

## CFWI Public Meeting - Public Comments

June 4, 2015

Approximately 50 members of the public attended the meeting in Winter Garden to learn about CFWI and provide comments on the Regional Water Supply Plan and the Solutions Plan. District staff welcomed the public and provided the opportunity for the public to discuss issues of interest before the meeting began. Mark Hammond presented information about the Plan and the regional projects that were analyzed. He then gave information about how comments can be submitted. About 10 members of the public, including representatives from environment, agriculture and business wanted to ensure that the districts place more emphasis on conservation, ensure conservation does not equate into permit reduction, and ensure future supply. The prevailing theme from the workshops and public meetings has been conservation. Most speakers felt "while conservation is listed and viewed favorably in the plan, more dollars should be front-loaded into the plan instead of spreading it out over 20 years".

### **Public comments**

- The Plan says the cause of the problem is the amount of water we are using. The real issue is to manage the water in the water table and add to the amount kept on the surface. What we use takes away from the natural systems and we need to protect these systems.
- We do not have to drink toilet water if more water is kept in the system.
- We need reservoirs. If we add one inch over the whole area of the CFWI, 70 billion gallons would be available.
- We need to make better use of water than watering our grass.
- The Plan should have more emphasis on water conservation and funding for conservation.
- The plumbing code should be changed to meet US EPA Water Sense Standards.
- The biggest use of water indoors is the toilet and we need to place emphasis on retrofits to low-flush toilets. In DeKalb County, GA, when a property is sold, the new owner must show that the toilet meets current standards. We need more money provided for retrofits.
- Only 6.1% of the budget in the Plan is for conservation and education. We need to front-load the spending for conservation instead of spreading it out over 20 years.
- On the Conservation Team, we were limited to projects that cost \$3/1000 gallons or less while all the other projects were allowed much higher dollar costs. We need to spend more on conservation.
- Concerned about the amount of water used on landscape irrigation. Since landscaping is non-essential, we need a more aggressive approach to limiting water use for this purpose. We need a new approach to thinking of water use and not continue down the same track of ensuring enough water to irrigate lawns. Plants should be required that will only need watering for establishment. There should be no irrigation beyond plant establishment, and there is no need for it if the right plants are used.
- Use of reclaimed water is not conservation because it keeps the same ethic of making water available for irrigation and groundwater is used as a backup. Reclaimed water should be put in wetlands instead of subdivisions.
- We need enforcement of State law that prevents HOAs from requiring a perfect St. Augustine lawn.

- There are at least two huge developments planned in East Orange and Osceola Counties that are not accounted for in the population projections. The Deseret North Ranch Sector Plan calls for reservoirs that will harm two tributaries of the St. Johns River. They could use the Taylor Creek Reservoir for their water supply instead.
- Much more conservation indoors and outdoors is possible. New projects should be required to have Florida Friendly landscaping instead of turf.
- We need to value our water more, and disposal of reclaimed water is a missed opportunity. We need to maximize use of reclaimed water and move away from surface water withdrawals.
- Asked if water pricing tiers are in place so large water users pay more per gallon. (Mark Hammond responded that most utilities have this fee structure.)
- Front-loading the funding for conservation in the planning period will have a larger impact on changing behavior.
- Most people have barriers to conserving water because of HOAs. We need to provide more support to citizens to help them change their landscapes.
- Mobile irrigation labs should be funded. People need help to understand the use of their irrigation timers to make sure they are not over-watering.
- How many gallons of fresh water go to the Gulf of Mexico? Why is fresh water sent to the Gulf?
- Cities make too much money on reclaimed water to send it to AG even though AG needs it. AG can't afford to buy it from utilities. When state law changed making reclaimed water the property of the utilities, things became worse for the farmer. (Mark Hammond responded that we need to look at more options near the coast to use surface water, provide funding and not send as much fresh water to the Gulf. He added that he does not know of any utilities that actually make money on reclaimed water because of the due to the costs to process and distribute it.)
- Concerned that the BEBR population numbers used in the CFWI SLRWI area are extremely low and do not account for large planned developments in both Minneola and Groveland. Two new development areas, with over 5,000 homes each, are Groveland's Villa City and in Minneola's Mountain Properties partnership. Development will also be assisted in this area with the opening of the new FDOT Minneola interchange on the Florida Turnpike. Without acknowledging the growth and water demands of the area, proper solutions cannot be developed.
- Questioned how the CFWI BEBR populations were developed for the SLRWI area. In the District's document (Table A-1), the BEBR population number assigned to the total CFWI Planning Area for Lake County in 2035 is listed as 237,314, while the BEBR population for ALL of Lake County (Bulletin 162) list a population projection of 472,800 - or twice that of the CFWI table. Since the CFWI table already includes the large growth areas of Clermont, LUSI and all of the SLRWI municipalities (plus Leesburg and Mount Dora) where else in the County is this additional growth occurring? It is difficult to know how the SLRWI numbers were assigned when part of the County is outside the CFWI and the CFWI tables do not identify the BEBR population for all of Lake County.
- What is the experience of SWFWMD with partnerships of several agencies and governments for large projects? It can be a very complication process. (Mark Hammond responded that it is a very difficult process but well worth the effort given the results in resolving problems. He also mentioned that the same format may not work for different groups).

- The emphasis of the Plan should be conservation. If done early, we may not need to build the expensive infrastructure project.
- We need a new statewide water ethic so when new businesses locate here; they know that conservation is mandatory. The concepts in CFWI need to be broadened to a statewide effort for conservation.
- Instead of using reclaimed water for irrigation, we should be using it for drinking – toilet to tap. It is a waste to use it for landscape irrigation.
- Someone earlier mentioned we should stop sending fresh water to sea but fresh water has an environmental purpose for fisheries.