



UNION *County*
LAKE BUTLER • WORTHINGTON SPRINGS • RAIFORD • PALESTINE • PROVIDENCE

Union County Board of County Commissioners
15 Northeast 1st Street, Lake Butler, FL 32054 • Phone: 386-496-4241 • Fax: 386-496-4240

Ms. Virginia Johns, Chair

Suwannee River Water Management District

9225 CR 49 Live Oak, Florida 32060

Re: Opposition to the Water First North Florida Project

Dear Ms. Johns:

Union County joins with its fellow members of the Middle and Lower Suwannee River and Withlacoochie River Task Force, as well as the numerous counties, municipalities, and citizen groups who have all expressed concerns about, and opposition to, the proposed Water First North Florida Project. In the apparent rush to implement this project, local governments have gone uninformed and local voices in opposition have been largely ignored until just recently. We are grateful for legislative intervention that has, for the time being, stayed the execution of this project, but we remain alert to the potential for it to re-commence in the future and therefore wish to express our opposition.

It has long been understood by the scientific community that heavy withdrawal of water from the Floridan Aquifer for municipal use in the more heavily-populated northeast Florida region has taxed groundwater resources in north central Florida, resulting in lower flows and levels in local springs and waterways, including the outstanding Florida Waters of the Suwannee and Ichetucknee Rivers, as well as the Santa Fe River, which forms Union County's southern border. Union County's local waters and the adjacent Olustee Creek and New River are also affected by this phenomenon.

The Water First North Florida Project has proposed to remedy this longstanding problem by the transfer of 40 million gallons per day of treated wastewater from the Northeastern region into the Floridan Aquifer at an as-yet undisclosed location in the North Central Florida region. The proposed treatment of this water to avoid contamination of this still largely-pristine resource has been poorly disclosed, beyond the inclusion of biological filtering via an artificial wetland of the type that has been used to treat runoff surface waters elsewhere.

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