



COLUMBIA COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AGENDA ITEM REQUEST FORM

The Board of County Commissioners meets the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month in the Columbia County School Board Administrative Complex Auditorium, 372 West Duval Street, Lake City, Florida 32055. The first meeting of every month is at 9:30AM while the second meeting of every month takes place at 5:30PM. All agenda items are due in the Board's office one week prior to the meeting date.

Today's Date: 2/9/2026 Meeting Date: 2/19/2026

Department: BCC Administration

1. Nature and purpose of agenda item:

Presentation by Troy Roberts, Suwannee River Water Management District about the Water First North Florida project

2. Recommended Motion/Action:

Presentation

3. Fiscal impact on current budget.

This item has no effect on the current budget.

David Kraus

From: Tyler Winburn <Tyler.Winburn@srwmd.org>
Sent: Friday, February 6, 2026 11:27 AM
To: David Kraus
Subject: Water First North Florida

External Sender - From: (Tyler Winburn
<Tyler.Winburn@srwmd.org>)

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Mr. Kraus,

North Florida has reached an important crossroads for protecting the long-term viability of the natural water resources that make our region unique and serve as our primary source of water supply. A comprehensive, sustainable solution is needed to recharge our aquifer, restore our springs and river flows, and ensure our region's sustainable water supply.

Water First North Florida is the most effective and cost-efficient solution to protect our natural water systems and support our long-term water supply.

There has been significant misinformation about Water First North Florida presented as fact – notably that this project utilizes wastewater – and we would like to provide you with accurate information about the project and answer any questions you may have.

We are willing to attend any upcoming commission meetings to discuss Water First North Florida and secure your support as it continues to develop.

Below is a link to the Water First North Florida Website.

[Water First North Florida | Protecting Springs & Rivers Through Aquifer Recharge](#)

Thank you,

Tyler Winburn
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Let us know how we're doing: [Contact Us](#)



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How It Works

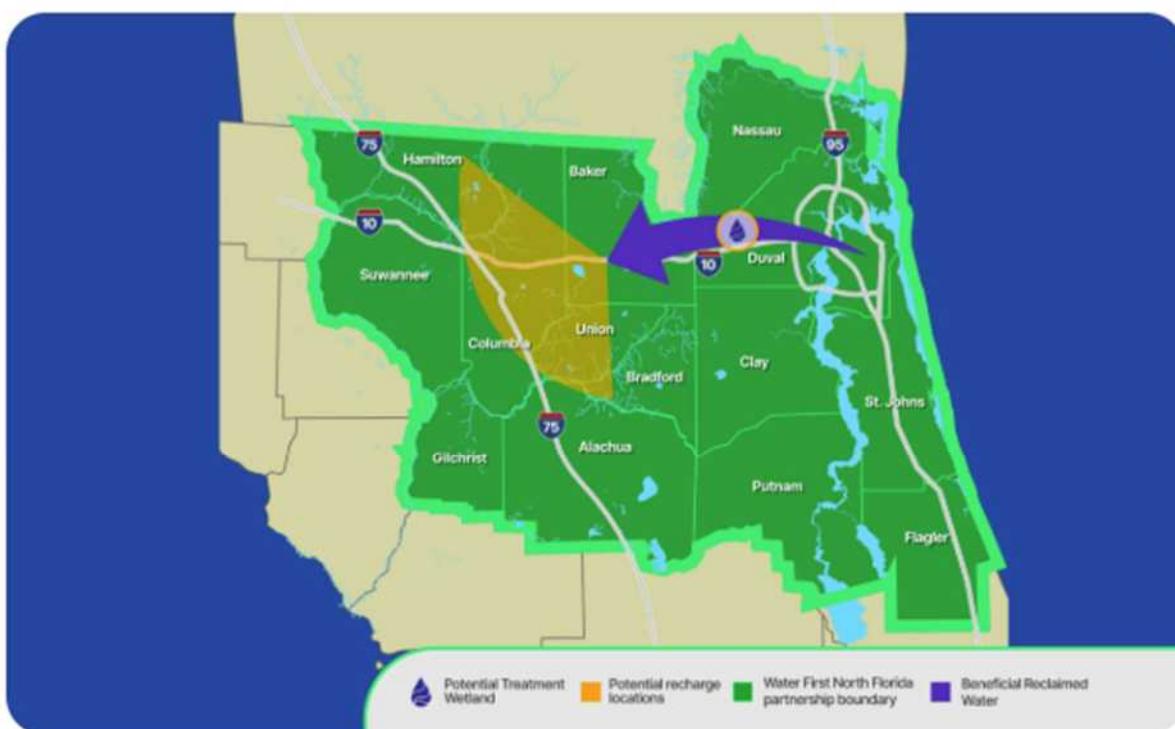


Water First North Florida uses proven technology being successfully used across Florida:

1. Advanced Treatment—Recycled water is highly treated at a water reclamation facility
2. Natural Filtration—Water undergoes additional natural filtering through constructed wetlands
3. Quality Assurance—Meets high water quality standards and is regularly tested and monitored
4. Aquifer Recharge—Clean water replenishes the Floridan Aquifer, restoring natural flows to our springs and rivers

This process eliminates non-beneficial surface water discharge while putting clean water back into the ground in a smart, natural way.

Where will it be located?





Why It's Needed

Florida law requires Minimum Flows & Water Levels (MFLs) to be established to protect water bodies from significant harm due to groundwater pumping. A recovery or prevention strategy is necessary if a water body is not meeting or is projected to not meet an MFL.

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has proposed MFLs for the Lower Santa Fe and Ichetucknee Rivers (LSFIR), which are not being met. DEP is developing a recovery and prevention strategy to meet the MFLs while meeting the growing needs of the region.

Proven Success

Similar projects like the Sweetwater Wetlands Project in Alachua County and the Black Creek Water Resource Development Project in Clay County have successfully improved water quality, restored wetland habitats, and provided community benefits – proving this approach works for North Florida.

This collaborative effort by the St. Johns River Water Management District, Suwannee River Water Management District, and other key stakeholder organizations including the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and local utilities, delivers a comprehensive solution that:



Protects our natural water systems by replenishing the aquifer and restoring flows to our springs and rivers



Ensures reliable water supply for homes, farms, and businesses



Supports economic growth by sustaining key industries like agriculture, tourism, and small businesses



Creates environmental benefits by restoring wetlands that support wildlife habitats and recreational opportunities