



AGENDA
SUWANNEE RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT
FIRST PUBLIC HEARING ON THE FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026 MILLAGE AND BUDGET

YouTube Link: <https://www.youtube.com/@SRWMD>

Open to Public

September 9, 2025
5:05 p.m.

District Headquarters
Live Oak, Florida

1. Call to order and Roll Call
2. Resolution Number 2025-09 Tentative Millage Rate for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget
3. Resolution Number 2025-10 Tentative Budget for Fiscal Year 2025-2026
4. Announcements:
Monday, September 22, 2025, at 5:05 p.m. is the Final Public Hearing on Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Millage and Budget.
5. Adjournment

Any member of the public, who wishes to address the Board on any agenda item, or any other topic, must sign up (including the completion of the required speaker forms) with the Executive Director or designee before the time designated for Public Comment. During Public Comment, the Chair shall recognize those persons signed up to speak on agenda items first. To the extent time permits, the Chair shall thereafter recognize those persons signed up to speak on non-agenda items. Unless, leave is given by the Chair, (1) all speakers will be limited to three minutes per topic, (2) any identifiable group of three persons or more shall be required to choose a representative, who shall be limited to five minutes per topic. When recognized by the Chair during Public Comment, a speaker may request to be allowed to make his or her comments at the time the Board considers a particular agenda item. The Chair may grant or deny such request in the Chair's sole discretion.

Definitions:

•"Lobbies" is defined as seeking to influence a district policy or procurement decision or an attempt to obtain the goodwill of a district official or employee. (112.3261(1)(b), Florida Statutes [F.S.]

•"Lobbyist" is a person who is employed and receives payment, or who contracts for economic consideration, for the purpose of lobbying, or a person who is principally employed for governmental affairs by another person or governmental entity to lobby on behalf of that other person or governmental entity. (112.3215(1)(h), F.S.)

The Board may act upon (including reconsideration) any agenda item at any time during the meeting. The agenda may be changed only for good cause as determined by the Chair and stated in the record. If, after the regular time for Public Comment, the agenda is amended to add an item for consideration, the Chair shall allow public comment on the added agenda item prior to the Board taking action thereon.

All decisions of the Chair concerning parliamentary procedures, decorum, and rules of order will be final, unless they are overcome by a majority of the members of the Board in attendance.

If any person decides to appeal any decision with respect to any action considered at the above referenced meeting and hearing, such person may need to ensure a verbatim record of the proceeding is made to include testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is made.

SUWANNEE RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

MEMORANDUM

TO: Governing Board

FROM: Kristin Thompson, Finance Program Manager, Office of Finance

THRU: Hugh Thomas, Executive Director

DATE: September 1, 2025

RE: Resolution Number 2025-09, Tentative Millage Rate for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget

RECOMMENDATION

Approve Resolution Number 2025-09 to adopt a Tentative Millage Rate of 0.2812 for Fiscal Year 2025-2026.

BACKGROUND

The Tentative Fiscal Year 2025-2026 (FY 2026) millage rate and budget were developed in accordance with sections 200.065, 373.503, and 373.536, Florida Statutes, direction provided by the Governor's Office, the Legislature, and the Department of Environmental Protection, and in accordance with the budget guidelines set forth by the Governing Board.

At the July 8, 2025, Governing Board meeting, the Board authorized the tentative millage rate to be set at the rolled-back millage rate for FY 2026 and to notify the property appraisers within the District of its intent to levy a rollback millage rate. The Board also approved a Tentative Budget of \$83,629,325, authorized staff to submit the Standard Format Tentative Budget pursuant to section 373.536(5), Florida Statutes, and make adjustments as needed based on new information.

The Suwannee River Water Management District is the taxing authority that tentatively proposes to levy the rolled-back millage rate of 0.2812 for FY 2026, which is a 4.22 percent reduction from the current Fiscal Year 2024-2025 millage rate of 0.2936. The rolled-back millage rate of 0.2812 is based on taxable property values from all the property appraiser's offices within the District.

The final public hearing is scheduled for September 22, 2025, at 5:05 p.m., at the District Headquarters located at 9225 CR 49, Live Oak, Florida, 32060.

KT/rl
Attachment

**SUWANNEE RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT
RESOLUTION NUMBER 2025-09**

ADOPTION OF TENTATIVE MILLAGE RATE FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026

WHEREAS, the Governing Board of the Suwannee River Water Management District (District) by authority of Article VII, Section 9(b) of the Florida Constitution, and Chapters 200 and 373, Florida Statutes, is authorized to levy ad valorem taxes on taxable property within the District; and

WHEREAS, the ensuing fiscal year of the District shall extend the period beginning October 1, 2025, and ending September 30, 2026; and

WHEREAS, the Governing Board of the District has determined that a tentative millage rate as provided for in sections 200.065, 373.503, and 373.536, Florida Statutes, is necessary to provide funds for the tentative budgeted expenditures of the District for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 (FY 2026) and should be levied in the amount set forth herein; and

WHEREAS, notices of proposed property taxes, advising of date, time, and place of the first public hearing, were prepared, and transmitted, pursuant to section 200.065, Florida Statutes, by the county property appraisers of each county within the District; and

WHEREAS, the first public hearing on the tentative millage rate and tentative budget was held by the Governing Board of the District at 9225 County Road 49, Live Oak, Florida, on September 9, 2025, commencing at 5:05 p.m. as provided in the notice, at which the name of the taxing authority, the rolled-back rate, the percentage of change from the rolled-back rate, and the millage rate to be levied were publicly announced, and the general public was allowed to ask questions and speak prior to the adoption of any measures.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED; by the Governing Board of the Suwannee River Water Management District that:

1. There is adopted and tentatively levied a millage rate, as provided for in sections 373.503 and 373.536, Florida Statutes, at the rolled-back rate, for FY 2026, to be assessed on the tax rolls for the year 2025, for the purpose of levying a uniform ad valorem tax on all taxable property in the counties within the District as certified by the county property appraisers pursuant to section 200.065, Florida Statutes, excluding lands held by the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund to the extent specified in section 373.543, Florida Statutes.
2. The FY 2026 tentative millage rate of 0.2812 is equal to the rolled-back rate of 0.2812 mills.

PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS _____ DAY OF _____ 2025, A.D., AT _____ P.M., BY
THE GOVERNING BOARD OF THE SUWANNEE RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT:

SUWANNEE RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT
BY ITS GOVERNING BOARD

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD:
VIRGINIA JOHNS
RICHARD SCHWAB
CHARLES KEITH
WILLIAM LLOYD
LARRY SESSIONS
HARRY SMITH
LARRY K. THOMPSON
GEORGE WHEELER

ATTEST:

SUWANNEE RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

MEMORANDUM

TO: Governing Board
FROM: Kristin Thompson, Finance Program Manager, Office of Finance
THRU: Hugh Thomas, Executive Director
DATE: September 1, 2025
RE: Resolution Number 2025-10, Tentative Budget for Fiscal Year 2025-2026

RECOMMENDATION

Approve Resolution Number 2025-10 to adopt a Tentative Budget of \$83,629,325 for Fiscal Year 2025-2026.

BACKGROUND

The Tentative Budget for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 (FY 2026) has been developed in accordance with sections 200.065, 373.503, and 373.536, Florida Statutes, direction provided by the Governor's Office, the Legislature, and the Department of Environmental Protection, and in accordance with the budget guidelines set forth by the Governing Board.

At the July 8, 2025, Governing Board meeting, the Board authorized the tentative millage rate to be set at the rolled-back millage rate for FY 2026 and to notify the property appraisers within the District of its intent to levy a rollback millage rate. The Board also approved a Tentative Budget of \$83,629,325, authorized staff to submit the Standard Format Tentative Budget pursuant to section 373.536(5), Florida Statutes, and make adjustments as needed based on new information.

The following is a summary of the Tentative Budget for FY 2026 and program highlights.

BUDGET SUMMARY:

The Tentative Budget for FY 2026 represents a standardized approach to budgeting and fiscal responsibility. It reflects the District's effort to diligently address core mission responsibilities that consist of water supply, water quality, flood protection, and natural systems in accordance with Governing Board priorities, legislative directives, adopted minimum flows and minimum water levels (MFLs) schedule, and the District's Strategic Plan.

The District maintains five individual governmental funds including the General Fund and four Special Revenue Funds (Land Management and Operations Fund, District Fund, State Fund, and Federal Fund). The Tentative Budget for FY 2026 is \$83,629,325, which includes the General Fund of \$18,050,081 and Special Revenue Funds of \$65,579,244 (See Attachments). It reflects a full-time equivalent (FTE) work force of sixty-nine (69) employees and one (1) Other Personal Services (OPS) position.

The Tentative Budget proposes to reduce last year's adopted millage rate of 0.2936 to the rolled-back rate of 0.2812 for FY 2026. The projected ad valorem revenue for FY 2026 is \$7,496,769. The District budgeted 97.48% or \$7,307,624 of the projected ad valorem revenue in the FY 2026 Tentative Budget.

GENERAL FUND BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS:

The General Fund is the principal operating fund used to account for most of the District's general activities and technology and information services including:

- Water resource planning and monitoring (water supply planning; other water resources planning; minimum flows and minimum water levels; research data collection, analysis, and monitoring; and planning technical assistance)
- Regulation (consumptive use permitting; water well construction permitting and contractor licensing; environmental resource and surface water permitting; and other regulatory and enforcement activities)
- Operations and Maintenance (facilities and fleet services). These activities were previously budgeted in the Land Management & Operations Special Revenue Fund.
- Outreach (water resource education; public information; and legislative affairs)
- District management and administration (administrative and operations support; and tax collector/property appraiser fees)

The Tentative Budget for the General Fund for FY 2026 is \$18,050,081. Source of funds include District revenue of \$7,819,527, state revenue of \$6,375,000, transfer out to the District Special Revenue Fund of (\$2,000,000), and fund balance utilization of \$5,855,554. District revenue includes ad valorem, investment income, and permit fees. State revenue includes FY 2026 state appropriations for operations, minimum flows and minimum water levels, and environmental resource permitting as well as the continuation of the District headquarters renovation grant.

Use of funds include Salaries and Benefits of \$8,288,542, Contractual Services of \$3,567,195, Operating Expenditures of \$2,229,800, Operating Capital Outlay of \$288,044, Fixed Capital Outlay of \$2,386,000, and Interagency Expenditures of \$1,290,500. Salaries may include employee base wages, position progressions, cost of living/merit increases, performance awards, and projected retiree and termination compensated absence liabilities.

SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS:

The four Special Revenue Funds (Land Management and Operations Fund, District Fund, State Fund, and Federal Fund) are used to account for and report the proceeds of specific revenue sources that are restricted or committed to expenditure for specified purposes.

The Tentative Budget for the Special Revenue Funds for FY 2026 is \$65,579,244. Source of funds include District revenue of \$2,078,097, state revenue of \$48,943,210, federal revenue of \$6,151,500, transfer in from the General Fund of \$2,000,000, and fund balance utilization of \$6,406,437.

- District revenue includes timber, ad valorem, and the sale of surplus lands.
- State revenue includes FY 2026 state appropriations for land management and Payment-in-Lieu of Taxes. It also includes grants from Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT); Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services –

Florida Forest Service; Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission; and Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) Springs Restoration, Alternative Water Supply (AWS), Water Quality Improvement, Wastewater, and Resilient Florida. State Springs Restoration and AWS funding in the amount of \$34,587,750 or 41.4% of the District's budget is allocated to springs protection and restoration.

- Federal revenue includes American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and federal pass-through state fiscal recovery funds appropriated by the Florida legislature for projects through FDEP's wastewater grant program; and Federal Emergency Management Agency grants used to update flood risk maps and to deliver quality data that increases public awareness to reduce future flooding vulnerability.
- Fund balance utilization includes District fund balance for agricultural and Regional Initiative Valuing Environmental Resources (RIVER) cost-share projects, project effectiveness metrics, and regional water resource development projects. It also includes fund balance for Suwannee River Partnership, FDOT projects, and land and conservation easement acquisitions.

Use of funds include Salaries and Benefits of \$917,658, Contractual Services of \$29,499,589, Operating Expenditures of \$295,600, Fixed Capital Outlay of \$8,939,000, and Interagency Expenditures of \$25,927,397.

PROGRAM AREA HIGHLIGHTS:

The Tentative Budget by program area is as follows:

PROGRAMS	Fiscal Year 2025-2026 (Tentative Budget)
1.0 Water Resource Planning and Monitoring	\$11,838,179
2.0 Acquisition, Restoration and Public Works	\$57,259,654
3.0 Operation and Maintenance of Works and Lands	\$9,683,558
4.0 Regulation	\$2,507,619
5.0 Outreach	\$291,126
6.0 Management and Administration	\$2,049,189
TOTAL	\$83,629,325

The Tentative FY 2026 Budget will enable the District to protect water resources for the benefit of its citizens and natural systems while lessening the burden on taxpayers and establishing a high level of public service. This Tentative Budget documents the District's commitment to implement cost efficiencies and enhance existing programs.

The final public hearing is scheduled for Monday, September 22, 2025, at 5:05 p.m. at the District office located at 9225 CR 49, Live Oak, Florida.

KT/rl
Attachments

**SUWANNEE RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT
RESOLUTION NUMBER 2025-10**

ADOPTION OF TENTATIVE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2025-2026

WHEREAS, Chapters 200 and 373, Florida Statutes, require that the Governing Board of the Suwannee River Water Management District (District) adopt a tentative budget for the District for each fiscal year; and

WHEREAS, the Governing Board of the District, after careful consideration and study, has caused to be prepared a tentative budget, including all items that are necessary and proper as provided by law for the District, for the ensuing fiscal year beginning October 1, 2025, and ending September 30, 2026, as provided for in sections 200.065, 218.33, and 373.536, Florida Statutes; and

WHEREAS, notices of proposed property taxes, advising of date, time, and place of the first public budget hearing, were prepared and mailed, pursuant to section 200.065, Florida Statutes, by the county property appraisers of each county within the District; and

WHEREAS, the first public hearing on the tentative millage rate and budget was held by the Governing Board of the District at 9225 County Road 49, Live Oak, Florida, on September 9, 2025, commencing at 5:05 p.m. as provided in the notice; and

WHEREAS, the Governing Board of the District, prior to adopting a tentative budget, has adopted Resolution Number 2025-09, Adoption of Tentative Millage Rate for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 (FY 2026), which established the tentative millage levy for FY 2026 as provided for in sections 200.065, 373.503, and 373.536, Florida Statutes.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED; by the Governing Board of the Suwannee River Water Management District that:

The attached budget is hereby adopted as the tentative budget of the District for the fiscal year beginning October 1, 2025, and ending September 30, 2026, as the tentative operating and fiscal guide of the District for the upcoming fiscal year.

**PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS ____ DAY OF _____ 2025, A.D., AT ____ P.M., BY
THE GOVERNING BOARD OF THE SUWANNEE RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT:**

**SUWANNEE RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT
BY ITS GOVERNING BOARD**

**MEMBERS OF THE BOARD:
VIRGINIA JOHNS
RICHARD SCHWAB
CHARLES KEITH
WILLIAM LLOYD
LARRY SESSIONS
HARRY SMITH
LARRY K. THOMPSON
GEORGE WHEELER**

ATTEST:

Suwannee River Water Management District

Tentative Budget FY 2025–2026	TOTAL BUDGET	GENERAL FUND	LAND MANAGEMENT & OPERATIONS SPECIAL REVENUE FUND	DISTRICT SPECIAL REVENUE FUND	STATE SPECIAL REVENUE FUND	FEDERAL SPECIAL REVENUE FUND
Revenues						
District Revenue	\$ 9,897,624	\$ 7,819,527	\$ 1,578,097	\$ -	\$ 500,000	\$ -
State Revenue	55,318,210	6,375,000	2,985,369	-	45,957,841	-
Federal Revenue	6,151,500		631,500	-	-	5,520,000
Total Revenues	\$ 71,367,334	\$ 14,194,527	\$ 5,194,966	\$ -	\$ 46,457,841	\$ 5,520,000
Transfers Out	2,000,000	-	-	2,000,000	-	-
Transfers Out	(2,000,000)	(2,000,000)	-	-	-	-
Fund Balance Utilization	12,261,991	5,855,554	1,089,937	2,589,500	2,727,000	-
TOTAL REVENUES, TRANSFERS & FUND BALANCE UTILIZATION	\$ 83,629,325	\$ 18,050,081	\$ 6,284,903	\$ 4,589,500	\$ 49,184,841	\$ 5,520,000
Expenditures						
Salaries & Benefits	\$ 9,206,200	\$ 8,288,542	\$ 912,584	\$ -	\$ 5,074	\$ -
Contractual Services	33,066,784	3,567,195	2,817,219	2,183,500	19,990,870	4,508,000
Operating Expenditures	2,525,400	2,229,800	251,100	30,000	6,500	8,000
Operating Capital Outlay	288,044	288,044	-	-	-	-
Fixed Capital Outlay	11,325,000	2,386,000	1,439,000	-	7,500,000	-
Interagency Expenditures	27,217,897	1,290,500	865,000	2,376,000	21,682,397	1,004,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 83,629,325	\$ 18,050,081	\$ 6,284,903	\$ 4,589,500	\$ 49,184,841	\$ 5,520,000

Activities 3.3, 3.6, and 3.7, previously budgeted in the Land Management Fund, are budgeted in the General Fund effective 10/1/2025

BUDGET SUMMARY

Suwannee River Water Management District - Fiscal Year 2025–2026

THE PROPOSED OPERATING BUDGET EXPENDITURES OF THE SUWANNEE RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT ARE 4.6% MORE THAN LAST YEARS TOTAL OPERATING EXPENDITURES.

I. ESTIMATED REVENUES AND BALANCES	MILLAGE PER \$1,000	GENERAL FUND	SPECIAL REVENUE FUNDS	TOTAL BUDGET
ESTIMATED REVENUES				
AD VALOREM TAXES (Rolled-back rate)	0.2812	\$ 7,179,527	\$ 128,097	\$ 7,307,624
OTHER REVENUES			-	
Federal Revenue			6,151,500	6,151,500
State Revenue		6,375,000	48,943,210	55,318,210
District Revenue		90,000	750,000	840,000
Permit and License Fees		250,000	-	250,000
Investment Income		300,000	-	300,000
Timber Sales			1,200,000	1,200,000
TOTAL ESTIMATED REVENUES		14,194,527	57,172,807	71,367,334
TRANSFERS IN/(OUT)				-
BEGINNING FUND BALANCE/RESERVE PROJECTED		16,547,548	13,086,702	29,634,250
TOTAL REVENUES, TRANSFERS & FUND BALANCE		\$ 30,742,075	\$ 70,259,509	\$ 101,001,584
II. EXPENDITURES				
WATER RESOURCES PLANNING & MONITORING		\$ 7,698,282	4,139,897	\$ 11,838,179
ACQUISITION, RESTORATION & PUBLIC WORKS		1,810,210	55,449,444	57,259,654
OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF LANDS & WORKS		3,693,655	5,989,903	9,683,558
REGULATION		2,507,619	-	2,507,619
OUTREACH		291,126	-	291,126
ADMINISTRATIVE AND OPERATIONS SUPPORT		2,049,189	-	2,049,189
TOTAL APPROPRIATED EXPENDITURES		\$ 18,050,081	\$ 65,579,244	\$ 83,629,325
ENDING FUND BALANCES/RESERVES		12,691,994	4,680,265	17,372,259
TOTAL APPROPRIATED EXPENDITURES, TRANSFERS AND FUND BALANCE		\$ 30,742,075	\$ 70,259,509	\$ 101,001,584

THE TENTATIVE, ADOPTED, AND/OR FINAL BUDGETS ARE ON FILE IN THE OFFICE OF THE ABOVE MENTIONED TAXING AUTHORITY AS A PUBLIC RECORD.