



Lower Santa Fe and Ichetucknee Rivers Implementation Strategy/Water First North Florida Project

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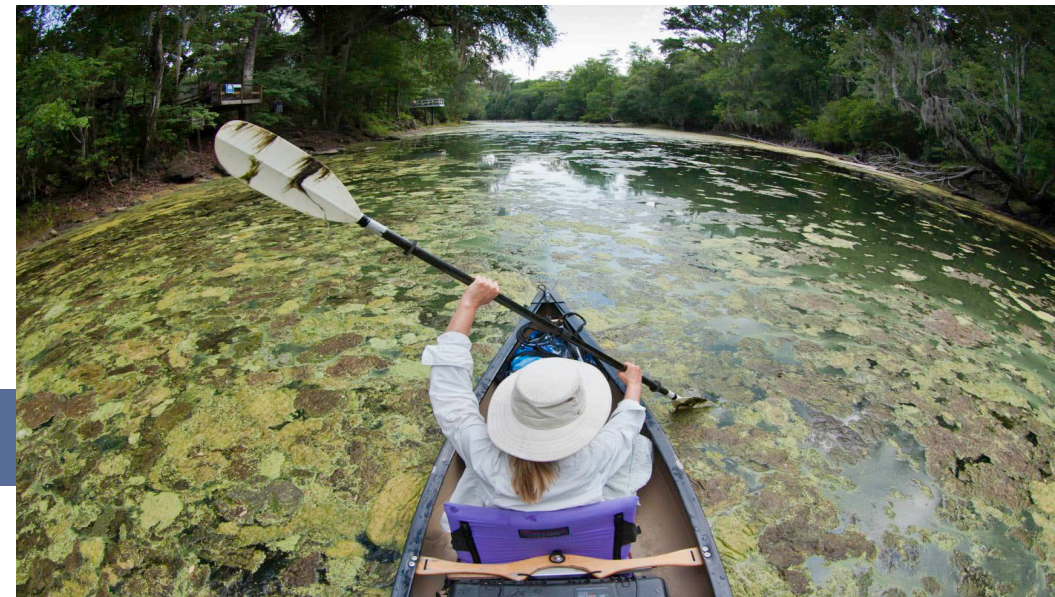


Lower Santa Fe and Ichetucknee Rivers and Springs MFL

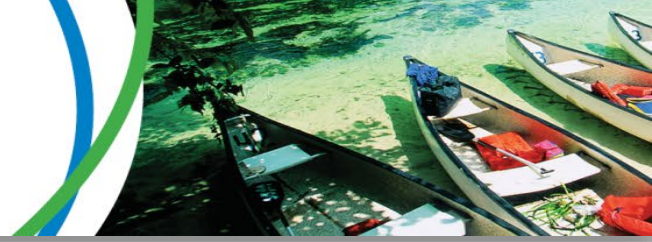


- **Basin not meeting MFL and is in “Recovery”**
- **Signed by the Governor in 2026 and includes:**
 - Implementation Strategy
 - Regulatory Component

Photo by John Moran – Santa Fe River, May 2012



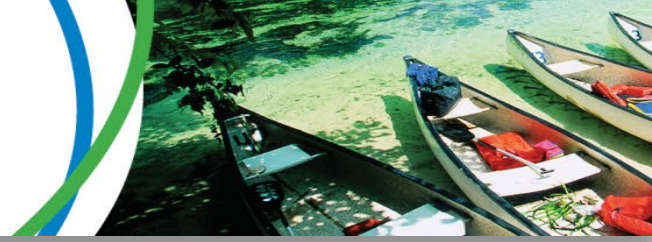
MFL Implementation Strategy



Projects to achieve MFL:

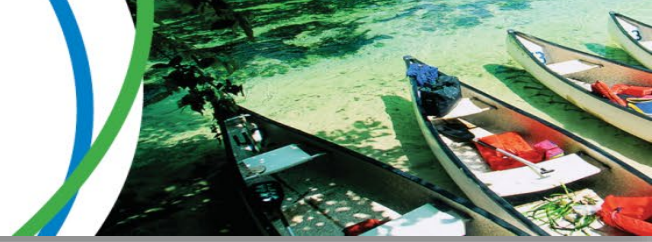
- **Water First North Florida (WFNF)**
- Black Creek Water Resource Development Project- 119 Million
 - 10 MGD from Black Creek to upper Floridan Aquifer to restore flows in the St Johns portion of the area
- Agricultural Water Conservation
 - Cost Share projects
(soil moisture sensors, weather stations, soil health, etc.)
- Florida Water Star Silver Plus
- Existing projects

Senate Bill 64 (2021)



- In response to nutrient loading, SB64 prohibits non-beneficial surface water discharge of treated effluent by 2032
 - 2025 legislation allowed JEA to have till 2032
- Requires beneficial effluent disposal methods such as:
 - indirect potable reuse
 - reclaimed water landscape irrigation
 - rehydrating wetlands
 - aquifer recharge

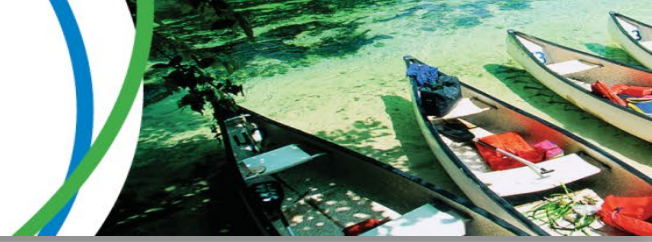
Water First North Florida



- 1.1 billion dollar (not including land acquisition) project in planning phase
- 40 million gallons per day (MGD) of treated wastewater from JEA will be routed through wetland treatment systems and into the aquifer in the Santa Fe basin
- Project is anticipated to provide sufficient recharge to offset the impacts of current and projected 2045 water use
- Target completion by 2040



Water First North Florida



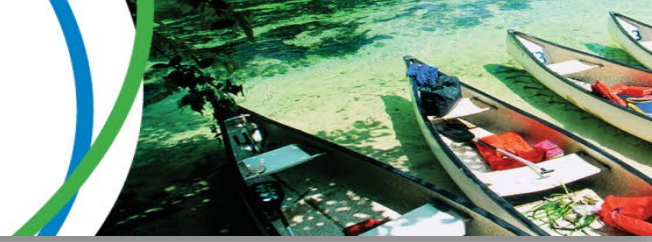
- Pilot project is evaluating ozone pretreatment and treatment wetlands for removal of PFAS and other contaminants
- A siting study has been funded to identify potential wetland sites within SJRWMD
- The fate of the project is unclear and there has been widespread opposition
- If the project moves forward, it should include public involvement and rigorous scientific investigations

Alternative Strategies



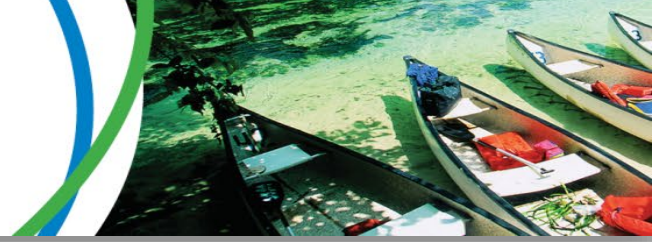
- We need recovery now, and WFNF will take decades to complete (if it moves forward)
- Reducing current and future demand is the most cost-effective solution
 - The North Florida Regional Water Supply Plan shows water conservation projects cost \$3.4 million/MGD, compared to recharge/development projects at \$15 million/MGD

Reducing Current and Future Groundwater Demand



- Limit irrigation to one day a week year-round
- Restore the July 2024 version of the MFL Regulatory Strategy:
 - Prohibit landscape irrigation wells within the NFWSP area when potable or reclaimed water is available (so utilities can fully implement aggressive tiered water pricing and water budgets)
 - Require existing permits to offset a proportion of their impact
- A water reservation may be another tool to ensure protections

Reducing Current and Future Groundwater Demand



- Future growth is currently projected at 135 MGD by 2045
- Changing development trends could greatly reduce the need for additional water resources
 - Prohibit permanent landscape irrigation for new construction in the NFRWSP where MFLs are not being met
- Utility water conservation plans should be strengthened to accelerate conservation

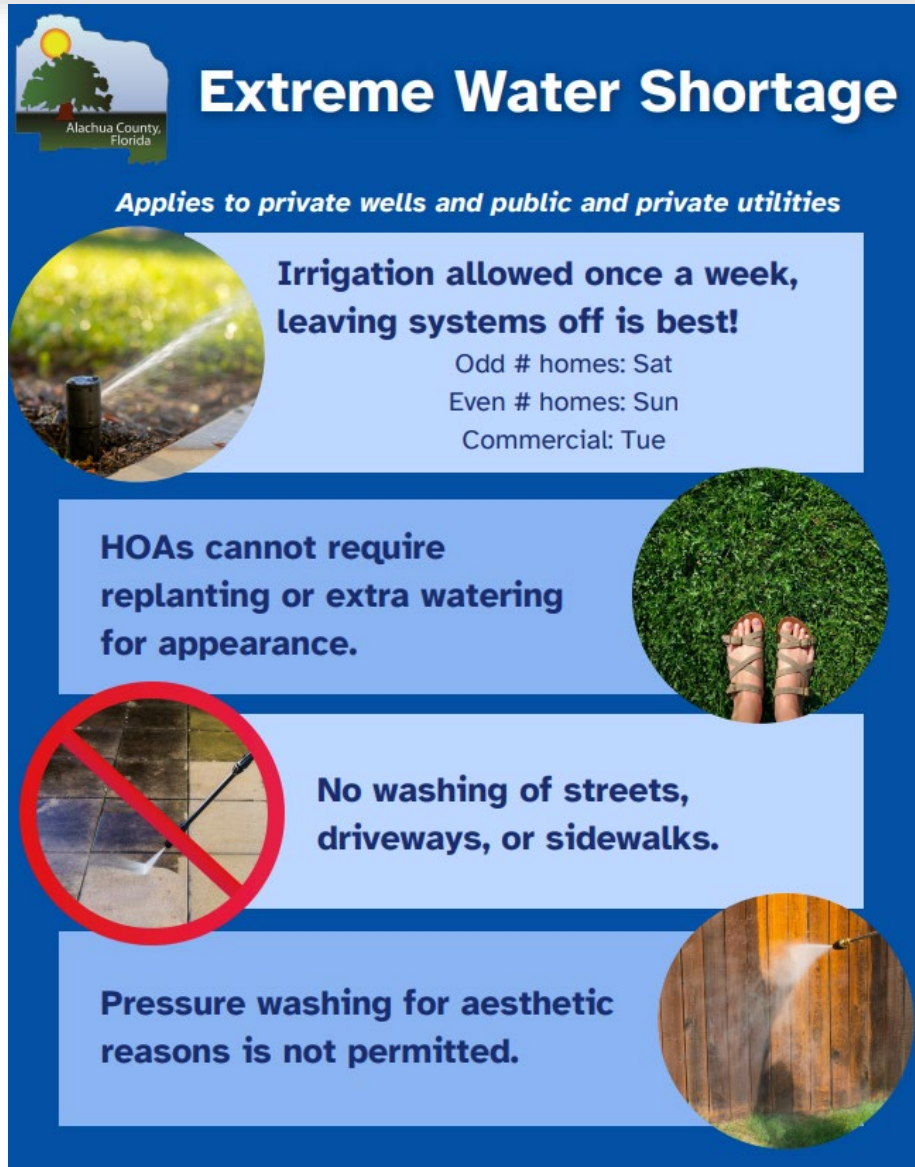
Extreme Water Shortage Update

- Irrigation limited to one day per week
- Establishment irrigation also restricted – postpone installing new landscapes
- Non-essential water uses are prohibited
- Pressure/soft washing for aesthetics reasons is prohibited
- HOAs cannot require additional watering, landscape replacement or pressure washing at this time



Extreme Water Shortage Update

- Current water conservation education efforts include:
 - Billboards
 - Ads on WUFT radio
 - Paid social media
 - Press releases
 - Direct communication with irrigation professionals, HOAs, and real estate agents
 - Oaks mall advertisements?



Extreme Water Shortage

Applies to private wells and public and private utilities

**Irrigation allowed once a week,
leaving systems off is best!**

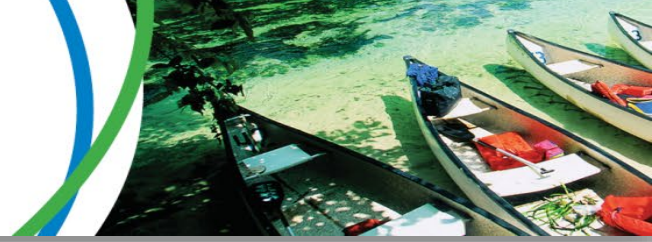
Odd # homes: Sat
Even # homes: Sun
Commercial: Tue

**HOAs cannot require
replanting or extra watering
for appearance.**

**No washing of streets,
driveways, or sidewalks.**

**Pressure washing for aesthetic
reasons is not permitted.**

Staff Recommendation to Approve Resolution



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.