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Discolored turf marks the location of the new pipe location that connects the irrigation system to the City of Live Oak's wastewater connection.

COMMUNITY GOLF COURSE ABOVE PAR WITH WATER CONSERVATION

LIVE OAK, FLA., Sept. 19, 2018 – Local golfers can enjoy green fairways while they support water conservation thanks to a recent project with the Suwannee Country Club, City of Live Oak and Suwannee River Water Management District (District).

Located approximately five miles east of downtown Live Oak, the project has allowed the Suwannee Country Club to utilize reclaimed water to irrigate the golf course instead of pumping fresh groundwater. The switch has resulted in water savings of over 100,000 gallons per day, which equates to the water in approximately five inground swimming pools.

The project rerouted the country club's irrigation system from groundwater as the primary irrigation source to the City of Live Oak's reclaimed water distribution system. With the new irrigation hookup, groundwater would only be used as a backup in the event of a failure of the reclaimed system.

"This project showcases the ability of our small communities to utilize alternative water sources similar to our more densely populated neighbors to the east and south, while still maintaining our rural way of living," said Hugh Thomas, executive director for the District.

Reuse water connections are often limited for rural communities because public utilities rarely extend out past the city limits. This project is a unique exception. Currently, the City provides reclaimed water to Camp Weed and the Suwannee Parks and Recreation Department with the remaining water being sprayed at the City's spray field. This project better utilizes the excess reclaimed water.

"The City of Live Oak is always looking for ways to conserve and utilize our water resources," said Frank Davis, mayor of Live Oak. "We have been working with others on this project for several years and we are excited to see it completed."

Funded by the District's Regional Initiative Valuing Environmental Resources (RIVER) grant program, the project cost just under \$130,000 with approximately \$125,000 paid by the District and about \$5,000 paid by the City. The project supports year-round water conservation and water shortage ordinances that the City of Live Oak adopted in 2012. Construction began in April and the new irrigation line went live in mid- July.

"Our water is a finite resource and these projects help to ensure that we have an adequate water supply now and for the next 100 years," said Thomas. "Finding innovative ways to reuse our water is a goal we have for all of our communities; I expect we will see more projects like this on the horizon."

The mission of the Suwannee River Water Management District is to protect and manage water resources using science-based solutions to support natural systems and the needs of the public. The District holds true to the belief of water for nature, water for people. Headquartered in Live Oak, Florida, the District serves 15 surrounding north-central Florida counties.

For more information about the District, visit www.mysuwanneeriver.com or follow us on Facebook and Twitter, search @SRWMD.

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