

SUWANNEE RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT
MEMORANDUM

TO: Governing Board
FROM: Hugh Thomas, Executive Director
Date: January 13, 2026
RE: Water Shortage Advisory Order Number 26-001

RECOMMENDATION

Approve Water Shortage Advisory Order Number 26-001, Water Shortage Advisory.

BACKGROUND

The District has been monitoring the hydrologic conditions to determine if action is required regarding potential water shortage advisories and/or declarations within the District. As of December 21, 2025, fourteen District counties had an average rainfall deficit of approximately 11.5 inches based on records dating back to 1932. Further, the National Weather Service's Climate Prediction Center for the one-month (January 2026) and three-month (January – March 2026) timeframes call for below normal rainfall.

The District is observing drier than average conditions for surface conditions, groundwater, and surface water Districtwide. As of December 18, 2025, the U. S. Drought Monitor identifies all counties of the District within one of three drought categories: Moderate Drought (D1), Severe Drought (D2), or Extreme Drought (D3). Districtwide mean Upper Floridan aquifer levels remain near the 25th percentile. Additionally, monitoring indicates that the Aucilla, New, Santa Fe, Suwannee, and Withlacoochee rivers have at least one gage with daily flows below the 25th percentile.

Current conditions warrant heightened water conservation awareness throughout the District, and the District encourages all users to reduce water use, defer water intensive activities, and conserve water to the maximum extent possible. In addition, the District is encouraging all users to plan proactively for the possibility of an extended drought.

The issuance of a water shortage advisory would apply to all counties within the District and unincorporated portions of Alachua and Levy counties, consistent with existing memoranda of understanding with neighboring Districts.

Neighboring water management districts are also monitoring drought conditions. Southwest Florida Water Management District issued a Phase I Water Shortage Order for their district as of November 2025.

Because of the aforementioned hydrologic factors, staff recommends that the Governing Board approve Water Shortage Advisory Order Number 26-001.

RLM/ak
Attachment