

CFWI Public Meeting - Public Comments

June 1, 2015

Approximately 80 members of the public attended the meeting in Winter Haven 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, business, and government wanted to ensure that the districts place more emphasis on conservation, take a closer look at crop projections, ensure future supply. Some were appreciative of the collaborative effort.

Public comments

- There is a relatively small amount of money listed for water conservation compared to projects for new water. The shortcoming of the Plan is a lack of concentrated focus and money for water conservation. Public supply is the key area to focus on. In DeKalb County, GA, there is a program to assure that old toilets (prior to 1993) are replaced when a property is sold. The new owner must demonstrate that low-flow toilets are in place. Also, during the building permitting process, low-flow toilets are required.
- Automatic irrigation systems have become the norm in Florida. There needs to be specific provisions in the Plan to require Florida Friendly Landscaping so irrigation is not needed. Utilities in Southern Nevada pay residents to install native vegetation requiring minimal or no irrigation.
- Winter Haven has many problems with low lake levels to the point that some in the Chain of Lakes are not navigable and others are not meeting MFLs. Winter Haven has a 5-year plan and the CFWI Plan needs to look at future development.
- Glad to see the Peace Creek Watershed Project on the project list in the Plan. It is testament to coordination.
- This Plan is just “kicking the can down the road” because the projects are using the same source of water that is in short supply – the water table. We don’t have enough water now to support natural systems and we are still talking about taking more water from the water table.
- All structures should be raised 6 inches to raise the water table level.
- How will the projects in this Plan affect the Myakka River and the Peace River?
- What happens in CFWI affect the areas south in Sarasota. Are there plans for that area? (Mark Hammond responded).
- Irrigations systems are not needed and use too much water.
- Judge Farms, Toho Restoration effort – can’t get answers. Concerned about water levels at Mill Slough area, and the Turnpike mitigation area within Mills Slough. Why aren’t Turnpike Authority members in the loop on this Judges Farm/Toho Restoration planning effort?
- Will Plan be sustainable for wildlife?
- Would like to get environmental report for CFWI.

- Projections for amount of acreage for blueberries and the future water needs are incorrect. (Mark Hammond responded).
- Has chronic concern about surface water levels.
- Concern that the SE Wellfield will have negative affects. Don't drill it. Conserve instead.
- Winter Haven has stepped up to solve problems. We need money for sewer and reuse projects.
- Amendment 1 mandate is being ignored by the legislature. Don't pipe water away from Polk County.
- What are the BMPs for agriculture? (Mark Hammond responded). These will not work for small farming operation. Problems with providing electricity because batteries and wiring are stolen.
- The Blue Belt Law was passed but not implemented. Farmers would benefit from it. Keep swamp lands. Low flush toilets don't work.