ROBINSON**  
arobinson@lakecityreporter.com

Winners of the inaugural Drop Savers Water Conservation Poster Contests received recognition for their artistic talents from The City of Lake City Council.

Sara Duffiney, Division 1 from Epiphany Catholic School; Kelsey Wolcott, Division 2, Epiphany; Griffin Phelps, Division 3, Epiphany; and Ava White, Division 4 Richardson Middle School were honored at the council meeting Monday night.

The winners received a T-shirt with a picture of their artwork in addition to a framed certificate and other items.

The contests were held to highlight Water Conservation Month which is April and National Drinking Water Day in May. Contest sponsors were the Lake City Regional Utilities, Fort White Water Utility and The Ichetucknee Partnership.

Fort White contest winners will be honored at the Fort White Town Council meeting April 11. Winners are: Zoey Love, Division 3, Fort White Elementary School and Austin Shingleton, Division 3, Fort White Middle School.

This was the first time in history Lake City held the contest,

said Dave Clanton, utilities executive director.

The contest featured five age divisions and more than 250 students from competed. Each poster featured a water conservation idea.

"We had a lot of participation and hope to have even more next year," he said.

The six winners will now advance to the state American Water Works Association poster contest.

Hopefully the young, aspiring artists will win at the next level, Clanton said.

All of the posters are displayed until April 13 at the Lake City Mall.

"Take a look," he said. "Everybody did a wonderful job."



ANTONIA ROBINSON/ Lake City Reporter

Winners of the inaugural Drop Savers Water Conservation Poster Contests display T-shirts with a picture of their artwork during the City of Lake City Council meeting Monday.

Wednesday, April 6, 2011

## 38 miles of ATV trail rides to open in Mallory Swamp

Those who enjoy riding all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) will soon have a place to ride in Lafayette County for a few months before the start of hunting season. The Suwannee River Water Management District will allow ATV riding at its Mallory Swamp tract April 9-Sept. 11.

The property provides 38 miles of ATV trails that will be open to the public during daylight hours only.

"The trails feature plenty of open space and the opportunity to ride alongside nature," said Edwin McCook, district land management specialist.

A complete list of rules and an ATV trails map are available on the district's Mallory Swamp webpage, which is available at [www.mysuwanneeriver.com](http://www.mysuwanneeriver.com).

For more information contact the district at (386) 362-1001 or 800.266.1066 (FL toll free).

### SRWMD GOVERNING BOARD MEETINGS

On Tuesday, April 12, 2011, the Suwannee River Water Management District's Governing Board will meet at 9:00 a.m. at District Headquarters, 9225 CR 49, Live Oak, Florida 32060. The meeting is to consider District business and conduct public hearings on regulatory and land acquisition matters. A workshop will follow the Governing Board meeting.

On Monday, April 25, 2011, 1:00 p.m., a Governing Board teleconference meeting will be held at District Headquarters in Live Oak, Florida.

All meetings, workshops, and hearings are open to the public.

4/6/11,c.

THURSDAY, APRIL 7, 2011 **THE JASPER NEWS**, Jasper, FL

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*Submitted*

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"The trails feature plenty of open space and the opportunity to ride alongside nature," said Edwin McCook, District land management specialist.

The District strongly cautions all riders to practice safety and follow all regulations for the area. Regulations include:

- All persons operating an ATV are required to have a daily special-use authorization (SUA) in their possession while riding. SUAs are available at the ATV parking area kiosk.

- Riders 16 years old or younger must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian who is required to sign the SUA.

- Riders must stay on designated trails and obey posted speed limits.

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

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### The Levy County Journal

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April 7, 2011

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Access to the Mallory Swamp tract from Mayo:

Travel south on SR 51 to CR 360, 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.

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# SRWMD board to meet

The governing board of the Suwannee River Water Management District (SRWMD) will meet at the district headquarters in Live Oak on Tuesday, April 12, at 9 a.m.

The headquarters are located at 9225 C.R. 49 in Live Oak. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss district business and conduct public hearings on regulatory and land acquisition matters in the SRWMD management area, which includes Union County.

A workshop will follow the governing board meeting.

A governing board teleconference meeting will be held on Monday, April 25, at 1 p.m. at the district headquarters in Live Oak.

All meetings are open to the public.

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## Review team learns about SRWMD's largest restoration project; provides input on land management practices

In the 1950s, when industrial landowners began to convert Mallory Swamp (Lafayette County) to pine plantations by draining water off the property, the swamp lost some of its ability to hold rainwater and gently feed it to the Steinhatchee and Suwannee rivers downstream. In 2001, a strike of lightning ignited the dry land and a wildfire swept through 60,000 acres of the swamp.

Now the Suwannee River Water Management District is in the process of restoring the land back to its natural state and condition. In 1999, the District purchased a conservation easement on the property to protect the land from further development and in 2002 the District acquired full management and ownership of nearly 30,000 acres of the property.

On April 5, a group of about 25 biologists, foresters, parks and recreation specialists, environmentalists and landowners toured Mallory Swamp and other District lands to provide feedback on the District's land management practices. The group, referred to as the land management review team, tours District property annually; their comments are later presented to the District's Governing Board.

Before taking the tour, the group heard a presenta-

tion about land management practices and recreational opportunities on several District properties, including Mallory Swamp — home of the District's largest single restoration project.

Beau Willsey, District environmental scientist, gave a presentation on the history of Mallory Swamp. About 30 years after landowners installed a system of drainage canals, scientists determined that the hydrological alterations were increasing the discharge of water from the Steinhatchee River into the Gulf of Mexico, he told the group.

"The increased flow had the potential to negatively affect aquatic organisms in the river downstream to the gulf," Willsey said.

Such alterations also changed the hydrology of the swamp and affected natural vegetation and related wildlife.

On the tour, the land management review team saw firsthand what the District has done to restore the natural hydrology of the swamp and related natural communities. Members of the team asked questions and made suggestions along the way.

Willsey and Scott Gregor, District natural resource specialist, discussed the extensive network of canals and ditches

previously installed to drain the swamp and what the District has done to reverse the effects of such alterations.

A member of the review team, Jack Ewel (ecologist and farmer), praised the District's efforts to install culverts, ditch blocks and other structures to restore groundwater levels and natural drainage patterns.

Land managers have installed 311 culverts, 58 ditch blocks and eight flashboard riser structures to reduce the flow of water into the Steinhatchee and Suwannee rivers and to recharge the aquifer and rehydrate wetlands within the swamp.

Data from groundwater and surface water monitoring devices and the response of vegetation in wetland areas will be used to determine whether restoration goals are being met.

Willsey and Gregor also discussed the correlation between restoring water resources and the health of the ecosystem.

Management activities, such as prescribed burning and reforestation are tools being used to restore natural plant communities with vegetation that existed prior to land use alterations.

Plant and animal species on the property are monitored to determine the effects of land management

activities on such species and whether the District is successful at returning the land back to its pre-altered state.

Another review team member, Jacqui Sulek (Four Rivers Audubon Society), suggested the District do more extensive monitoring of birds on the property and she offered to provide volunteers from her group to implement that.

"One tool for measuring the quality of a natural community is how many birds or other species are present; it's like if you build it [natural habitat], they will come," said Gregor.

Since 2003, the District has spent more than \$3.4 million on restoration efforts. About \$2.4 million was provided by the United States Natural Resource Conservation Service through the agency's Wetlands Reserve Program.

Restoration efforts at Mallory Swamp are a key example of the District's land acquisition and management goals. The District acquires and manages lands for flood control, water quality protection and natural resource conservation. District lands are open to the public for recreational opportunities, such as hunting, fishing, hiking, camping and horseback riding.

The purpose of the land management review team is to determine whether District land managers are fulfilling their statutory obligations, complying with District policy and improving land management practices. The District is statutorily required to get feedback on its land management practices each year. Invitations are sent to various local governments, agencies, organizations and citizens in order to form a land management review team.

Anyone interested in joining the land management review team may contact Gwen Lord at the District at 386.362.1001 or 800.226.1066 (FL only).

Wednesday, April 20, 2011

# Nestlé "Framework" a Raw Deal for Communities

Dear Mr. Jeffery,

For the last decade, Nestlé has employed a wide range of tactics to wrest local control of water from communities across the country for its bottled water brands. Now your corporation has launched yet another public relations scheme intended to distract from Nestlé's shameful track record and manipulate new communities into ceding water rights to your corporation.

We're writing today to exhort you to stop attempting to write the rules by which you do business in communities across America.

Your proposed "Community Siting Framework" is just such an attempt to set the rules by which water in our towns is controlled.

Our communities and democratically-elected local governments are perfectly capable of setting the terms by which our water is managed.

We, the undersigned have seen Nestlé:

- bully communities into handing over community water rights;
- broker deals behind closed doors to gain access to our water for pennies on the dollar; and
- pay for environmental impact assessments that failed to account for the full impacts of water bottling on our water resources.

And, when we expressed concerns about Nestlé's actions, the corporation did anything but communicate "shared values." Instead, we were forced into lengthy, expensive, and emotionally-draining battles with Nestlé to:

- reduce water pumping that proved harmful to local streams and wildlife;
- ensure greater oversight of Nestlé's water sourcing;
- pass ballot initiatives protecting local water resources; and
- make sure mandated and independent environmental assessments were conducted prior to bottling.

You say your new framework commits you to addressing these problems in principle, but your corporation has a history of saying one thing and doing another.

Furthermore, while developing this framework, we believe you failed to:

- incorporate feedback from communities and community members most impacted by Nestlé's practices;
- designate communities, not Nestlé, as the key stakeholder driving the evaluation of plans to site and source water resources;

- address Nestlé's influence peddling, legal action, and public relations campaigns that have undermined community control of water resources in the past; and
- emphasize the imperative to obtain full community consent before sourcing water.

Given these shortcomings, the corporation's track record, and the fundamental flaw in such an approach – a private corporation writing the rules by which it will use a community's resources – it is difficult to see how this new framework offers anything more than business as usual.

Nestlé has historically dismissed concerns about its water practices, claiming that critiques are anti-business. Nothing could be further from the truth. Local economies depend on democratic management of water resources. And, when one enterprise controls the resource to the detriment of others, local governments and community residents must assert their right to local control.

Our water may be worth billions to Nestlé, but it is precious and irreplaceable to us. We will continue to work together within our communities to determine what is just when it comes to how our water is controlled and managed. We don't need guidance in this charge from Nestlé.

Sincerely,

Chaffee Citizens for Sustainability  
Defending Water in Washington  
Friends of the Wacissa  
McCloud Watershed Council  
Michigan Citizens for  
Water Conservation  
Montague Alliance to Protect  
Our Water  
Nottingham Water Alliance  
Our Santa Fe River, Inc  
Preserve the Wekepeke  
Protect Our Water and Wildlife  
Resources (POWWR)  
Protect Wells Water  
Save our Water  
Food & Water Watch  
The Polaris Institute  
Corporate Accountability  
International



Paid for by  
Think Outside the Bottle,  
a Corporate Accountability  
International campaign

# PLANNERS GIVE THE NOD TO AQUIFER PROTECTION MEASURE

## COMMISSIONERS CONSIDER PROPOSAL ON THURSDAY EVENING

LAZARO ALEMAN  
ECB Publishing  
Senior Staff Writer

The Jefferson County Planning Commission last week voted to recommend for approval to the County Commission an ordinance that aims at aquifer protection.

Planners approved the measure unanimously on Thursday night, April 14, after the brief discussion that followed Attorney Scott Shirley's presentation of the document.

Shirley pointed out that for sake of clarification, he had added a new proviso to the original draft of the ordinance. That proviso, relating to what will be allowed under the local public service activities, specifically excludes "water pumping stations and distribution facilities providing or transporting water for resale or distribution outside the geographic boundaries of Jefferson County."

Planners' only expressed concern was that the or-  
Please See *Aquifer* Page 6A

## Aquifer

Cont. From Page 1

dinance addressed aquifer protection countywide, which Shirley assured them that it did.

Another question was whether the mention of spring flows and the Wacissa Springs Group in particular wasn't redundant, given that the protection of the aquifer by extension applied to the springs. But Shirley said the Wacissa Springs Group was a regionally significant natural resource that warranted mention on its own.

As to how the ordinance might affect a water management district's permitting process, Shirley said that the two things were separate and distinct. He said the ordinance would have no influence on the water management district's permitting process, other than for the letter of approval that the water management district required that an applicant secure from the local jurisdiction where a project was located.

"This could affect that," Shirley said of the aquifer protection ordinance. "But otherwise, the two are separate and distinct."

He noted, however,

that the county also enjoyed regulatory authority over water uses, and a permit applicant who failed to satisfy both the requirements of the water management district and the local government basically failed to satisfy the process.

Otherwise, the discussion was limited and circumspect.

The proposed ordinance identifies its purpose as being to adopt an amendment to the Jefferson County Land Development Code (LDC) that better protects the quantity and quality of potable groundwater resources and spring flow waters from the Wacissa Springs Group and other springs from large groundwater withdrawals, at present and in future.

The ordinance notes that abundant and pure potable groundwater water resources are essential to current and future county residents, and that it is therefore important that the county regulate development activity that may pose a threat to the quantity or quality of these resources.

The ordinance further notes that large-

scale groundwater withdrawals for the purpose of providing water for sale or distribution outside Jefferson County involves activities that may be incompatible with surrounding uses, and consequently, proposals for such activities should be restricted and subjected to additional review and scrutiny.

The ordinance cites the Wacissa Springs Group and associated Wacissa River and wetlands as regionally significant natural areas that warrant protection.

Per Shirley's explanation to planners, the ordinance would next go to the County Commission, which has the sole authority to adopt the measure into law.

"The commissioners will bring their own views and opinions to the issue," Shirley said. "They are not required to follow the Planning Commission's recommendation. But it's been my experience that they rarely divert from the Planning Commission's recommendation."

Commissioners have scheduled the aquifer protection ordinance for a public hearing at 6 p.m. Thursday, April 21.

# Live Oak looks to recycle water

## City offers green approach

SUWANNEE DEMOCRAT/LIVE OAK

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 20, 2011

By Stephenie Livingston

stephenie.livingston@gafnews.com

In an effort to be more green and save money, the city of Live Oak has invested in fuel-efficient vehicles and energy saving technology. Now they plan to recycle water.

Hoping to save natural resources and meet the water supply needs of a growing local population, city officials say reuse of reclaimed water is an essential component.

"We are hurting here in this district," said City Administrator Bob Farley. "And when

I say hurting, I mean we're losing our natural resources."

Farley pointed to state-wide concerns over the drastic drop in the aquifer and damage to local springs.

Continued From Page 1A

Reuse water involves taking what was once considered to be wastewater and treating it biologically and chemically to a high degree. The water can then be used for purposes such as irrigation, flushing toilets and washing clothes.

The Department of Environmental Protection says the extensive treatment and disinfection ensures that public health and environmental quality are protected. In fact, Florida promotes reuse of reclaimed water as a major state objective, on grounds that it reduces demands on valuable surface waters used for drinking water, eliminates discharge that may pollute valuable surface waters, recharges ground water and saves money.

Live Oak Public Works Director, Brent Whitman said any impurities left in reclaimed water is filtered out naturally in the ground.

Farley echoed: "It's Mother Nature's filter."

Reuse of reclaimed water is growing in popularity in Florida. In 2008, there were about 481 treatment systems in Florida that provided approximately 667 million gallons of reclaimed water each day. During the last 21 years, Florida became a national leader in reuse of reclaimed water.

According to officials, Live Oak will be one of the first cities in the area to have a reclaimed water system up and running, and with customers lining up.

Beginning with expanding the city's wastewater treatment plant, the project cost the city \$1.3 million with Suwannee River Water Management District spending \$3.7 million out of funds specified for alternative water supply projects on top of that, according to Farley.

"Live Oak was one of our cornerstone projects," said Steve Minnis, governmental affairs director for SRWMD.

He said this project and reclaimed water usage is an excellent way to "offset groundwater withdrawals."

The city is seeking approval from SRWMD to use White Lake at Camp Weed as a discharge site for reuse water. Farley said the use of this site will save the city approximately \$8 million in locating spray fields to discharge the reuse water, on top of maintenance and operation costs that will be spared in the long run.

Minnis said using White Lake to store reuse water has the potential to be environmentally beneficial by recharging the aquifer and enhancing the environment. For example, city officials say White Lake, which is currently dry, should return back to normal levels.

A public meeting will be held at Camp Weed on May 3 to discuss the use of White Lake. SRWMD's governing board will vote on the matter on May 19.

"There would be an environmental and natural sys-

tems benefit to it," said Minnis.

Last week, city council set reclaimed water rates, one of the last steps in a project that has taken nearly four years to complete. The new rates are \$10 up to 40,000 gallons. Drinking water is currently \$3.51 per thousand gallons in the city.

Farley said he is confident the city will be pumping reuse water to the soccer field currently under construction on 72nd Trace within the next 30 days. If they receive approval from SRWMD, he anticipates the city will begin pumping to White Lake in the next 90 days.

The city's first customers will be SRWMD and the new soccer field. Lowe's Home Improvement in Live Oak is also equipped with the special piping needed to use reclaimed water, as is required for all new commercial and subdivision construction, not single family units.

He said although bringing reclaimed water to downtown Live Oak would be costly and difficult, they hope to be able to offer a reuse program to outlying residents and newly constructed neighborhoods and subdivisions in the city in the not-so-distant future.

"Every citizen of Live Oak needs to realize we are stewards of our environment, and we need to protect what we have. In this way, (reclaimed water) is the best use of our resources for the future," said Farley.

# Restoring Mallory Swamp

Taco Times April 20, 2011

## System holds rainwater, feeds Steinhatchee, Suwannee rivers

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Data from groundwater and surface water monitoring

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Another review team member, Jacqui Sulek (Four Rivers Audubon Society),

the agency's Wetlands Reserve Program.

Restoration efforts at Mallory Swamp are a key example of the district's land acquisition and management goals, officials said.

The district acquires and manages lands for flood control, water quality protection and natural resource conservation. SRWMD lands are open to the public for recreational opportunities, such as hunting, fishing, hiking, camping and horseback riding.

The purpose of the land management review team is to determine whether district land managers are fulfilling their statutory obligations, complying with district policy and improving land management practices.

SRWMD is statutorily required to get feedback on its land management practices each year. Invitations are sent to various local governments, agencies, organizations and citizens in order to form a land management review team.

Anyone interested in joining the land management review team may contact Gwen Lord at (386) 362-1001 or (800) 226-1066 (Florida only).



Beau Willsey, district environmental scientist, gave a presentation on the history of Mallory Swamp.

About 30 years after landowners installed a system of drainage canals, scientists determined that the hydrological alterations were increasing the discharge of water from the Steinhatchee River into the Gulf of Mexico, he told the group.

"The increased flow had the potential to negatively affect aquatic organisms in the river downstream to the gulf," Willsey said.

Members of the team asked questions and made suggestions along the way.

Willsey and Scott Gregor, SRWMD natural resource specialist, discussed the extensive network of canals and ditches previously installed to drain the swamp and what the district has done to reverse the effects of such alterations.

A member of the review team, Jack Ewel (ecologist and farmer), praised the district's efforts to install culverts, ditch blocks and other structures to restore groundwater levels and natural drainage patterns.

devices and the response of vegetation in wetland areas will be used to determine whether restoration goals are being met.

Willsey and Gregor also discussed the correlation between restoring water resources and the health of the ecosystem.

Management activities, such as prescribed burning and reforestation are tools being used to restore natural plant communities with vegetation that existed prior to land use alterations.

Plant and animal species on

suggested the district do more extensive monitoring of birds on the property and she offered to provide volunteers from her group to implement that.

"One tool for measuring the quality of a natural community is how many birds or other species are present; it's like if you build it [natural habitat], they will come," said Gregor.

Since 2003, the district has spent more than \$3.4 million on restoration efforts. About \$2.4 million was provided by the United States Natural Resource Conservation Service through

# Review team learns about SRWMD's largest restoration project; provides input on land management practices

LIVE OAK, FL, April 13, 2011 – In the 1950s, when industrial landowners began to convert Mallory Swamp (Lafayette County) to pine plantations by draining water off the property, the swamp lost some of its ability to hold rainwater and gently feed it to the Steinhatchee and Suwannee rivers downstream. In 2001, a strike of lightning ignited the dry land and a wildfire swept through 60,000 acres of the swamp.

Now the Suwannee River Water Management District (District) is in the process of restoring the land back to its natural state and condition. In 1999, the District purchased a conservation easement on the property to protect the land from further development and in 2002 the District acquired full management and ownership of nearly 30,000 acres of the property.

On April 5, a group of about 25 biologists, foresters, parks and recreation specialists, environmentalists and landowners toured Mallory Swamp and other District lands to provide feedback on the District's land management practices. The group, referred to as the land management review team, tours District property annually; their comments are later presented to the District's Governing Board.

Before taking the tour, the group heard a presentation about land management practices and recreational opportunities on several District properties, including Mallory Swamp – home of the District's largest single restoration project.

Beau Willsey, District environmental scientist, gave a presentation on the history of Mallory Swamp.

About 30 years after landowners installed a system of drainage canals, scientists determined that the hydrological alterations were increasing the discharge of water from the Steinhatchee River into the Gulf of Mexico, he told the group.

"The increased flow had the potential to negatively affect aquatic organisms in the river downstream to the gulf," Willsey said.

Such alterations also changed the hydrology of the swamp and affected natural vegetation and related wildlife.

On the tour, the land management review team saw firsthand what the District has done to restore the natural hydrology of the swamp and related natural communities. Members of the team asked questions and made suggestions along the way.

Willsey and Scott Gregor, District natural resource specialist, discussed the extensive net-

work of canals and ditches previously installed to drain the swamp and what the District has done to reverse the effects of such alterations.

A member of the review team, Jack Ewel (ecologist and farmer), praised the District's efforts to install culverts, ditch blocks and other structures to restore groundwater levels and natural drainage patterns.

Land managers have installed 311 culverts, 58 ditch blocks and eight flashboard riser structures to reduce the flow of water into the Steinhatchee and Suwannee rivers and to recharge the aquifer and rehydrate wetlands within the swamp.

Data from groundwater and surface water monitoring devices and the response of vegetation in wetland areas will be used to determine whether restoration goals are being met.

Willsey and Gregor also discussed the correlation between restoring water resources and the health of the ecosystem.

Management activities, such as prescribed burning and reforestation are tools being used to restore natural plant communities with vegetation that existed prior to land use alterations.

Plant and animal species on the property are monitored to determine the effects of land management activities

on such species and whether the District is successful at returning the land back to its pre-altered state.

Another review team member, Jacqui Sulek (Four Rivers Audubon Society), suggested the District do more extensive monitoring of birds on the property and she offered to provide volunteers from her group to implement that.

"One tool for measuring the quality of a natural community is how many birds or other species are present; it's like if you build it [natural habitat], they will come," said Gregor.

Since 2003, the District has spent more than \$3.4 million on restoration efforts. About \$2.4 million was provided by the United States Natural Resource Conservation Service through the agency's Wetlands Reserve Program.

Restoration efforts at Mallory Swamp are a key example of the District's land acquisition and management goals. The District acquires and manages lands for flood control, water quality protection and natural resource conservation. District lands are open to the public for recreational opportunities, such as hunting, fishing, hiking, camping and horseback riding.

The purpose of the land management review team is to determine whether District

land managers are fulfilling their statutory obligations, complying with District policy and improving land management practices. The District is statutorily required to get feedback on its land management practices each year. Invitations are sent to various local governments, agencies, organizations and citizens in order to form a land management review team.

Anyone interested in joining the land management review team may contact Gwen Lord at the District at 386.362.1001 or 800.226.1066 (FL only).

Friday, April 22, 2011

# SRWMD Governing Board Officers Elected



Photo submitted

New officers of the Suwannee River Water Management District Governing Board are pictured from left, Donald "Ray" Curtis, secretary/treasurer; Donald Quincey, chairman; and Alphonas Alexander, vice-chairman.

The Suwannee River Water Management District Governing Board held an election of officers on March 8. Donald J. Quincey, Jr., will serve as chairman; Alphonas Alexander will serve as vice-chairman; and Donald R. "Ray" Curtis III, will hold the positions of secretary/treasurer.

Quincey, a resident of Chiefland, was appointed by Governor Charlie Crist in April 2008 to represent the Lower Suwannee River Basin.

Quincey earned an Associate of Arts degree from Santa Fe Community College in 1976. He is the owner and president of Quincey Cattle Company and is currently the president-elect of the Florida Cattleman's Association.

Alphonas Alexander, of Madison, was appointed by Governor Crist in March 2010 and he represents the Upper Suwannee River Basin.

Alexander holds a Bachelor of Science degree

in animal science from Florida A&M University. He serves as an independent contractor for The Forestry Company, of Perry, and is a member of the Forestry Stewardship program and the Florida Forestry Association.

Donald "Ray" Curtis III, of Perry, was appointed by Governor Charlie Crist in March 2010. Curtis represents the Coastal River Basin.

Curtis is an attorney with Howard & Curtis, P.A. in Perry. He received his Juris Doctorate from Florida Coastal School of Law in Jacksonville after earning a Bachelor of Arts degree in business administration, with a minor in agricultural law, from the University of Florida.

Curtis serves as a member of the City of Perry Zoning and Planning Board and the City of Perry Board of Adjustment. Currently he is chair of the City of Perry Code Enforcement Board.

# The Carter Family



2011 CONSERVATION FARM  
FAMILY OF THE YEAR

# 2011 CONSERVATION FARM FAMILY OF THE YEAR

Cover Photo: l - r, Doug Carter, Caige Tidwell, Eleanor Carter, John Carter; top to bottom: Tyson Robinson, Matthew Tidwell and Cole Herring



Douglas Sr. and Doug Jr. pulling samples from hayage ready to feed beef cattle. The University of Florida(IFAS) Lab tests measure moisture and nutrient content.

## This Farm CARES



**Suwannee River Partnership**  
SUWANNEE RIVER BASIN NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT WORKING GROUP

**The Carter  
Farm**

The Suwannee County Conservation District (SCCD) is proud to honor the Carter Family as the 2011 Conservation Farm Family of the Year. The Carter Farm is a leader in conservation of natural resources through Best Management Practices (BMPs), and is leading the way in poultry management and nutrient monitoring from their large poultry operation. Using computer monitoring and field testing procedures, they have reduced their footprint on the environment, and are an excellent example of what stewardship means and how important caring for the land has become. Protecting the land and the environment, while still making a living farming, is important now, but even more important is to protect and preserve our natural resources for future generations.

Carter Farms is proud to be a 3rd generation farming operation. John F. Carter and his wife Elinor began as dairy farmers after World War II. Beginning in the days when milk was bottled fresh on the farm, John and Elinor had a cash and carry dairy in Duval County. Their son John Douglas, born in 1946, grew up working the dairy and farming cropland. Douglas always knew he would follow in his fathers' footsteps. He married Jacqueline Lee in 1969. They were married in their home town of Baldwin, Florida. They have 3 grown children; Dana Tidwell (Dewayne), Donna Robinson (TY), and John Douglas II (Doug) (Deanne), and seven grandchildren; Carley, Cole, Matthew, Tyson, Gracie, Caige, and Trent.

The farm operation was moved to McAlpin, Florida in 1977. Actually, they began purchasing land in the area prior to moving to the small North Florida community. They now farm just over 400 acres. The dairy was sold in 1994, and now they manage a beef cattle herd of over 200 Angus and Limousin breeds, along with a large broiler operation.

About half of the land is used for pasture. The remaining land is divided between cropland and hay. Rye grass, millet, coastal and bahia grass are harvested and baled for winter feed. One pivot irrigation system is in place now that covers about 40 acres. Another pivot is in the works and should be up and running in the near future. They use BMPs to evaluate the soil to determine what nutrients are needed. Samples are sent to the Institute of Food and Agricultural Science (IFAS), a University of Florida testing facility. These results are used to help formulate the needed fertilizer requirements. This helps prevent the overuse of nutrients that would otherwise be wasted and possibly reach ground water supplies. Saving money on commercial fertilizer and pro-

## 2011 CONSERVATION FARM FAMILY OF THE YEAR

protecting the environment help keep the Carter Farm good stewards of the land.

The poultry operation has become a major part of the Carter Farm story. The poultry portion of the farm began in 1987 with the construction of 2 broiler houses. The houses hold between 24,000 and 25,000 birds. In 1989, two more houses were added, doubling the production capabilities. Four more houses were added in 2004, again doubling the production and these four are monitored by a computer. From the farm office, they can check temperature, water usage & consumption, feed usage & consumption, air pressure, fan operation and intervals, as well as electrical usage.

Because the poultry operation takes up so many man/woman hours, it has become more time consuming to manage properly. Everyone pitches in. The children and grandchildren help with the baby chicks, and also help with other farm chores. Grandpa John, Grandma Jackie and Douglas do all of the daily farm chores. Other family members provide extra help on weekends or during clean-out times between chicken flocks. The older grandchildren Carley, Cole, and Tyson help with setting up houses for new biddies. They are responsible for put-



Doug and Caige aerating pasture to improve root growth and nutrient uptake.



Doug Carter working with the poultry monitoring system in the farm office. This computer monitors feed and water consumption, temperature, air pressure, fan cycles, etc from 4 of their 8 house operation.

ting in feed pans and waterers. Even Caige, who is only 3, helps put down pans and loves hitching a ride on one of the many tractors on the farm.

Litter management and dead bird disposal is a priority for the poultry farmers in the Suwannee River Water Management District. Poultry farms like Carter Farms are making significant strides in the area of litter management in order to safeguard the environment. Working with the County Alliance for Responsible Environmental Stewardship (CARES), and implementing BMPs, the Carter Farm has established and followed environmental management plans while maintaining a profitable agricultural business. By performing environmentally conscious actions of litter removal, dead bird and litter composting, litter storage, and litter application, they are contributing to sustaining a cleaner, safer, and healthier environment.

Monitoring litter removal during the winter/summer seasons allows for greater benefit to the farm throughout the year. Minimal amounts of litter are taken between flocks during the winter to ease storage issues. More is

# 2011 CONSERVATION FARM FAMILY OF THE YEAR

taken during the warmer months to be used during the growing season. The litter is spread on the grass fields in regulated amounts to allow the plant the most efficient use of needed nutrients with the least amount of waste. This cuts commercial fertilizer costs significantly. This is accomplished through testing by a conservation field technician from the SCCD. Litter and soil samples are sent for testing by IFAS. The testing measures levels of potassium, phosphorus, magnesium, and other nutrients within the soil. Regulating the amount of litter used and measuring the nutrient level in the litter, along with evaluating and determining the soil needs, makes the best use of the available nutrients in the litter.

A Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) was developed for the Carter Farm by the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in 2002. The CNMP addresses both Nitrogen and Phosphorus concerns for the farm. In developing the CNMP, it was determined by NRCS that Phosphorus was a lesser environ-



Doug preparing to clean poultry house prior to delivery of next batch of chickens.



Grandson Gaige with his new hat from SCCD.

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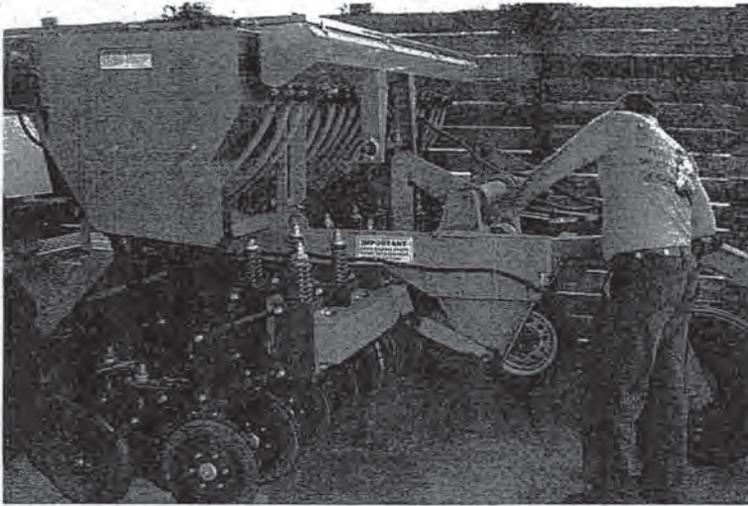
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# 2011 CONSERVATION FARM FAMILY OF THE YEAR



Doug inspecting their no-till drill. This piece of equipment allows for direct planting of seed without plowing/harrowing of existing crop.

mental concern than Nitrogen because the soils on the Carter farm have the ability to bind phosphorus, thereby limiting its movement throughout the soil profile. Therefore, nutrient application can be based on nitrogen requirements of the crops. This allows money savings on commercial fertilizer well as making the best use of the land.

Carter Farm cares about implementing the best management practices possible to provide environmentally friendly means of proper litter removal, storage, and application. By implementing a plan of action, the Carter family farm operation is a profitable business, and an environmental friendly steward of the available natural resources.



Grandma Jackie helping 3-year-old Caille feed a calf.



Doug servicing sprayer for spring weed control on pasture and hay fields.

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# What is a Soil and Water Conservation District?

In the early 1930s, along with the greatest depression this nation ever experienced, came an equally unparalleled ecological disaster known as the Dust Bowl. Following a severe and sustained drought in the Great Plains, the region's soil began to erode and blow away; creating huge black dust storms that blotted out the sun and swallowed the countryside. Thousands of dust refugees left the black fog to seek better lives.

But the storms stretched across the nation. They reached south to Texas and east to New York. Dust even sifted into the White House and onto the desk of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. On Capitol Hill, while testifying about the erosion problem, soil scientist Hugh Hammond Bennett threw back the curtains to reveal a sky blackened by dust. Congress unanimously passed legislation declaring soil and water conservation a national policy and priority. Since about three-fourths of the continental United States is privately owned, Congress realized that only active, voluntary support from landowners would guarantee the success of conservation work on private land.

In 1937, President Roosevelt wrote the governors of all the states recommending leg-

islation that would allow local landowners to form soil conservation districts. Today, across the United States, nearly 3000 conservation districts, almost one in every county, are helping local people to conserve land, water, forests, wildlife and related natural resources. More than 15,000 volunteers serve in elected or appointed positions on conservation districts' governing boards. They work directly with more than 2.3 million cooperating land managers nationwide; and their efforts touch more than 778 million acres of private land. There are more than 8,000 Conservation District Employees assisting these volunteer Supervisors and their Partners daily to support and implement these conservation programs.

The creation of Florida Districts was authorized by the Soil & Water Conservation Law, Chapter 582, Florida Statutes, enacted in 1937.† There are a total of 63 Districts in Florida. SWCDs form partnerships with Federal, State and Local Governments, and private organizations to help carry out a variety of conservation, environmental and educational programs, as well as provide technical assistance and other services to help land users protect our natural resources.

The Suwannee County Conservation District (SCCD) was formed in 1942 with five voluntary board members. The current SCCD voluntary board members are; Andy Jackson as Chairman, Nancy Barnes as Vice Chair, James Williams as Treasure, Ronnie Lawson, and Terry Reagan round out a complete supervisory board. The SCCD also have three full time employees that handle the day to day events of the district. On board as Secretary / Coordinator is Teresa Owens. Garrett McCray, Conservation Technician, works with local producers to help implement Best Management Practices (BMP) to help conserve local natural resources. Cliff Starling is serving as the Resource Consultant for the District where he also works with producers to implement BMPs and also handles SCCD youth and adult education coordination.

Your local Suwannee County Conservation District is proud to serve all of Suwannee County residents as we assist in coordinating efforts to protect and conserve our vital natural resources. Please call our local office for more information at 386-362-2622 x 3 or drop by and visit us at the USDA Service Center on South US 129 one mile past the South Oaks Square.



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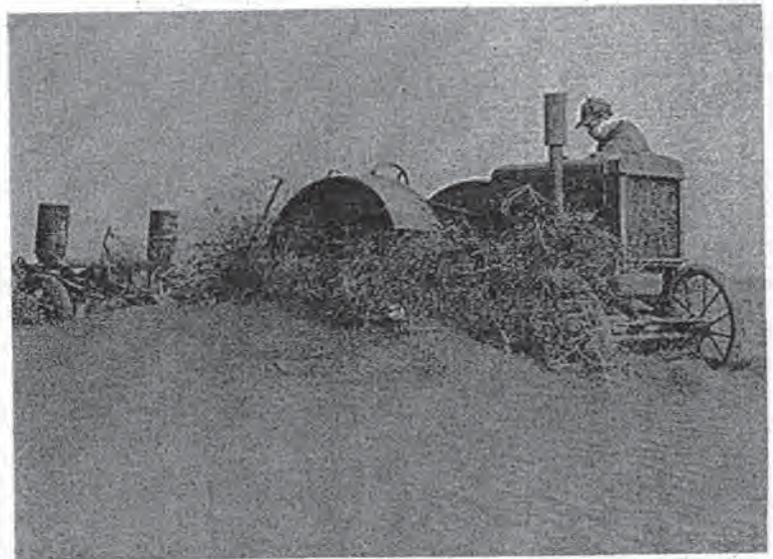
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A scene from the 1930's Dust Bowl

# Suwannee Valley farmers leaders in food safety

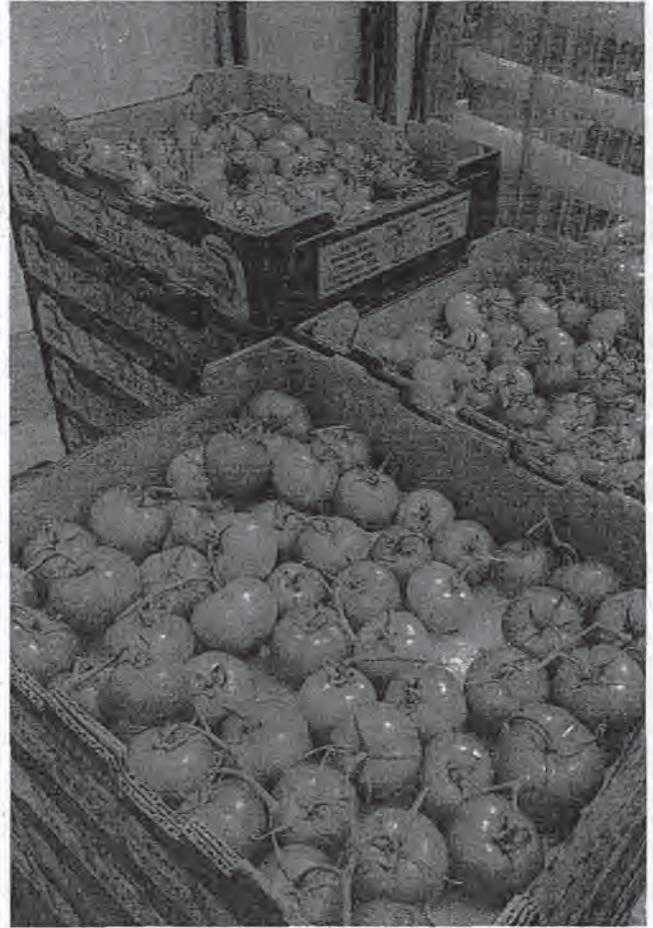
By Bob Hochmuth

UF/IFAS Multi-County Extension Agent  
NFREC-Suwannee Valley

"Food Safety" is a common phrase today for both consumers and farmers. Food safety scares over the past several years have included food borne illnesses due to micro organisms such as Salmonella, E. coli, and others. Introduction of food borne disease organisms can occur anywhere in the food chain, including the farm, processing facilities, transport, distribution, and of course, in the home. The first responsibility to food safety occurs on the farm and many vegetable farms in the Suwannee Valley area now have an approved food safety program. In fact, most large chain grocery stores now require some type of program from the farmer before they will purchase from the farm. A recent Florida statute requires all Florida tomato growers selling more than 50 lbs of tomatoes to a single customer to have an approved food safety program. This requirement is added to the list of the many regulatory aspects now common on the farm including: certified pesticide applicators, migrant labor laws, approved water withdrawal, approved waste disposal, notice of intent to implement best management practices (BMPs), soil fumigant setback restrictions, and more. Farmers today have to be highly engaged with these types of business related aspects to remain competitive.

Suwannee County farms have had the oppor-

tunity to show how well prepared they were in the area of food safety. A team of food safety inspectors from US Food and Drug Administration, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, and food safety researchers from the University of Florida came to the area for three days of informational visits. The visits were facilitated by UF/IFAS Extension agents, Bob Hochmuth and Elena Toro. The teams had specific interests in learning more about fresh vegetable farming practices from both field and greenhouse operations. The farms visited all had excellent, clean operations and all had food safety plans in place. The farmers were able to participate with teams to help identify ways to assure maintaining safe products to consumers. The communication between area growers and agency experts helps the vegetable industry to act in a positive and proactive manner to assure safe vegetables for consumers. In addition, Suwannee County farmers were represented on a statewide Food Safety Listening Session for USDA and FDA officials. This session was targeted to hearing about the unique needs of smaller farms as related to food safety. Farmers from throughout the region have been participating in Food Safety training conducted by several local Extension Agents at the UF/IFAS North Florida Research and Education Center, near Live Oak. These recent and little known activities is yet another example of the farm industry leaders here in Suwannee County.



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# The Best Management Practices (BMP) Program

The Best Management Practices (BMP) Program is a voluntary program designed to protect ground and surface water from pollution caused by erosion or leaching of plant nutrients and pesticides. The Florida Watershed Restoration Act of 1999 is the state legislature's mandate to clean up Florida's waterways. The Suwannee River Basin is currently being monitored for pollutants and decisions of future regulations will be driven by the progress in protecting water quality. If a high percentage of the agricultural industries (vegetables, field crops, forestry, etc) adopt BMPs and they are successful in protecting the water quality, the need for more restrictive and mandatory regulations should be diminished. To date, there are 63 farms in Suwannee County that have enrolled in the BMP program with a pledge to utilize BMPs on their farm. There are a few key BMPs which focus on

nutrient and irrigation management for producers in Suwannee County. These BMPs have been identified as most important to keeping nutrients from leaching into the groundwater. The BMPs these farms use emphasizes managing nutrients and irrigation, and includes the following practices. Nutrient budgets- Adjustment of fertilizer program to address specific crop needs. Equipment calibration- Ensures proper functioning of equipment. Split fertilizer applications- Multiple applications timed with periods of peak plant growth allows plants to take up nutrients more efficiently. Fertigation- Application of fertilizer through irrigation water allows for direct nutrient application to the crop root zone. This fertilizer is typically applied daily, or several times per week in small quantities. Precision application- Use specialized equipment for precise placement of nutrients on targeted

areas. This often reduces total amount of nutrients used. Soil and tissue testing- Used to base fertilizer applications on plant needs and available nutrients in the soil. Irrigation scheduling- Planning when to irrigate based on soil moisture content, crop water use rates, rainfall, and time of day. This practice reduces water use and nutrient leaching. Monitoring soil moisture- Use of devices that measure the amount of water in the soil, or using methods such as estimating water content by hand. Recordkeeping- Proper recordkeeping provides accountability in the implementation of BMPs. Farmers in the Suwannee Basin have been leaders in the adoption of BMPs. If you are a farmer who is interested in the BMP program, or an area resident that would like more information, you can contact your local UF-IFAS Extension Office. Mace Bauer, UF-IFAS BMP Implementation Team

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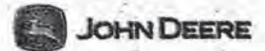
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663212hd

# PROPOSED AQUIFER PROTECTION MEASURE PULLED FROM AGENDA

LAZARO ALEMAN  
ECB Publishing  
Senior Staff Writer

## ORDINANCE RAISES OBJECTION

It's a fine line between the authority granted to state agencies and counties over the regulation of water and land uses respectively, and apparently, the aquifer protection ordinance that county officials are contemplating for adoption crossed that line.

Scheduled for a public hearing on Thursday evening, April 21, the proposed

ordinance was pulled from the agenda at the last minute and tentatively rescheduled for a May hearing, pending the resolution of the concern that gave rise to its withdrawal.

The Suwannee River Water Management District (SRWMD), according to Attorney Scott Shirley, who prepared the ordinance, raised the concern. Shirley said

it was his understanding that the district received a call from a legislative staff person or a lobbyist who questioned the county's authority to regulate water use.

Shirley told the *News* on Friday, April 22, that the SRWMD next raised the issue with the county, noting that the regulation of water use was an exclusive right granted

Please See *Aquifer Protection* Page 15A

## Aquifer

## Cont. From Page 1

to water management districts under Florida statute.

"I offered to have the county table the ordinance to make sure that the county was not regulating in this area," Shirley said, adding that water management districts indeed had sole authority to issue consumptive use permits, based on whether these uses served a reasonable and beneficial purpose.

The county, however, had authority to regulate land-use issues, Shirley said.

"Where exactly you cross the line between a reasonable and beneficial determination and a land-use decision by the county is not always clear," Shirley said. "We have some latitude, as long as we're not crossing that line of reasonable and beneficial determination."

Consequently, the ordinance had to be constructed carefully, to ensure that it maintained the fine jurisdictional distinction, he said. Which was what he was hoping to accomplish when he met with SRWMD Executive Director David Still in the coming weeks, he said.

Still, for his part, was clear about his district's statutory authority to regulate the consumptive use of water, as embodied in Florida Statute 373.217, as he

was clear on the county ordinance having crossed the jurisdictional line.

"In other parts of the state, this would have led to the district suing the county," Still said.

Litigation, however, wasn't the way of the SRWMD, he said; nor was it the basis of its relationship with its member counties, especially given that he understood what Jefferson County was attempting to do, he added. But still, there were jurisdictional lines that couldn't be crossed, he said.

"I know what Jefferson County is trying to do and its good intention, but you can't cross the boundary," Still said.

It wasn't that the county was prevented from legally doing what it was trying to do in its terms of its authority to regulate land uses, Still said. But the particular language of the proposed ordinance simply crossed the line, he said, adding that he was willing to work with Shirley to ensure that the language was properly worded and avoided the jurisdictional problem.

The proposed ordinance states in part that the county will not approve any development activity that involves the removal of surface or ground water

from the county's geographic boundaries for outside use, absent a supermajority (4/5ths) vote of the Board of County Commissioners.

It also states in part that surface and ground water withdrawals in all Future Land Use Map (FLUM) districts will be limited to those that are necessary "to serve uses of land which are otherwise allowable designated land uses in the FLUM district where such water withdrawals are located and shall not exceed the amount of water necessary to serve such lawfully designated land uses."

Another late added proviso to the ordinance essentially disallowed for "water pumping stations and distribution facilities providing or transporting water for resale or distribution outside the geographic boundaries of Jefferson County."

Shirley told the commissioners on April 21 that he planned to have the jurisdictional issue resolved and the ordinance back before them for consideration at their next evening meeting on May 19.

The white elephant in the room that no one mentions, of course, is Nestlé Waters of North America and its designs on the Wacissa River for possible water bottling purposes, along with the controversy that the

testing has generated.

The Friends of the Wacissa, one of the groups opposed to the Nestlé Waters' testing, regularly attends commission meetings. Members of the group also recently traveled to Nestlé water bottling plant in Madison County to press their protest and deliver an anti-water bottling petition signed by Wacissa area residents, as well as to deliver an open letter addressed to Nestlé Waters of North America's CEO, Kim Jeffery. The opponents timed their visit to coincide with Nestlé shareholders' meeting, as well as counter what opponents allege to be a public relations campaign by Nestlé Waters.

The open letter, a copy of which appeared in the April 20 *Monticello News*, was signed by 15 anti-Nestlé's Water organizations and communities around the county, and supposedly appeared in multiple newspapers, according to Corporate Accountability International, the umbrella entity sponsoring the ad.

If nothing else, the ad indicates that the water bottling issue is not unique or specific to Jefferson County and the Wacissa River, and that the issue is one not likely to go away any time soon.

# New SRWMD program speeds up environmental resource permitting process

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ERP projects that qualify for an APR must meet certain

criteria, including, but not limited to the following: they must not have an impact on the wetlands and/or require mitigation; they must not require a variance; and they must not require comments or review from the District's attorneys.

There is a \$1,000 charge for APRs, which covers administrative costs. This is besides the actual permit fee.

Applicants must still meet all required rules and conditions of issuance as listed in Chapter 40B-4 and 40B-400, Florida Administrative Code.

"The APR program is designed to give premium service for certain projects," said Leroy Marshall, District professional engineer.

Marshall said the program was implemented in response to applicants' requests for an expedited permitting process. It also allows applicants to schedule their permits in

**SRWMD continued on page 8**

## SRWMD continued from page 5

advance.

"Knowing when a permit may be issued is particularly helpful to contractors who must meet other development requirements, such as obtaining a zoning change or county building permit," Marshall said. "This service is designed to help commercial ventures get in and out the door."

Those requesting an APR schedule a receiving period - a time frame of up to five days when the application and related documents will be submitted. The two-day review process begins after the five-day period.

Marshall said small to medium-sized commercial projects, such as the development of a department store, convenience store or fast food restaurant are the type of projects that will most benefit from the program.

Currently, the program is only offered to ERP applicants, but the District may look to expand the program in the future to provide APRs for other permits. Some of the projects that require an ERP include: the development of ponds, boat ramps, and dams; the construction of buildings, subdivisions, and roads; and wetland or stream encroachment.

For more information about the program, call Leroy Marshall at 386-362-1001.

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## **Join Us And Learn About The Drought, Water Levels And Issues Regarding Water**

### **Quality**

The Suwannee Chapter of the Florida Trail Association will hold its monthly meeting on Monday, May 9, 2011 at the Suwannee River Water Management District Office, 9225 CR 49, Live Oak, from 7-9 p.m., (on the corner of US 90 and CR 49, two miles east of Live Oak). The Public is welcome!

Our program will feature Megan Wetherington, senior professional engineer with the Suwannee River Water Management District. She will address concerns about the on-going drought, water levels in our area and issues regarding water quality.

The Suwannee Chapter maintains many miles of the Florida National Scenic Trail along the banks of the Suwannee River in Madison, Hamilton and Suwannee Counties for the hiking public.

# Commission Highlights **Construction On Horseshoe Beach And Demory Creek Boat Ramps To Begin Soon**

The Dixie County Board of County Commissioners held their regular evening meeting for this month last Thursday, April 21st. Some of the highlights included information about the upcoming Toxic Round-up and Wheelin' Sportsmen Annual Event.

One of the first items on the agenda was a petition by Sandra J. Prescott, requesting a special exception be granted to allow a travel trailer park within a residential (mixed) single family/mobile home zoning district. Prescott has been before the Board on several occasions with her request, only to be turned down due to opposition by a neighboring resident. This being her third try, Prescott was pleased to hear that after months of jumping through the "red-

tape" hoops, the Board agreed to her newest plan that will keep the number of travel trailers to what has existed for a number of years: two to three. However, it should be noted that Commissioners Gene Higginbotham and Ronnie Edmonds both had "nay" votes and it was the "yes" vote from Commission Chairman Mark Hatch that resulted in Prescott's long-awaited answer that she can continue to rent space to visitors coming to Suwannee.

One of the biggest issues that was brought up by Prescott's neighbor was that visitors were using her personal dock to fish from and she was very concerned with the liability associated with possible injury to the trespassers. Prescott stated that she would be putting up a fence to help contain her campground and that her guests would be advised not to use the private dock at any time. Since her first request, Prescott has cleaned up the area and has plans to continue improvements.

Frank Darabi of Darabi and Associates came before the Board with a request that they (the Board) go ahead with advertising for an Administrator and Engineering Service to prepare a grant for improvements to the site formerly started by Dixie Waste Services that could possibly be the new location for a gasification plant.

The grant would be a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for approximately \$750,000.00 to be used for improvements of electrical lines, water lines and other utilities or

infrastructure. This would not intrude on the Neighborhood Revitalization CDBG monies that will be available this coming July and are slated for road improvements throughout the county. While the Board agreed to go ahead with the advertising, they will not go ahead with the application until more information about the project is brought to them.

Phil Bishop of North Florida Professional Services informed the Commissioners that both the Horseshoe Beach Boat Ramp and Demory Creek Boat Ramp projects will begin construction within the next fourteen days.

D & L Construction Company won the bids for these projects and stated they will be working on them simultaneously. The Commissioners were very pleased to hear these projects are finally in the works.

Joe Ruth, Solid Waste Coordinator, gave his monthly report and noted also that the Annual Toxic Round-Up will be held Saturday, April 30th. Household hazardous waste can be taken to the Fire Station in Old Town, off SR 349 from 9a.m.-3p.m. and Dixie County Courthouse Parking Lot in Cross

See **HIGHLIGHTS**, Pg. 3

## **HIGHLIGHTS**

Cont. From Pg. 1

City from 10a.m. - 2p.m. For more information, contact Ruth at 498-1289.

Emergency Services Director Tim Alexander asked for the Board's approval to spend monies left from the Tropical Storm Fey Litigation Fund for improvements on Bow Legs Highway low-water crossings. The \$68,000.00 will be more than enough for the project. Alexander noted that this stretch of highway is the alternate evacuation route for our coastal communities during hurricanes and other storms that may flood those residents. The Board approved the project unanimously.

County Manager Mike Cassidy discussed a number of items, including three future grant applications available within the next few years.

The first grant, Small Counties Road Assistance Program (SCRAP), will open up for 2012-2013 and, if approved, could provide funding for road work on the worst half of the Horseshoe Beach Road and repaving and widening of CR 349 South and Mt. Olive Cemetery Road.

The other two grants would be for the 2014-2015 fiscal year. The Small Counties Outreach Program could provide funding for improvements to CR 351 to SR 349, the Andrew Saul's Road and Watson Homestead Loop. The Community Incentive Grant Program could be a source of monies to provide improvements of the drainage around the Sunnyvale Tower and Horseshoe Road and repair/maintenance improvements at the Shired Island Bridge.

All these grants will be contingent on the Legislature approving funding for these programs.

Cassidy gave a special report on the Community Service Workers Program that Dixie is involved in. Since January of 2011, Dixie has utilized the workforce that is available through the program with the Department of Corrections Probation Division and has logged over 250 hours.

Cassidy stated while this program helps the workers meet their community hours, it also helps the County with multiple jobs, such as cleaning, filing, yard work, etc. The program has been so successful that they have even been able to give references to a great number of those who more than proved themselves while working alongside County workers.

In closing, Commissioner Edmonds reminded the Board and audience that the Annual Wheelin' Sportsmen Fishing Tournament will be held May 6th - 8th. During those three days Shired Island boat ramp and park will be closed so these men and women who normally would not be able to participate in such activities may enjoy the long weekend.

Commissioner Mark Hatch noted that the town of Suwannee will be holding their Stone Crab Festival on Saturday, April 30th.

The festival promises to be a fun-filled day for the whole family!

Commissioner Jason Holifield noted that he had met with the officials at Suwannee River Water Management District concerning the release of more of their lands to be used for citizens' recreational activities. Talks between the County and SRWMD will continue in the months ahead. Holifield noted that he was pleased with the response from SRWMD so far.

The Commissioners asked that residents continue their prayers for former Road Superintendent Howard Reed as he continues to battle cancer.

The next Board meeting will be held on May 5th, beginning at 10:00 a.m.

# Review team learns about SRWMD's largest restoration project; provides input on land management practices



Scott Gregor, left, and Beau Willsey discuss the District's restoration efforts at Mallory Swamp with the District's Land Management Review Team on April 5. - Photo Submitted

## Submitted

LIVE OAK, FL, April 13, 2011 – In the 1950s, when industrial landowners began to convert Mallory Swamp (Lafayette County) to pine plantations by draining water off the property, the swamp lost some of its ability to hold rainwater and gently feed it to the Steinatchee and Suwannee rivers downstream. In 2001, a strike of lightning ignited the dry land and a wildfire swept through 60,000 acres of the swamp.

Now the Suwannee River Water Management District (District) is in the process of restoring the land back to its natural state and condition. In 1999, the District purchased a conservation easement on the property to protect the land from further development and in 2002 the District acquired full management and ownership of nearly 30,000 acres of the property.

On April 5, a group of about 25 biologists, foresters, parks and recreation specialists, environmentalists and landowners toured Mallory Swamp and other District lands to provide feedback on the District's land management practices. The group, referred to as the land management review team, tours District property annually; their comments are later presented to the District's Governing Board.

Before taking the tour, the group heard a presentation about land management practices and recreational opportunities on several District properties, including Mallory Swamp – home of the District's largest single restoration project.

Beau Willsey, District environmental scientist, gave a presentation on the history of Mallory Swamp.

About 30 years after landowners installed a system of drainage canals, scientists determined that the hydrological alterations were increasing the discharge of water from the Steinatchee River into the Gulf of Mexico, he told the group.

"The increased flow had the potential to negatively affect aquatic organisms in the river downstream to the gulf," Willsey said. Such alterations also changed the hydrology of the swamp and affected natural vegetation and related wildlife.

On the tour, the land management review team saw firsthand what the District has done to restore the natural hydrology of the swamp and related natural communities. Members of the team asked questions and made suggestions along the way.

Willsey and Scott Gregor, District natural resource specialist, discussed the extensive network of canals and ditches previously installed to drain the swamp and what the District has done to reverse the effects of such alterations.

A member of the review team, Jack Ewel (ecologist and farmer), praised the District's efforts to install culverts, ditch blocks and other structures to restore groundwater levels and natural drainage patterns.

Land managers have installed 311 culverts, 58 ditch blocks and eight flashboard riser structures to reduce the flow of water into the Steinatchee and Suwannee rivers and to recharge the aquifer and rehydrate wetlands within the swamp.

Data from groundwater and surface water monitoring devices and the response of vegetation in wetland areas will be used to determine whether restoration goals are being met.

Willsey and Gregor also discussed the correlation between restoring water resources and the health of the ecosystem.

Management activities, such as prescribed burning and reforestation are tools being used to restore natural plant communities with vegetation that existed prior to land use alterations.

Plant and animal species on the property are monitored to determine the effects of land management activities on such species and whether the District is successful at returning the land back to its pre-altered state.

Another review team member, Jacqui Sulek (Four Rivers Audubon Society), suggested the District do more extensive monitoring of birds on the property and she offered to provide volunteers from her group to implement that.

"One tool for measuring the quality of a natural community is how many birds or other species are present; it's like if you build it [natural habitat], they will come," said Gregor.

Since 2003, the District has spent more than \$3.4 million on restoration efforts. About \$2.4 million was provided by the United States Natural Resource Conservation Service through the agency's Wetlands Reserve Program.

Restoration efforts at Mallory Swamp are a key example of the District's land acquisition and management goals. The District acquires and manages lands for flood control, water quality protection and natural resource conservation. District lands are open to the public for recreational opportunities, such as hunting, fishing, hiking, camping and horseback riding.

The purpose of the land management review team is to determine whether District land managers are fulfilling their statutory obligations, complying with District policy and improving land management practices. The District is statutorily required to get feedback on its land management practices each year. Invitations are sent to various local governments, agencies, organizations and citizens in order to form a land management review team.

Anyone interested in joining the land management review team may contact Gwen Lord at the District at 386.362.1001 or 800.226.1066 (FL only).

THE MAYO FREE PRESS, Mayo, FL

THURSDAY, APRIL 28, 2011

## Join us and learn about the issues regarding water quality

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Friday, April 29, 2011

— Jefferson County Journal

# Rainfall Varies Across Suwannee In March

LAZARO ALEMAN  
ECB Publishing  
Senior Staff Writer

The Suwannee River Water Management District (SRWMD) reports mixed results in terms of rainfall during March.

Although the average rainfall during the month was 5.10 inches, or 0.58 inch higher than the historical March average of 4.52 inches, the district retained a 12-month rainfall deficit of -0.68 inches.

Too, rainfall accumulations were poorly distributed, with western counties such as Jefferson experiencing almost double their normal rainfall and counties in the Santa Fe Basin receiving significantly lower amounts, according to the district's latest hydrologic conditions report.

States the report: "The 12-month district average of 54 inches was

near the long-term average of 54.68 inches. Significant deficits persisted in the upper Aucilla, Suwannee, and Santa Fe basins."

The report shows that Jefferson County received 7.19 inches of rainfall in March, compared with the March average of 5.80 inches. The county has received 10.02 inches of rainfall during the last three months and 48.94 inches during the last 12 months.

Madison County, meanwhile, received 6.81 inches in March, compared with the March average of 5.72 inches. Madison County has received 10.66 inches during the last three months and 51.01 inches during the last 12 months.

River levels fell throughout the district, with a few registering

**Please See Rainfall  
Page 4A**

## Rainfall

modest rises near the end of the month and those in the coastal basins faring a little better. Lake levels also generally dropped in March, with the exception of Snead's Smokehouse Lake in Jefferson County,

which rose more than a foot.

Groundwater levels, meanwhile, fell 40 percent in monitored wells of the upper Floridan Aquifer, dropping an average of two inches from the previous month.

The SRWMD monitors agricultural water use on 106 overhead irrigation systems. It reports that the average daily application rate in March was 0.05 inches, an increase of 0.02 inches since February.

The report indicates that parts of the district continue to be experience moderate hydrologic drought conditions.

The district continues its phase-one water

Cont. From Page 1

shortage advisory that it issued in mid December 2010. The advisory urges homeowners and others whose water use is not regulated by a district-issued permit to reduce their water consumption voluntarily.

The SRWMD compiles the hydrologic conditions report using water resource data collected from radar-derived rainfall estimates, groundwater and surface water levels, and river flows, among other variables. The district encompasses all or parts of 15 counties in north-central Florida, including Madison County and the eastern half of Jefferson County.

# SRWMD streamlines permitting process

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