

SE ENVIRONMENTAL GEOLOGY  
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November 14, 2016

North Florida Regional Water Supply Partnership

RE: PROPOSAL FOR THE RECHARGE OF THE UPPER FLORIAN AQUIFER IN THE NORTH FLORIDA FLATWOODS ENVIRONMENT, HAMILTON, COLUMBIA, UNION, BAKER AND ALACHUA COUNTIES.

My proposal is directed towards those areas in the SRWMD and the SJRWMD that are underlain by the Hawthorn formation resulting in extensive areas containing a surficial aquifer and the intermediate aquifers that exist in the Hawthorn. Recharge to the Floridan is retarded by the presence of the clay layers in the Hawthorn. Very large wetland systems are common in these areas.

Water balance studies were produced twice that I am aware of in the SRWMD, one by Dave Fisk of the SRWMD and one for the Environmental Impact Statement regarding Phosphate Mining in Columbia County in the Osceola National Forest, in the 1970's. Both studies resulted in an estimated recharge to the Florida of about 4" per year  $\pm$ . All water balance studies were done after the majority of the wetland drainage systems were constructed and therefore do not take into account the natural recharge that occurred prior to ditching.

Starting in the late 1800's and continuing through the 1950's-1970's when planted pine plantations started, much of our large wetlands systems have been drained purposefully in order to harvest the cypress out of the wetlands and to dry up marginal wetlands around these wetlands to create more acres of pine plantations.

I have been working in the North Florida Flatwoods as a geologist for the last 42 years, starting as an exploration geologist, mapping the ore body in Columbia and Hamilton counties, for what is now PCS phosphate in Hamilton County. I have walked hundreds of miles through the Flatwoods, including my time with the FDEP and the SRWMD. I have spent the last 20 years working for myself as a licensed well driller and wetlands/geologist consultant. Most recently I spent 4 years permitting a wetlands mitigation bank, Bayfield Mitigation Bank, a few miles south of Sandlin Bay in Columbia County. I rarely go into wetlands that have not been ditched.

Through all this time I have discovered that all the road side ditches, pine plantation planting beds, wetland ditching and interior ditching has drained the wetlands of most of the water from significant rainfall events, especially during the winter months when most recharge to the aquifer happens.