



PO Box 88, Hahira, GA 31632  
850-290-2350  
[wwalswatershed@gmail.com](mailto:wwalswatershed@gmail.com)  
[www.wwals.net](http://www.wwals.net)  
[Facebook](#) [Instagram](#)  
[YouTube Meetup](#)

WWALS is an IRS 501(c)(3) nonprofit charity est. June 2012.

*WWALS advocates for conservation and stewardship of the surface waters and groundwater of the Suwannee River Basin and Estuary, in south Georgia and north Florida, among them the Withlacoochee, Willacoochee, Alapaha, Little, Santa Fe, and Suwannee River watersheds, through education, awareness, environmental monitoring, and citizen activities.*



February 19, 2026

To: Columbia County Commissioners  
Cc: [bccadmin@columbiacountyfla.com](mailto:bccadmin@columbiacountyfla.com)  
Re: Water First North Florida (WFNF)

Dear Commissioners,

According to your agenda, you are hearing from SRWMD about the Water First North Florida (WFNF) plan to pipe treated wastewater from Jacksonville into wetlands in the Suwannee River Basin to recharge levels and flows in the Santa Fe and Ichetucknee Rivers and their springs.

**Here are some things you may not hear from SRWMD.**

WFNF is a big win for JEA, but a big risk for Suwannee River Basin wetlands, springs, and rivers, as well as drinking water, agriculture, industry, and recreation. The biggest reason for low flows and levels in the Suwannee Basin is Jacksonville water withdrawals. Jacksonville should decrease or eliminate those, for example by seawater desalination.

The main intended WFNF source, the JEA Buckman wastewater plant, is under a Consent Order for exceeding limits on Chronic Whole Effluent Toxicity (WET), Aldrin and Total Cyanide, Fecal Coliform, Enterococci, and Ultraviolet Light Dosage, Total Recoverable Iron, Nickel, Copper, and Total Suspended Solids.

<https://wwals.net/?p=69415>

That is not clean enough now, and there is no reason to believe it will be by the approximately 2036 operational target for WFNF.

Yet JEA cannot continue sending its outflows into the St. Johns River, because SB 64 of 2021 prohibits nonbeneficial surface water discharge after January 2032.

<https://wwals.net/?p=69428>

**Fortunately for JEA, SB 64 has a loophole:** “403.064(17)(a)3.e. The discharge provides direct ecological or public water supply benefits, such as rehydrating wetlands or implementing the requirements of minimum flows and minimum water levels or recovery or prevention strategies for a waterbody.”

This could explain why the [JEA Board on November 18, 2025, approved \\$400 million for NFWF](#). <https://wwals.net/?p=69347>

That’s 40% of the \$1 billion cost SRWMD estimates for WFNF. See above for why JEA might want to fund much of WFNF.

**But the Suwannee Basin is already downstream from Valdosta’s frequently-spilling wastewater system. Why should we also be downstream from Jacksonville?** Why should we believe the much larger Jacksonville wastewater facilities and a 60-mile-plus WFNF pipeline would never break? **PFAS forever chemicals, drugs, and artificial sweeteners are not removed by typical wastewater treatment.** Why should we risk those in our wetlands, concentrating in vegetation and wildlife, and on to humans through hunting and fishing?