

## MEMORANDUM

TO: The Honorable Scarlet Frisina, Chairman, Columbia County BOCC  
The Honorable Randy Ogburn, Chairman, Hamilton County BOCC  
The Honorable Wesley Wainwright, Chairman, Suwannee County BOCC

FROM: David Still, Executive Director  
Suwannee River Water Management District  
Hans G. Tanzler III, Executive Director  
St. Johns River Water Management District



DATE: January 20, 2012

RE: Suwannee River Water Management District, St. Johns River Water Management District, and Florida Department of Environmental Protection Interagency Agreement, dated September 13, 2011

The Suwannee River Water Management District (SRWMD), St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD), and Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) entered into an Interagency Agreement (Agreement) on September 13, 2011, to facilitate coordination on management of the water resources of North Florida. The Agreement includes the evaluation of regional declines in the potentiometric surface of the Upper Floridan aquifer, the development of a joint regional groundwater flow model, the sharing of hydrologic, planning and permitting data, the use of consistent minimum flows and levels (MFLs) methodology, and the joint development of MFLs prevention and recovery strategies. Activities and accomplishments for each element of the Agreement through December 1, 2011, are summarized below.

### **National Research Council (NRC) Scope of Work**

A draft scope of work for collection and review of existing relevant scientific literature and data by SRWMD and SJRWMD staff was completed on November 23, 2011. The SRWMD Governing Board approved the scope at its January 10, 2012 meeting. The scope includes preparation of a report that summarizes the salient points related to the decline of the potentiometric surface of the Upper Floridan aquifer and peer review of the SRWMD-SJRWMD report by the NRC. The scope is being sent to the NRC for preparation of a final budget and timeline.

## **North Florida-Southeast Georgia Regional (NFSGR) Groundwater Flow Model**

SRWMD and SJRWMD staff established an open, public process encouraging involvement of a broad range of stakeholders for model development. The process includes a Steering Team that provides high-level policy guidance to a Technical Team developing the model. Stakeholder groups are represented on both teams.

The following have been completed by the Steering and Technical teams:

- Drafted model development charter and work plan
- Clarified relationship between technical team and steering team
- Compiled draft model goals, objectives and modeling approach

SRWMD, SJRWMD, and Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) staff will return their recommendations to the Technical Team in February 2012 on model type (transient or steady-state), goals and objectives, areas of critical concern, and domain.

The NFSGR model will be regional but will facilitate the development of sub-regional models. The model is intended to be used for SRWMD and SJRWMD permitting and planning responsibilities.

### **Minimum Flows and Levels and Prevention/Recovery Strategies**

- Field data collection has been completed for the Lower Santa Fe River MFL. Modeling and data analysis efforts are ongoing.
- Field data collection efforts are scheduled to commence within the next 60 days for the Upper Suwannee River MFL.
- A coordinated and consistent approach to setting MFLs will be considered by SRWMD and SJRWMD.
- Highlights of the Clay-Putnam MFL Prevention/Recovery Strategy Technical Working Group meeting held October 25, 2011:
  - Refined project mission statement
  - Discussed conservation potential estimation tool and proposed pilot study to investigate domestic self-supply use in areas with and without outdoor irrigation
  - SJRWMD staff presented lake augmentation strategies

- Highlights of the Clay-Putnam MFL Prevention/Recovery Strategy Technical Working Group meeting held November 17, 2011:
  - Further refined project mission statement
  - Categorized proposed strategy measures as either conveyances, conservation (residential and agricultural), or 'new water' (constructed wetlands, augmentation, and aquifer recharge)

### **Interstate Coordination**

Highlights of the Florida/Georgia coordination meeting held November 17, 2011:

- Discussed the need for consistent definitions for water use categories between Florida and Georgia
- Georgia and SRWMD will meet to evaluate in-stream flow methods
- Reviewed the NFSGR Groundwater Flow Model development and the need for additional monitoring in Georgia and SRWMD
- Proposed a pilot joint MFL study in the upper Suwannee River in Georgia
- All Georgia water supply plans have been adopted effective November 8, 2011
- The next coordination meeting is being scheduled for March 2012

### **Data Needs and Analysis**

- SJRWMD E-Regulatory system and E-Permitting rollout to SRWMD regulatory staff. Currently familiarizing SRWMD staff with system while programming is underway. The well construction permitting program will be the pilot E-Permitting program at SRWMD.
- To support data collection in SRWMD, a monitor well drilling project by SJRWMD is scheduled to begin in January 2012. It will include approximately 10 new well 'nests' (Floridan aquifer system, intermediate aquifer system / intermediate confining unit, and surficial aquifer system) in Baker, Columbia, and Union counties where aquifer data is sparse and will also include rehabilitation of several SRWMD monitor network wells.
- United States Geological Survey light detection and ranging mapping in Bradford and Union counties for SRWMD and Alachua, Clay, and Putnam counties for SJRWMD scheduled for Fiscal Year 2011-2012. This will provide more accurate ground elevation data for the area.

Pending approval of both district Governing Boards, the SRWMD and SJRWMD will consider revising the Interagency Agreement to include the preparation of a joint regional water supply plan for northeast Florida. We look forward to coordinating the efforts of SRWMD and SJRWMD with those of the counties' working group.

Cc: Lad Daniels, Board Chairman, SJRWMD  
Don Quincey, Board Chairman, SRWMD  
Ann B. Shortelle, Florida Department of Environmental Protection  
David Richardson, Northeast Florida Utility Coordinating Group