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Public invited to review draft regional water supply plan for north Florida

LIVE OAK, FL, October 5, 2016 – The Suwannee River and St. Johns River water management districts have released the draft North Florida Regional Water Supply Plan for public review and comment. The release of the draft plan is the result of a four-year collaborative process that looked at the sustainability of water supplies 20 years into the future and identifies potential future water supply sources.

“This region’s first cooperative water supply plan is a critical and positive step forward in protecting our unique water resources for future generations,” said Suwannee River Water Management District Executive Director Noah Valenstein.

"Water supply planning helps us identify how much water we will need over the next 20 years, how much we can realistically achieve through water conservation and where water users may look to supplement their groundwater withdrawals," said St. Johns River Water Management District Executive Director Dr. Ann Shortelle. "The planning process has engaged stakeholders from partnering water management districts, water suppliers, agriculture and environmental groups in an open, public process."

The plan can be downloaded from <http://northfloridawater.com/watersupplyplan/draft.html> and is open for public comment until Dec. 5, 2016. The public is asked to use either the comment review form or the comment box on the webpage to submit their comments.

The North Florida Regional Water Supply Plan represents the first joint planning effort between the St. Johns River and Suwannee River water management districts. The draft plan is part of the districts’ work to ensure adequate and sustainable water supplies are available to meet future needs while protecting the environment. Water supply plans identify future water supply needs for a 20-year planning horizon, and programs and projects needed to ensure sustainable supplies.

The plan includes an assessment of how much water is needed over the 20-year planning horizon and whether the traditional groundwater sources meet the demand while protecting the water resources and related natural systems. Where traditional sources are not adequate, the plan identifies potential future water supply sources.

Workshops are being planned for Jacksonville and Live Oak in the next few weeks.

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