

Steinhatchee Venue for SRWMD Governing Board

May 14, 2016



Policy Director Merrillee Malwitz-Jipson Speaks to the Issues Before the Board

The Suwannee River Water Management District Governing Board met on Thursday (yes, not Tuesday) May 12, 2016 in the Steinhatchee Landing Resort Conference Center, Steinhatchee, FL.

OSFR was represented by Policy Director Merrillee Malwitz-Jipson, who made her monthly statement/request to the board for a moratorium on large excessive water use permits in the

district. Ichetucknee Alliance president, John Jopling also addressed the board.

It was revealed in the Update on Legal Activities by counselor Tom Reeves, when addressing the eminent domain issue of Sabal Trail pipeline crossing district lands, that the proposed compressor station will be built on lands on which the district holds an easement. Interestingly, Mr. Reeves said that Sabal Trail did not know the boundaries of their own land nearby, and that the water district had to show them where it is.

Of interest to many in the meeting was the approval of 15 projects awarded by the Regional Initiative Valuing Environmental Resources (RIVER**) Cooperative Funding Program Project Summary 2016, revenue stream comes from "reserves" from the SRWMD budget.

Most thankfully, this project funding is usually and much more efficiently known as the 2016 RIVER Cost-Share Program.

Projects approved which are contained within the Santa Fe River basin are the following: City of Lake City Reclaimed Water System, Well Pump No. 2 Replacement, City of Hampton Water Supply Improvement, Dream Inn WWTP Closure and Connection to Columbia County System, SRWMD RIVER Grant Septic Tank Abatement in High Springs, Starke Fire Hydrant Replacement Project, and Santa Fe Park and Boat Ramp in Gilchrist Co. at the Hwy 47 bridge.

The latter, a project of interest to OSFR, includes replacing the boat ramp, adding docks, a separate canoe launch, and fixing drainage which will reduce sediment and nutrients going into the river. This is the park which volunteers from OSFR helped renovate not long ago. It is one of the most vandalized public areas on the Santa Fe.

And, due to the proximity of the river, any septic tank removals are a welcome improvement to our nutrient loading in the Santa

Fe River corridor. Merrillee reminded the board, during the workshop, to consider the other end of wastewater treatment as these septic tanks are removed and sewer lines installed. The solid wastes after the treatment at the industrial waste facilities need some attention and consideration. We have three bio-solid application sites in the three river corridor of the Suwannee, Santa Fe and Ichetucknee. While these wastes are treated to a DEP level of standard to warrant them as a fertilizer for growing Bahia grass (hay), our reality is that we would like to see these applications sites further away from the high recharge areas of these river basins.



This Group Includes Board Members and Representatives from Columbia County, Celebrating Awards

**side note– I hope the bureaucrat who stretched this horrible acronym to beyond fiddle-string tautness got a good raise.