

Central Florida Water Initiative Strategic Communications Plan (Draft)

Background

The St. Johns River, South Florida and Southwest Florida water management districts are working with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services and regional utilities to address near- and long-term water supply needs in the central Florida region.

Through the Central Florida Water Initiative (CFWI), the agencies are engaging stakeholders in the development of a Regional Water Supply Plan (RWSP) for the area, which includes Orange, Osceola, Polk, Seminole and southern Lake counties.

The RWSP will:

- Quantify existing and future water needs
- Ensure protection of water resources and related natural systems
- Identify sustainable water supply options

A draft RWSP has been completed and is available for public review and comment. The districts and other CFWI partners developed and implemented a communications plan to inform the public and key stakeholders about the CFWI process and the RWSP.

This strategic communications plan is intended to carry forward the work through 2014. The plan includes communication strategies for continuing to message about the RWSP through the public comment period and plan adoption, the Solutions Planning process and Regulatory Team activities. The plan is a “living” document and will evolve and develop over time.

Communication Goals

- Ensure that stakeholders are kept apprised of the RWSP, the work of the Solutions Planning Team and Regulatory Team, and are provided with timely opportunities to engage in the exchange of information. Stakeholders include the media; government staff and officials; environmental groups; the business community; the regulated public; and the general public.
- Provide consistent and accurate messages about the CFWI process and deliverables.
- Conduct communications that demonstrate public-private collaboration, inclusiveness and transparency.

Key Messages *(section to evolve over time as information becomes available)*

- Continuation of key messages about the draft RWSP, public comment opportunities and process for adoption. (Current groundwater use in region is about 800 mgd; sustainable limit about 850 mgd; need 250 mgd of water supply options by 2035; about 50 mgd of water conservation potential. More than enough project options are identified in the draft RWSP.)
- The Solutions Planning Team will further develop potential options identified in the draft RWSP to meet the water demands including, optimizing the use of existing groundwater, and identifying viable conservation and other management strategies, viable alternative and nontraditional water supplies, areas that may require recovery or resource protection and areas where regulatory and water resource protection strategy consistency may be needed.
- The projects will be prioritized and evaluated for cost/benefit; water resource impacts; potential partnerships and governance options; funding sources; project feasibility and technical requirements. Technical teams have been formed to focus on project-related issues that include minimum flows and levels and water reservations; hydrologic analysis; environmental measures; data, monitoring and investigations; and groundwater availability. In addition, a stakeholder engagement process is in development that will further support the evaluation and prioritization effort.
- By the end of 2014, the Solutions Team will recommend specific projects and develop strategies to provide the additional water needed for users and for resource recovery. The findings will be presented in the CFWI Water Resources Protection and Water Supply Strategies document, which will be incorporated into the RWSP.
- Concurrently in 2014, the Regulatory Team will develop options for consistent rules and regulations for the three water management districts that meet the collaborative process goals and implement the results of the CFWI. Consistent regulations will help ensure equitable and predictable review of consumptive use permit applications among the water management districts.
- While regulations are being reviewed, a strategy is now in place to ensure that the consumptive use permitting actions taken by the water management districts take into account the identified deficit and recognize the process under way to identify solutions. The strategy will ensure coordination, transparency, maximization of water conservation, protection of water resources and recognition by permittees of the potential for changes in the permits once solutions are identified.
- The districts will pay particular attention to the reasonable assurances provided that the conditions for permit issuance will be met; conduct a case-by-case analysis of whether or not a shorter permit duration should be issued; and continue to require applicants to demonstrate water use efficiency and conservation plans.

- Permits issued in this interim period will put the permittee on notice that the permit may be modified to change the amount of water allocated or add requirements where needed to prevent harm to water resources or existing legal users.

Communication Strategies *(section to evolve over time as information becomes available)*

- Maintain and update the CFWI website.
- Assisted by a stakeholder-engagement consultant, conduct one-on-one stakeholder briefings, small group sessions and targeted stakeholder workshops on specific projects, potential partnerships and funding options. Workshops will include elected officials and government staff, business leaders, and civic and environmental organizations. A key focus will be building consensus on project partnerships and project funding sources and mechanisms.
- Conduct general public workshops on the CFWI Water Resources Protection and Water Supply Strategies document, providing multiple comment opportunities.
- Conduct workshops/webinars for regulated public to update them on Regulatory Team activities.
- Provide news releases, interviews, tours and editorial board briefings to the media.
- Provide presentations and briefings to local governments on progress and findings.
- Provide presentations to key business groups.
- Provide briefings to legislators.
- Use social media (Facebook, Twitter, electronic newsletters, emails, etc.) to share CFWI activities and progress.
- Develop talking points, fact sheet(s), map(s) and presentations for outreach support.
- Maintain and update stakeholder interested persons list for communications.

Audiences

This strategic communications plan is intended to reach the following audiences: Elected officials; local government staff; utilities; other water users; media; business community; environmental groups; planning councils; the regulated public and the general public.

Implementation Timeline *(under development)*

The following table reflects the planned communications activities. Activities may change as the process develops. The timing of the activities also may shift to reflect timing of deliverables or special needs. The lead agency indicates who owns primary responsibility for planning and material development for each activity. Implementation of the activities will be conducted jointly under the direction of the communication directors for each agency.

Activity	Timing	Lead Agency	Preparation	Materials
CFWI website	Ongoing	SJRWMD	Continual review for updates	Team information; meeting information
Targeted stakeholder briefings, meetings and workshops	Spring and Summer	SFWMD and Consultant	Procurement; refine scope; detail plan; manage contract	TBD
Public workshops on Strategies document	Fall	SJRWMD	Schedule; locations; promotion	Presentation; other meeting materials
Regulated public workshops/webinars	Spring and Fall	SWFWMD	Identify target list, schedule; promotion	Presentation and other meeting materials
Media communications	Ongoing	SJRWMD	Develop schedule of news releases, interviews, etc.	Speaking points; other support materials
Local government briefings and presentations	Summer	Each District	Identify target list; assign responsibility; refine message	Presentation and speaking points
Presentations to key business groups	Spring and Summer	SWFWMD	Identify target list; assign responsibility; refine message	Presentation and speaking points
Legislative briefings	Summer and Fall	SWFWMD in coordination with DEP and Governor's office	Identify target list; assign responsibility; refine message	Speaking points
Social media	Ongoing	Each district promotes the current message	N/A	N/A
Stakeholder list	Ongoing	Each district maintains and updates their lists and communicates current message	N/A	N/A

Water management district Governing Boards	Ongoing	Each district to update its Board members per individual agency protocols	N/A	N/A
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