

**OPERATING AGREEMENT CONCERNING  
REGULATION UNDER PART IV, CHAPTER 373, F.S.,  
BETWEEN  
SUWANNEE RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT  
AND  
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

**I. INTENT**

The Suwannee River Water Management District (DISTRICT) and the State of Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEPARTMENT) enter into this operating agreement to further streamline environmental permitting, while protecting the environment. This agreement divides responsibility between the DISTRICT and the DEPARTMENT for the exercise of their authority regarding permits, compliance, and enforcement under Part IV, Chapter 373, F.S. This agreement also divides responsibility between the DISTRICT and DEPARTMENT regarding formal wetland determinations pursuant to Subsection 373.421(2) through (5), F.S. It is a goal of this agreement that the division of responsibilities provide no reduction in levels of compliance monitoring and enforcement and, where possible, allow increased levels of compliance monitoring and enforcement.

This agreement supersedes the following agreements: OPERATING AGREEMENT CONCERNING MANAGEMENT AND STORAGE OF SURFACE WATERS REGULATION, AND WETLAND RESOURCE REGULATION BETWEEN THE SUWANNEE RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT AND DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATION, DATED FEBRUARY 2, 1993; FIRST AMENDMENT TO FEBRUARY 2, 1993 OPERATING AGREEMENT CONCERNING MANAGEMENT AND STORAGE OF SURFACE WATERS REGULATION, AND WETLAND RESOURCE REGULATION BETWEEN SUWANNEE RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT AND DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, DATED FEBRUARY 17, 1994; OPERATING AGREEMENT CONCERNING REGULATION UNDER PART IV, CHAPTER 373, F.S., BETWEEN SUWANNEE RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT AND DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, DATED SEPTEMBER 22, 1994; and OPERATING AGREEMENT CONCERNING REGULATION UNDER PART IV, CHAPTER 373, F.S., BETWEEN SUWANNEE WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT AND DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, DATED OCTOBER 22, 1998.

As a future step to further increase the efficiency and effectiveness of environmental permitting, the DEPARTMENT and the DISTRICT shall jointly pursue further integration and streamlining of federal and state wetlands regulations.

**II. RESPONSIBILITIES OF DISTRICT AND DEPARTMENT**

## A. DEPARTMENT Responsibilities

### 1. Permits and Variances

The DEPARTMENT shall review and take final action on all applications for permits and petitions for variances, under Part IV, Chapter 373, F.S., and variances or waivers under Section 120.542, F.S., for the project types listed in a. through t. below. The permit applications encompassed within the DEPARTMENT's responsibilities hereunder include those submitted for wetland resource (dredge and fill) permits and management and storage of surface water (MSSW) permits, pursuant to Subsections 373.414(11) through (16), F.S., as well as those submitted for environmental resource permits.

a. All solid waste management facilities that require a permit under Chapter 403, F.S. However, the DISTRICT shall review and take final action on permit applications when the solid waste management facility qualifies for a solid waste general permit and is merely an incidental component of a project for which the DEPARTMENT does not review and take final action on permit applications under any other paragraph in Section II.A.1. of this agreement.

b. Hazardous waste facilities that require a permit under Chapter 403, F.S. However, the DISTRICT shall review and take final action on permit applications when the storage of hazardous waste is merely an incidental component of a project for which the DEPARTMENT does not review and take final action on permit applications under any other paragraph in Section II. A. 1. of this agreement.

c. Domestic or industrial wastewater treatment, storage, transmission, effluent disposal, or water reuse facilities that require a permit under Chapter 403, F.S. This includes all facilities and activities located at the domestic or industrial wastewater treatment facility; all reuse sites permitted under Parts II or IV of Chapter 62-610, F.A.C.; land application sites permitted under Part VI of Chapter 62-610, F.A.C., and wetlands created using reclaimed water (from domestic wastewater or industrial wastewater sources). However, the DISTRICT shall review and take final action on permit applications for:

(1) Water reuse sites permitted under Part III of Chapter 62-610, F.A.C.; such as facilities for the storage and application of reclaimed water to irrigate crops, golf courses, or other landscapes;

(2) Activities involving the application of reclaimed water to rehydrate wetlands or to provide artificial recharge to reduce or mitigate drawdown impacts due to well withdrawals;

(3) Those facilities that are subject to any of the requirements of Chapters 40B-4, or 40B-400, F.A.C., through a system or activity which is not fully contained on the domestic or industrial wastewater facility site, but which is

part of a larger project for which the DEPARTMENT does not review and take final action on permit applications under any other paragraph in Section II. A. 1. of this agreement;

(4) Those facilities that qualify for a general or generic permit pursuant to Rules 62-660.801, F.A.C. (General Permit for a Wastewater Disposal System for a Laundromat), 62-660.802, F.A.C. (General Permit for a Pesticide Waste Degradation System), 62-660.803, F.A.C. (General Permit for Car Wash Systems), 62-660.805, F.A.C. (General Permit for Disposal of Tomato Wash), or 62-621.300(2), F.A.C. (Generic Permit for Discharge of Produced Ground Water from any Non-Contaminated Site Activity); and

(5) Those facilities in which the industrial wastewater component is merely an HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) cooling tower discharge, or other industrial wastewater treatment facility which is merely an incidental component of a project for which the DEPARTMENT does not review and take final action on permit applications under any other paragraph in Section II. A. 1. of this agreement.

d. Potable water facilities that require a permit under Chapter 403, F.S. This includes drinking water treatment plants as well as distribution mains. However, the DISTRICT shall review and take final action on permit applications for distribution lines that are fully contained within systems for which the DEPARTMENT does not review and take final action on permit applications under any other paragraph in Section II.A.1. of this agreement;

e. All mines, as defined in Chapter 378, F.S., including limerock mines. However, the DISTRICT shall review and take final action on permit applications for sand, shell and clay (other than fuller's earth) mines and borrow pits that do not involve processing other than use of a scalping screen to remove large rocks, wood and debris.

f. Power plants and electrical distribution and transmission lines and other facilities related to the production, transmission and distribution of electricity. However, the DISTRICT shall review and take final action on electrical distribution lines fully contained within any larger plan of development for which the DEPARTMENT does not review and take final action on permit applications under any other paragraph in Section II.A.1. of this agreement.

g. Communication cables and lines. However, the DISTRICT shall review and take final action on communication cables and lines fully contained within any larger plan of development for which the DEPARTMENT does not review and take final action on permit applications under any other paragraph in Section II.A.1. of this agreement.

h. Natural gas or petroleum exploration, production, and distribution activities and facilities, product pipelines, and other facilities related to the

exploration, production, and distribution of natural gas and petroleum. However, the DISTRICT shall review and take final action on natural gas distribution lines fully contained within any larger plan of development for which the DEPARTMENT does not review and take final action on permit applications under any other paragraph in Section II.A.1. of this agreement.

i. Docking facilities, boardwalks, seawalls and piers, including the adjacent docking and boating related development and navigational dredging. Adjacent docking and boating related development includes parking areas for the docking facility, dry storage facilities, boat sale and supply facilities, maintenance and repair facilities, associated seafood loading and processing facilities, restaurants, harbor master and marina administration facilities. The DISTRICT shall review and take final action on permit applications for all docking facilities, boardwalks, seawalls and piers, including adjacent docking and boating related development and navigational dredging, whenever such facilities are part of a larger plan of other commercial or residential development that has received or requires a permit under Part IV of Chapter 373, F.S.

j. Systems proposed in whole or in part seaward of a point 50 feet above the mean high water line at any riparian coastal location fronting the Gulf of Mexico shoreline, exclusive of bays, inlets, rivers, bayous, creeks, passes and the like.

k. Projects constructed, operated or maintained by the DISTRICT; however, activities of the DISTRICT permitted under Sections 403.91 through 403.929, F.S., or the rules adopted pursuant to those statutes, and activities of the DISTRICT which did not require a permit under such statutes or rules, shall not require a permit under Part IV of Chapter 373, F.S., provided such activities are part of a project which was commenced prior to October 3, 1995.

l. Navigational dredging conducted by governmental entities except where associated with a larger project that is otherwise the responsibility of the DISTRICT for review and final action.

m. Seaports and adjacent seaport related development where the applicant or property owner is a port authority as defined in Subsection 315.02(2), F.S.

n. A system serving or consisting of up to two contiguous parcels of land under single ownership, where each parcel contains or is proposed to contain only one single family dwelling unit, duplex, triplex, or quadruplex (hereinafter referred to as a residential unit), except where the residential unit is only an incidental part of a parcel that is otherwise used for agricultural activities for which a permit has been issued or is required under Part IV, Chapter 373, F.S.

o. The following systems in wetlands or other surface waters when they are not part of a larger plan of development for which the DISTRICT reviews and takes final agency action under any other paragraph of this agreement: boat ramps, ski jumps, ski slalom courses, aids to navigation, mooring buoys and fields, piling supported structures which are not physically connected to uplands, aquatic plant management activities regulated under Chapter 369, F.S., fish attractors, artificial reefs, treasure salvage, and archeological research or exploration, and removal of organic detrital material.

p. Temporary systems proposed for commercial film productions.

q. High speed rail facilities under Sections 341.8201 through 341.842, F.S.

r. Aquaculture activities not exempt pursuant to Subsection 373.406(8), F.S.

s. All activities on sovereignty submerged lands leased by the Division of Recreation and Parks, except those proposed by the DEPARTMENT.

t. Projects constructed, operated or maintained by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

## **2. Formal Determinations**

The DEPARTMENT shall review and take final action on petitions for formal determinations of the extent of wetlands and other surface waters pursuant to Section 373.421, F.S., filed by entities regarding properties on which they propose to undertake activities for which the DEPARTMENT would have permitting responsibility under this agreement.

The DEPARTMENT shall provide the DISTRICT with copies of formal determinations of the extent of wetlands or other surface waters issued by the DEPARTMENT.

## **3. Mitigation Banks and Regional Offsite Mitigation Area (ROMA) Agreements**

a. The DEPARTMENT shall review and take final action on all permit applications for mitigation banks and ROMA agreement proposals, under Sections 373.4135 and 373.4136, F.S.

b. To establish a Mitigation Bank, the DISTRICT shall submit a Mitigation Bank application, including a Mitigation Bank Plan, to the DEPARTMENT. The Mitigation Bank Plan shall identify one or more parcels of land to be acquired for mitigation site(s) or identify one or more parcels of land in

which the DISTRICT has a legal or equitable interest. During the Mitigation Bank application review process, there shall be no more than two requests for additional information.

### **B. DISTRICT Responsibilities**

1. The DISTRICT shall review and take final action on all applications for permits, petitions for variances, and petitions for formal determination under part IV, Chapter 373, F.S., variances and waivers under Section 120.542 F.S., except for those identified as the DEPARTMENT's responsibility under this agreement, but including activities within an adopted works of the district pursuant to Rule 40B-4.3000, F.A.C. The permit applications encompassed within the DISTRICT's responsibility hereunder include those submitted for wetland resource permits and MSSW permits, under Subsections 373.414(11) through (16), F.S., as well as those submitted for environmental resource permits.
2. The DISTRICT shall review and take action on projects constructed, operated or maintained by the DEPARTMENT. However, activities of the DEPARTMENT permitted under Sections 403.91-403.929, F.S., or the rules adopted pursuant to those statutes, and activities of the DEPARTMENT which did not require a permit under such statutes or rules, shall not require a permit under Part IV of Chapter 373, F.S., provided such activities are part of a project which was commenced prior to October 3, 1995.
3. The DISTRICT shall provide the DEPARTMENT with copies of formal determinations of the extent of wetlands or other surface waters issued by the DISTRICT.

### **C. Incorrectly Submitted Applications and Petitions; Modifications**

1. Permit applications, petitions for variances or waivers, and petitions for formal determinations submitted to the incorrect agency pursuant to the terms of this operating agreement shall be forwarded to the correct agency for further processing within ten (10) days of receipt, except where the agencies mutually agree that the application may be retained by the incorrect agency, in which case a special case agreement shall be executed in accordance with Section II.D. of this agreement. A refund of any fee submitted to the agency that does not retain processing of the application shall be made to the applicant. Prior to transferring the application, the incorrect receiving agency shall coordinate with the proper reviewing agency and the applicant in order to inform all parties that the application has been submitted incorrectly and is being forwarded.
2. Notwithstanding sections II.A. and II.B. of this agreement, permit modification requests shall be processed by the agency issuing the original permit. If the permit has been modified, the agency that issued the last

modification to the permit shall process the modification. However, the following two exceptions apply:

a. The DEPARTMENT shall process all modifications to permits for the following activities:

- (1) Solid waste management facilities as described in Section II.A.1.a.;
- (2) Mining projects as described in Section II.A.1.e., when the modification involves the addition of new lands to the permit or the expansion of mining activities into areas not previously approved for mining; and
- (3) Seaports and seaport related development as described in Section II.A.1.m.

b. Alterations to stormwater systems previously authorized under Rules 17-25.040 or 62-25.040, F.A.C., shall not be considered as modifications under the provisions of this section, and shall be processed by the agency that would have responsibility for reviewing and taking final agency action on the system under Sections II.A. and II.B. of this agreement.

#### **D. Special Cases**

By written agreement between the DISTRICT and the DEPARTMENT, responsibilities may deviate from the responsibilities outlined in II.A., B., or C. above. Instances where this may occur include the following:

1. An extensive regulatory history or a proprietary interest by either the DISTRICT or the DEPARTMENT with a particular project that would make a deviation result in more efficient and effective regulation. This may include activities on lands with a conservation easement held by the other agency;
2. Simplification of the regulation of a project that crosses water management district boundaries;
3. The incorrect agency has begun processing an application or petition and transfer of the application or petition would be inefficient; or
4. Circumstances in which a deviation would result in the application or petition being more efficiently or effectively processed.

### **III. DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY: MIXING ZONES, ZONES OF DISCHARGE, VARIANCES**

A. The DEPARTMENT delegates authority to the DISTRICT to review and take final action on requests for zones of mixing in surface waters and zones of discharge in groundwater, in accordance with Sections 62-4.242, 62-4.244, 62-

28.700, 62-522.400 and 62-522.410, F.A.C., when the requests are associated with a permit application for which the DISTRICT is responsible under the terms of this agreement.

B. The DEPARTMENT delegates the authority to the DISTRICT to take action on petitions for variances or waivers from state water quality standards in accordance with Sections 120.542 and 403.201, F.S., and Section 28-104, F.A.C., when the petition is associated with a permit application for which the DISTRICT is responsible under the terms of this agreement.

#### **IV. COMPLIANCE MONITORING AND ENFORCEMENT**

##### **A. Division of Responsibilities**

Each agency shall perform compliance monitoring on all projects for which that agency has issued a permit, consent order, final order, or for which a consent final judgment or final judgment has been entered to determine compliance with the conditions thereof and will enforce said conditions by taking appropriate enforcement action where necessary. However if the DEPARTMENT or the DISTRICT modifies a permit previously issued by the other agency, pursuant to this agreement, the agency modifying the permit shall thereafter determine compliance with the permit and enforce all provisions or conditions of that permit.

Each agency shall investigate activities regulated under Part IV of Chapter 373, F.S., which are undertaken without the required permits, and take appropriate enforcement action, when it has permitting responsibilities for those activities under this agreement.

When a violation of Part IV of Chapter 373, F.S., also constitutes a violation of either Chapters 253 or 258, F.S., and the resolution of the violation under Part IV of Chapter 373, F.S., does not resolve the violation under either Chapters 253 or 258, F.S., the District shall coordinate compliance and enforcement actions with the DEPARTMENT, and shall forward a copy of the enforcement documentation generated on those violations to the DEPARTMENT for its use in addressing the violation under either Chapters 253 or 258, F.S.

##### **B. Special Cases**

By written agreement between the DISTRICT and the DEPARTMENT, enforcement responsibilities for specific cases may deviate from the responsibilities outlined in Section IV.A. Instances where this may occur include:

1. The case also includes activities which may be violations of rules of the DEPARTMENT or DISTRICT that are not the subject of this agreement;
2. The case involves activities that cross water management district boundaries; or

3. Deviation would result in the case being more effectively or efficiently handled.

## **V. EMERGENCIES**

In a declared emergency, pooling of staff resources and deviations from the terms of this agreement may be in the best interest of public service and protecting or restoring property and environmental resources. Therefore, notwithstanding the divisions of responsibilities specified in this agreement, where the Governor has issued an Executive Order which declares an emergency and the DEPARTMENT and the DISTRICT have issued emergency orders to implement the Executive Order, either party to this agreement can review and take agency action on any activities regulated under Part IV of Chapter 373, F.S., that are authorized by an emergency order during the duration of the emergency orders of the DEPARTMENT and the DISTRICT.

## **VI. INTERAGENCY COMMITTEE**

In order to seek consistency in the environmental resource permit (ERP) program and to facilitate the implementation of the DEPARTMENT's responsibilities under Subsection 373.026(7), F.S., and Section 62-340.100, F.A.C., the DEPARTMENT and DISTRICT agree to form and participate in an ERP Committee (Committee). The Committee shall meet at least twice a year, but may meet more frequently as issues arise that require interagency coordination. The Committee shall provide a forum for the DEPARTMENT and water management districts to coordinate and communicate regarding the following:

- a. Joint training efforts to maximize the use of training resources and ensure that adequate training is provided.
- b. Promotion of consistent interpretation and implementation of ERP rules.
- c. Proposed amendments to ERP rules.
- d. Development of consistent ERP compliance and enforcement.
- e. Future revisions to the DEPARTMENT and DISTRICT operating agreements regarding the ERP program.
- f. Development of a statewide ERP data set and a computer data exchange methodology.
- g. Such other activities which the Committee deems necessary or desirable to achieve and maintain the goals of this agreement.

## **VII. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

The DEPARTMENT and DISTRICT mutually agree to provide to each other technical assistance related to the implementation of the Environmental Resources Permit Program. Requests for such technical assistance shall be in writing and are subject to availability of staff, technical and financial resources of the provider. Per diem and travel expenses as specified in Chapter 112, F.S., and other expenses as specifically authorized in writing by the entity requesting technical assistance shall be reimbursed upon receipt of an invoice documenting such technical assistance from the provider.

### VIII. EFFECTIVE DATE

A. This agreement shall take effect upon execution by both parties and adoption of rule amendments which incorporate this agreement by reference.

B. Applications, petitions, and enforcement cases, under Part IV of Chapter 373, F.S., which are pending on the effective date of this agreement shall continue to be processed by the agency to which application or petition was made or which initiated the enforcement case, except when the DISTRICT and the DEPARTMENT agree, that an application, petition or enforcement case should be transferred in order to provide for more efficient processing and enforcement. Applications and petitions received after the effective date of this agreement will be processed as described in Section II of this agreement.

AGREED TO this 1<sup>st</sup> day of July, 2007.

SUWANNEE RIVER  
WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT



WILLIAM DAVID POPE, III  
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STATE OF FLORIDA DEPARTMENT  
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