

# ENHANCING PARTNERSHIPS IN REGIONAL WATER SUPPLY PLANNING

*A Report by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection  
November 2005*



Each year, the Department of Environmental Protection reports on the status of regional water supply planning (s. 373.0361(5), F.S.) and the Water Management Districts' Five-Year Water Resource Development Work Programs (s. 373.536(6)(a)4, F.S.). This report will summarize last year's important accomplishments:

- ◆ Water Management Districts continue to implement existing regional water supply plans.
- ◆ Water Management Districts are updating regional water supply plans and will be completed by December 2006.
- ◆ Legislation was passed that promotes multijurisdictional water supply development, alternative water supply development, better links between growth management and water supply, and provides funding for alternative water supply development.
- ◆ "Conserve Florida" continues to develop the initial water conservation guidance document for public water supply and will be completed by June 2006.

## DEMAND PROJECTIONS

The water management districts have developed new water demand projections for 2025 (Figure 1). In 2005, the estimated statewide water use was approximately 7.9 billion gallons per day. The projected 2025 demand for fresh water is estimated to be approximately 9.8 billion gallons per day, which represents a 24 % increase. These projections will be further refined as the Districts update their regional water supply plans. (The projections for the SFWMD have been extrapolated from the demand projections provided in their 2000 regional water supply plans.)

**Figure 1. Fresh Water Demands for Each Water Management District**

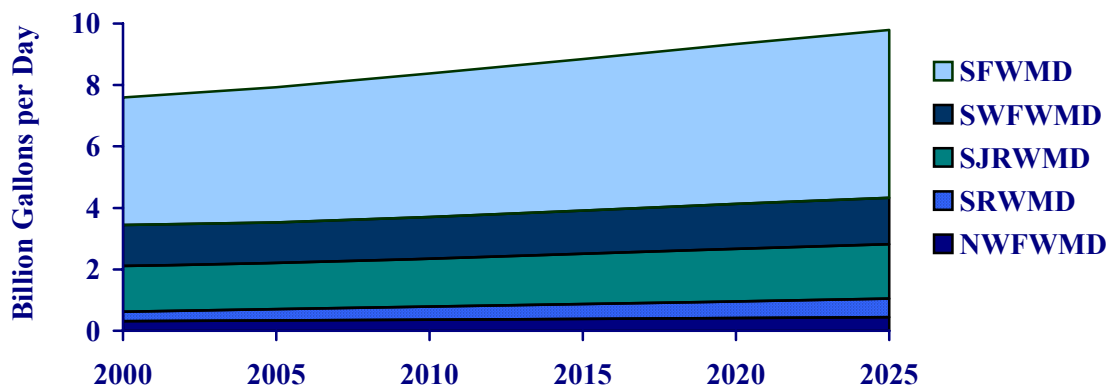
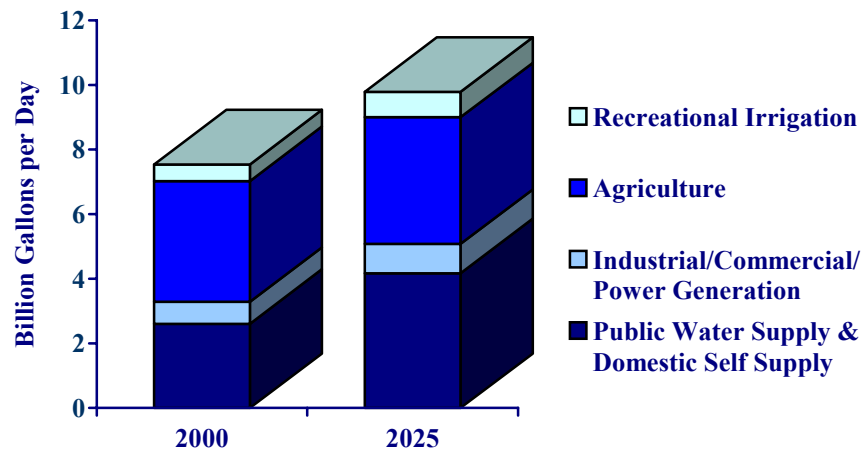


Figure 2 shows the estimated fresh water demand for each user group. In 2000, agriculture was the largest user of water, accounting for approximately 50% of all freshwater withdrawn. Public water supply is the next largest user, using approximately 34% of all freshwater withdrawn. By 2025, agricultural use is expected to decline to approximately 40% of total use, but will still be higher than 2000 demands. By 2025, public water supply use is expected to increase to approximately 40% of total use.

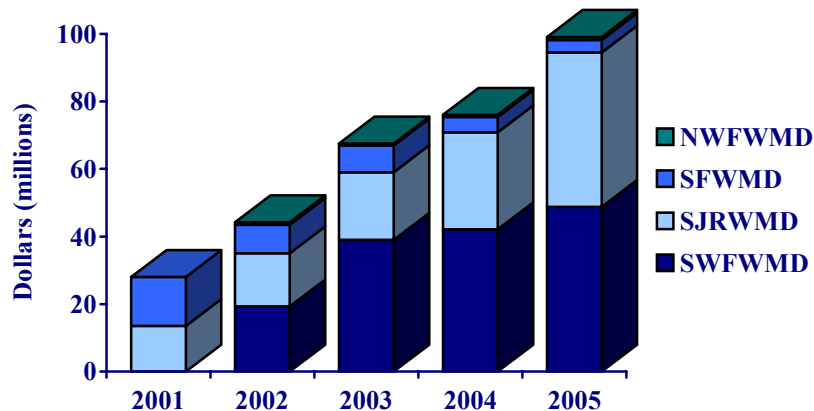
**Figure 2. Statewide Demands for Water User Categories**



## IMPLEMENTING EXISTING PLANS

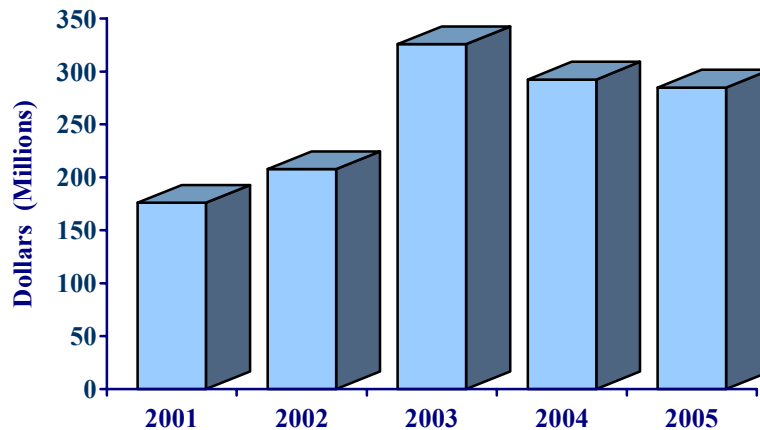
By August 2001, the first set of regional water supply plans were completed by the Northwest Florida, St. Johns River, South Florida, and Southwest Florida Water Management Districts. (The Suwannee River Water Management District determined that supplies were sufficient to meet the future needs.) All of these plans identified sufficient sources of water to meet 2020 demands. Since then, the Districts have been implementing the plans and Figure 3 shows the yearly expenditures for water resource development projects that were identified in the plans. Since the plans were adopted, statewide funding has steadily increased each year.

**Figure 3. WMD funding for Water Resource Development**



In addition to the funding shown in Figure 3, the SFWMD identified, in their regional water supply plan, several Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) projects which will help meet the region's water supply needs. Figure 4 shows the SFWMD funding for these CERP projects that are considered part of the regional water supply plan. Funding for these projects is expected to remain at these levels in the future.

**Figure 4. SFWMD Funding Levels of CERP Water Resource Development Projects**



Each year the Districts have developed a *Five-Year Water Resource Development Work Program*, which describes the implementation of the water resource development portion of the regional water supply plans. The Department reviewed the 2004 work programs and found that all the work programs were consistent with the Districts' regional water supply plans and the expenditures generally appear to be adequate.

The water management districts are now updating their regional water supply plans. The updates will identify water resource development and water supply development projects that will meet the 2025 reasonable-beneficial demands. The updated plans will also address the new statutory requirements enacted by the 2005 Legislature. Table 1 shows the water management districts' schedule for completing the updates to the regional water supply plans.

**Table 1. District Schedule for Updating Regional Water Supply Plans**

| Water Management District | Plan Needed | Anticipated Completion Date |
|---------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------|
| NFWMD                     | Yes         | October 2006                |
| SJRWMD                    | Yes         | February 2006               |
| SWFWMD                    | Yes         | December 2006               |
| SFWMD                     | Yes         | July 2006                   |
| SRWMD                     | No          | n/a                         |

## LEGISLATIVE CHANGES

This year the Florida Legislature passed Senate Bill 444, which made significant changes to Chapter 373. These changes are summarized below.

### REGIONAL WATER SUPPLY PLANNING PROCESS

The provisions enacted in Senate Bill 444 will result in regional water supply plans that are more useful to local water suppliers in developing alternative water supplies. As a result, the updated plans will include more specific information and will identify specific water supply projects that are more than sufficient to meet the existing and future reasonable-beneficial needs while sustaining the environment. Additionally, the plans will be required to identify the need for multijurisdictional approaches to projects. For any areas in which the plan identifies the need to develop alternative supplies, the Districts are required to notify, educate, and involve the water supply entity that is recommended to implement the alternative water supply project. Within a year of plan completion, the local governments are required to tell the Districts which water supply project(s) they intend to implement.

### WATER PROTECTION AND SUSTAINABILITY PROGRAM

Several of the regional water supply plans indicated that the development of traditional sources, such as fresh groundwater, will not be enough to meet the future reasonable-beneficial needs, while sustaining our natural systems. The plans identified several alternative sources that should be developed. Traditionally, it has been the local government's responsibility to pay for water supply development. This year, in order to promote the development of alternative water supplies, the Legislature created the *Water Protection and Sustainability Program* within the Department of Environmental Protection.

The *Water Protection and Sustainability Program* provides funding for the following programs:

- Alternative Water Supply Development
- Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs)
- Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM)
- Disadvantaged Small Community Wastewater Grant Programs

Funding for this program was authorized in Senate Bill 360, which establishes \$100 million in recurring funding for the program from documentary stamp revenues. An additional \$100 million in non-recurring funding was provided for the current fiscal year (FY 2005-2006). During the current fiscal year, \$100 million has been allocated for the development of alternative water supply projects. The funds are distributed through DEP, which will pass on the money to the Water Management Districts according to the allocation shown in Table 2.

In subsequent fiscal years, funding for alternative water supply development will be \$60 million (60% of the recurring revenue source). The money will be distributed to the districts according to the same percentages as in FY 2005 – 2006 (Table 2).

**Table 2. Funding Distributions for Alternative Water Supply through the Water Protection and Sustainability Program**

| <b>Water Management District</b> | <b>Percentage Allocation</b> | <b>Fiscal Year 2005-2006 Funds</b> | <b>Fiscal Year 2006-2007 and Future Years</b> |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| South Florida                    | 30 %                         | \$30 million                       | \$18 million                                  |
| Southwest Florida                | 25 %                         | \$25 million                       | \$15 million                                  |
| St. Johns River                  | 25 %                         | \$25 million                       | \$15 million                                  |
| Suwannee River                   | 10 %                         | \$10 million                       | \$6 million                                   |
| Northwest Florida                | 10 %                         | \$10 million                       | \$6 million                                   |
| <b>Total</b>                     |                              | <b>\$100 million</b>               | <b>\$60 million</b>                           |

The legislature intended that funding for alternative water supply development be shared between the local water providers, users, the Districts and the State. The *Water Protection and Sustainability Program* is intended to supplement existing alternative water supply funding programs of the Districts. To ensure that current funding levels are not reduced, Senate Bill 444 requires that the Districts also provide, to the greatest extent possible, an equivalent amount of money that matches the funding provided through the program. The matching funds can be provided through a combination of direct funding assistance to water suppliers for alternative water supply development and funding of District water resource development projects that support alternative water supply development. The Suwannee River and Northwest Florida Water Management Districts are not required to meet this match, but should try to achieve the match to the greatest extent practicable.

The enclosed insert was created to inform local governments about the new funding program and to aid them in applying for funding assistance.

**CRITERIA FOR FUNDING**

For a project to be eligible for funding under the *Water Protection and Sustainability Program*, the following conditions must be satisfied:

1. The project must meet the statutory definition for “alternative water supplies.”
2. The project must be identified in the regional water supply plan, or the Governing Board may, at its discretion, allocate up to 20% of the funds to projects that are not in the plan, but are consistent with the goals of the plan.
3. The funds must be used for construction purposes only and the project sponsor must

“Alternative water supplies” are defined as,

*“..salt water; brackish surface and groundwater; surface water captured predominately during wet-weather flows; sources made available through the addition of new storage capacity for surface or groundwater, water that has been reclaimed after one or more public supply, municipal, industrial, commercial, or agricultural uses; the downstream augmentation of water bodies with reclaimed water; stormwater; and any other water supply source that is designated as nontraditional for a water supply planning region in the applicable regional water supply plan.” (Section 373.019(1), F.S.)*

provide a minimum of 60% of the capital costs of the project. The Governing Board may partially or fully waive this requirement for financially disadvantaged small local governments as defined in s. 403.885, F.S., and may also elect to use District funds to assist an applicant with the local match requirement.

4. The utility receiving the funds must develop rate structures that will promote water conservation and the use of water from alternative sources.

The Governing Board has the responsibility to select the projects to receive funding considering the factors identified in s. 373.1961(3)(f) and (g), F.S. (see insert.) In addition, the Governing Board may establish additional criteria for selecting projects.

The Southwest Florida and South Florida Water Management Districts have already reviewed and selected projects for this year's funding under the *Water Protection and Sustainability Program*. The Northwest Florida, Suwannee River, and St. Johns River Water Management Districts have not selected projects yet, but have identified projects that they anticipate funding. Table 3 shows the anticipated number of projects and funding amounts for each district.

**Table 3. Water Management District Allocation of FY 2005 - 2006  
Water Protection and Sustainability Program Funds**

| <b>Water Management District</b>                 | <b>Selected Projects</b>                                       | <b>Funding Amounts</b>   |
|--|--|--|
| Southwest Florida                                | 22 projects approved on August 30, 2005                        | \$25 million State Funds<br>\$25 million WMD Funds<br>\$>10.3 million Local Funds*               |
| South Florida                                    | 80 projects approved on October 12, 2005                       | \$30 million State Funds<br>\$30.7 million WMD Funds<br>\$158 million Local Funds                |
| Suwannee River<br>(WMD not required to match)    | Anticipate funding 6 projects by January, 2006                 | Anticipate:<br>\$10 million State Funds<br>\$2.375 million Local Funds                           |
| St. Johns River                                  | Anticipate funding approximately 30 projects by February, 2006 | Anticipate:<br>\$25 million State Funds<br>\$26 million WMD Funds<br>\$≥76.5 million Local Funds |
| Northwest Florida<br>(WMD not required to match) | Anticipate funding 5 projects for FY 05-06 and FY 06-07        | Anticipate:<br>\$10 million State Funds<br>\$2 million WMD Funds<br>\$14.2 million Local Funds   |

\*SWFWMD is still determining the local contribution for three of the selected projects, but the local contribution is expected to be at least 40% of construction costs.



## LINKING GROWTH AND WATER SUPPLY PLANNING

In 2005, the Florida Legislature continued to strengthen the link between land use and water supply planning. Building upon the water management district's regional water supply plan efforts, each local government must now include, in its comprehensive plan's potable water element, a minimum 10-year water supply facility work plan for building all public, private and regional water supply facilities necessary to serve existing and new development within its jurisdiction. These water supply facility work plans must project future water supply demands, identify the water supply sources available to meet those demands and identify all water supply projects that need to be constructed. They will also include the schedules for permitting, constructing and operating all needed public, private, and regional water supply facilities within the local government's jurisdiction. The 10-year water supply facility work plans must be adopted by the local government into their comprehensive plans within 18 months following the approval of an update to an existing regional water supply plan. (However, local governments located within the Wekiva River Study Area must adopt their water supply facility work plan by December 1, 2006.)

The Department of Community Affairs is holding workshops during the fall of 2005 to discuss the new growth management legislation in each regional planning council area. Additional information regarding the new growth management legislation can be found on the DCA Water Supply Planning web page:

(<http://www.dca.state.fl.us/fdcp/dcp/WaterSupplyPlanning/index.cfm>). Additionally, the water management districts must provide technical and financial assistance to local governments and water suppliers to help them identify, plan, design and build alternative water supply projects.

## **CONSERVE FLORIDA**

Legislative changes in 2004 supported the statewide efforts to increase water conservation in public water supply that began with the Water Conservation Initiative in 2001. The new legislation (Section 373.227, F.S.) encourages the use of efficient, effective, and affordable water conservation measures and emphasizes a goal-based, accountable, tailored water conservation program for public water supply utilities. The legislation directs the Department of Environmental Protection to "develop a comprehensive statewide water conservation program for public water supply." This is to be done "in cooperation with the water management districts and other stakeholders." That program, currently under development, has been named *Conserve Florida*. Progress to date includes:

- ◆ The standardized water conservation definitions and performance measures called for in section 373.227(2)(e), F.S., of the statute have been completed.
- ◆ The water conservation Guidance Document called for in section 373.227(2)(h), F.S., is under development. The Guidance Document will be a web-based application that guides a utility through the process of developing a utility profile, setting appropriate conservation goals, and selecting cost-effective Best Management Practices to create a goal-based conservation program tailored to the utility's specific needs. The first version of the complete web-based application will be completed in June 2006.
- ◆ A draft business plan for the water conservation clearinghouse called for in 373.227(2)(f), F.S., has been completed.

## CONCLUSION

The new legislation has expanded upon the regional water supply planning framework established in 1997. As a result of the legislative changes, it is expected that the updated plans will provide more specific information to ensure that future water supply needs are met while sustaining our natural systems. The plans will identify specific projects that will produce more than enough water to meet the future reasonable-beneficial demands. The local governments will become more involved in the water supply planning process than they have been in the past.

Over the years, the districts have dedicated hundreds of millions of dollars in their budgets to help implement water resource development and anticipate providing comparable amounts for the future. This effort will now be further aided by the legislatively funded *Water Protection and Sustainability Program*. The new funding assistance for alternative water supply development and the closer linkages between growth management and water supply should help ensure that the regional water supply plans continue to be successfully implemented.