

## **RESOLUTION 26-XX**

### *A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF ALACHUA COUNTY, FLORIDA TO RECOMMEND SUSTAINABLE STRATEGIES TO RESTORE FLOW TO THE LOWER SANTA FE AND ICHETUCKNEE RIVERS AND SPRINGS*

WHEREAS, the 2025 North Florida Regional Water Supply Plan (NFRWSP) outlines the need for an additional 135 million gallons of water a day to accommodate one million new residents by 2045; and

WHEREAS, Alachua County recognizes the importance of restoring flows to the Lower Santa Fe and Ichetucknee Rivers and Priority Springs (LSFIR); and

WHEREAS, the 2025 Implementation Strategy for the LSFIR is dependent on successful implementation of the Water First North Florida project to achieve recovery as currently adopted; and

WHEREAS, the public has widely communicated a multitude of concerns with the Water First North Florida Project, including water quality, cost, and schedule; and

WHEREAS, further exploration of the Water First North Florida Project should focus on documenting the level of pre-treatment necessary to safely recharge the aquifer to reassure the public; and

WHEREAS the LSFIR is already in recovery and needs restoration now, and the Water First North Florida Project, if successfully implemented, would not provide relief to the region until 2040 at the earliest; and

WHEREAS, reducing future and current groundwater demand through conservation is the most cost-effective and immediate approach for meeting the MFLs now and in the future; and

WHEREAS, landscape irrigation accounts for up to 60% of residential water use and the trend of permanent landscape irrigation in new construction has greatly increased annual water use over time; and

WHEREAS, Alachua County has committed significant staff time and resources to implement strong landscape irrigation design standards since 2016; and

WHEREAS, the Water Management Districts should reconsider the comments and recommendations provided by Alachua County throughout the LSFIR update outlined below; and

WHEREAS, current water use can be reduced by limiting irrigation to one day a week year-round; and

WHEREAS, future water needs can be greatly reduced by prohibiting permanent landscape irrigation for new construction in the North Florida Regional Water Supply Planning Area where Minimum Flows and Levels (MFL) are not being met; and

WHEREAS, landscape irrigation wells must be prohibited within the NFWSP area when potable or reclaimed water is available so utilities can fully implement tiered water pricing and water budgets to decrease existing and future discretionary water use; and

WHEREAS, the LSFIR MFL indicates that groundwater has been over-allocated by current consumptive use permits,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE ALACHUA COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF ALACHUA COUNTY, FLORIDA:

Alachua County requests that the Water Management Districts' implement the following to restore flow to the Lower Santa Fe and Ichetucknee Rivers and Priority Springs (LSFIR):

- 1) restore provisions included in the July 2024 version of the LSFIR MFL Regulatory Strategy which prohibited new landscape irrigation wells when potable water is available and required existing users to offset a proportionate share of their impact,
- 2) exercise the WMD's authority to curtail current permits as outlined in permit conditions,
- 3) water conservation plans shall be updated to include meaningful, measurable, and enforceable water conservation strategies that exceed current efforts,
- 4) implement once a week year-round irrigation restrictions or conduct a rule change to allow local governments to do such,
- 5) re-evaluate the definitions of beneficial use and public interest in reviewing permit allocations,
- 6) since the LSFIR MFL remains unmet, a reservation for the Santa Fe and Ichetucknee Rivers should be considered, and
- 7) evaluate alternatives to the Water First North Florida Project along with filtration and siting strategies for beneficial re-use of reclaimed water from Jacksonville.

**DULY PROCLAIMED**, this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2026

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF  
ALACHUA COUNTY, FLORIDA**

**By:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Ken Cornell, Chair  
Board of County Commissioner**

**ATTEST:**

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**J.K. "JES" Irby, Esq., Clerk  
(SEAL)**

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**Alachua County Attorney's Office**