

Water use restrictions take effect on June 13

The Suwannee River Water Management District (District) Governing Board voted on May 29 to adopt a water shortage order in response to extreme drought conditions. The order requires water use restrictions for all users within the District's boundaries, which includes all of Columbia, Dixie, Gilchrist, Hamilton, Lafayette, Madison, Suwannee, Taylor and Union counties, and portions of Alachua, Baker, Bradford, Jefferson, Levy and Putnam counties.

The restrictions go into effect on June 13, the day after the board's next meeting.

A significant rainfall deficit has caused water levels to hit record lows. Even with recent rainfall from Tropical Storm Beryl, water levels are not expected to significantly improve, said Megan Wetherington, District senior professional engineer.

Water use restrictions mostly target outdoor watering, particularly lawn and landscape irrigation which usually accounts for half of household use.

Following is a list of some of the restrictions that apply:

LAWN AND LANDSCAPE IRRIGATION

For established lawns and landscapes watering is limited to once per week. The schedule is based upon an even/odd address numbering system as follows:

- House addresses ending in 0 or 1 may only irrigate on Monday.
- Addresses ending in 2 or 3 may only irrigate on Tuesday.
- Addresses ending in 4 or 5 may only irrigate on Wednesday.
- Addresses ending in 6 or 7 may only irrigate on Thursday.
- Addresses ending in 8 or 9 may only irrigate on Friday.
- Residences with no address (community common areas, etc.) may only irrigate on Friday.

Restrictions also apply to the time



LEFT: The Santa Fe River at US 441, pictured here, only rose 3 inches during the week after Tropical Storm Beryl. This stretch of the river stopped flowing in early May. Photo taken May 9, 2012.

of day watering is allowed. Watering with sprinklers and irrigation systems is prohibited between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m. Watering with a hand-held hose with nozzle is prohibited between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. Additional watering is allowed for new lawns and landscapes for the first 60 days following planting. After that time, the rules for established lawns and landscapes take effect.

Treated wastewater irrigation and irrigation for home vegetable gardens are exempt from the restrictions.

AGRICULTURAL IRRIGATION

Overhead irrigation by high pressure/high volume systems is prohibited between noon and 9 p.m. No off-site application or irrigation water on non-targeted areas is allowed.

There are no restrictions on the use of treated wastewater for irrigation and on low pressure/low volume irrigation systems.

Many of the area's farmers and producers implement water conservation plans and have retrofitted their irrigation systems to increase efficiency and reduce

total water use. Systems that have been certified by an independent irrigation laboratory within the past five years prior to the effective date of a water shortage order to be as efficient as practicable or are compliant with applicable water conservation best management practices are not restricted.

OTHER RESTRICTIONS FOR OUTDOOR USE

Car washing is limited to once per week on the designated watering day for the location. Fundraising and commercial car washes and the washing of emergency and other first responder vehicles are exempt. Outside pressure cleaning is restricted to only low-volume methods. Outside aesthetic uses of water is prohibited (fountains, for example).

Restrictions to lawn irrigation of golf courses also apply. Non-irrigation restrictions apply to commercial, industrial, and water utility users.

A detailed list of all water use restrictions is available on the District's water shortage webpage at www.mysuwanneeriver.com.

Reclaimed water to recharge aquifer, improve lake levels

Reclaimed water will soon be used to recharge the aquifer and improve lake levels at White Lake at Camp Weed & Cerveny Conference Center in Live Oak.

Camp Weed, a popular spot for summer camps, weddings, and conferences, was built around the lake. However, the camp's connection with the water has been scarce over the last few years.

Camp Weed Executive Director Joe Chamberlain said the portion of the lake on the Camp Weed property has been dry for more than three years. With the use of reclaimed water, he hopes someday that connection will return.

Over the last few years, Chamberlain has worked with the City of Live Oak, the Suwannee River Water Management District (District), and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to make that dream a reality.

Here's the plan: Camp Weed will receive up to 450,000 gallons of reclaimed water per day from the City of Live Oak. That water will be deposited into a percolation pond. From there, the



Construction of a lagoon at Camp Weed in Live Oak (Photo courtesy of Camp Weed)

water will naturally seep into the ground and recharge the aquifer. A well will be installed to pump the equivalent of 90 percent of the amount of reclaimed water recharged from the ground into a lagoon. When the lagoon fills, it will overflow into the lake to replenish lake levels.

Chamberlain noted that rainfall will be essential in order to fill up the lake.

"This project will aid in the restoration of lake levels while replenishing the

aquifer," said Jon Dinges, District director of Water Supply and Resource Management. "Because 90 percent of the reclaimed water that is recharged will be pumped from the ground, there's a net benefit to the resource of 10 percent."

Chamberlain said, "After nearly four years of working in cooperation with the City of Live Oak, the District, and DEP we're excited about the moment when water starts flowing to the lake again."

The District provided the City of Live Oak about \$3 million to fund renovations to its wastewater treatment plant to produce reclaimed water. Camp Weed will be one of the City's first customers to receive reclaimed water.

The District is working with wastewater utilities within its 15-county region to develop the capacity to produce reclaimed water. To date the District has assisted Lake City, Live Oak, Monticello, Alachua and Cedar Key. These projects collectively have the potential to save about 6.7 million gallons of fresh water per day.

Top candidate for SRWMD executive director is named

The Suwannee River Water Management District Governing Board is expected to appoint a new District executive director at its monthly meeting on June 12.

Dr. Ann Shortelle, director of the Office of Water Policy at Florida Department of Environmental Protection, was named the selection committee's top candidate following candidate interviews held on May 18.

Shortelle will appear before the full board for final vote and if appointed, will start the job soon after contract negotiations with the board are completed. Her appointment is subject to confirmation by the Governor and Senate.

Water supply partnership selects stakeholder committee

Twelve representatives were named on May 9 to the North Florida Regional Water Supply Partnership's stakeholder committee, an advisory body that will share viewpoints of stakeholder groups with the St. Johns River and Suwannee River water management districts and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to help address the region's water supply issues.

Chosen to represent the groups, organizations and entities that have an interest in the region's water supply, committee members are:

- Public water supply: Ray O. Avery, Clay County Utility Authority; David Clanton, City of Lake City Utilities
- Commercial/power generation: Athena T. Mann, JEA; James Cornett, Cornett's Spirit of the Suwannee Inc.
- Industrial/mining: J. Michael O'Berry, Vulcan Materials Co.; Stan Posey, PCS Phosphate

- Agriculture: Kerry Kates, Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association; Thomas Harper, Harper Farms
- Environmental: Patrick T. Welsh, University of North Florida and Save Our Lakes; Jacqui Sulek, Audubon Florida
- Local government: Keystone Heights Mayor Mary Lou Hildreth; Dixie County Commissioner Gene Higginbotham

The committee is structured such that a wide range of public interests are included, while keeping the committee small enough to be effective and productive. Committee meetings will be open to the public, so stakeholders beyond the committee membership can attend and participate.

Additional information for each member is available on the partnership's website, www.northfloridawater.com. The website also provides information about relevant activities of the districts, related initiatives and past and upcoming meetings.