

may elect to address its impact to the MFLs by pursuing a smaller, local-scale project or by participating in the Water First North Florida project subject to the availability of offsets. The requirements for evidencing participation in this Regional Project may found in the “Offset Requirements” section.

## **Black Creek Water Resource Development Project**

The Black Creek WRD Project (Project) is located in southwest Clay County. It is one of several projects identified in the 2023 NFRWSP and focuses on recharge to the Upper Floridan aquifer (UFA). The Project is comprised of an intake structure and pump station that pumps up to 10 mgd from the South Fork of Black Creek when the creek flow is above a predetermined low-flow threshold. The water is then pumped through a 17-mile water transmission main before discharging to a treatment system located at Camp Blanding where color and nutrients are removed prior to discharging into Alligator Creek. The water is then eventually recharged to the UFA through Lakes Brooklyn and Geneva. The Project facilities began testing in the first quarter of calendar year 2025 and are expected to be fully operational by the first quarter of calendar year 2026. In addition to meeting the MFLs for waterbodies in the SJRWMD, this project has the potential to increase flows at Lower Santa Fe River at Hwy 441 near High Springs and the Ichetucknee River at Hwy 27 near Hildreth by up to 0.5 cfs and 0.1 cfs, respectively.

Funding for this project is comprised of a variety of sources. First, funding was provided in the St. Johns River and Keystone Heights Lake Region Projects legislative appropriations. The total appropriation was more than \$48 million, of which nearly \$43.4 million was allocated to the Project. Additionally, North Florida utilities are contributing \$19.7 million toward the project through participation agreements that were approved by the SJRWMD Governing Board in July 2021. Those utilities include CCUA, GRU, SJCUD, and JEA. DEP contributed \$13 million towards construction of the project. The remaining balance of project costs is being provided by SJRWMD. In summary, there is approximately \$119 million committed to the project to date.

The Black Creek WRD Project is also being designated as a Regional Project in the 2023 Regional Water Supply Plan First Addendum that is being considered concurrently with this Implementation Strategy. Participating entities in the project will receive offset credit commensurate with their financial participation in the Project. Any remaining offsets will be utilized by SJRWMD to mitigate impacts from existing legal uses in the SJRWMD portion of the Partnership area through 2025.

## **Agricultural Water Conservation**

Agricultural water conservation is being advanced by improved agricultural irrigation efficiency. This includes center pivot and irrigation drain tile retrofits, and other irrigation efficiency practices and technologies. In SRWMD, the District supports the adoption of advanced water-saving technologies such as variable rate irrigation, variable frequency drives (VFDs), and remote-controlled equipment, as well as nutrient management tools like grid soil sampling and side dressing. In SJRWMD, the Tri-County Agricultural Area