St. Johns River Water Management District

2018 STRATEGIC PLAN
Fiscal Year 2017–2018 through Fiscal Year 2021–2022
Message from the Chairman

Serving more than 5 million Floridians, the St. Johns River Water Management District is responsible for managing groundwater and surface water resources in all or part of 18 counties in northeast and east-central Florida. It is the mission of the District to protect the natural resources and support Florida’s growth by ensuring the sustainable use of Florida’s water for the benefit of the people of the District and the state. As with previous years, our Governing Board will be continuing to invest in our water resources through our successful cooperative funding program. This $28 million program for the upcoming fiscal year has been vital for our assisting rural communities and smaller counties by helping fund significant projects that will benefit our watershed. This program also provides our largest cities and fragile springsheds with funding to complete projects that will benefit so many residents.

In January 2017, the District took a big step forward by approving the North Florida Regional Water Supply Plan at a joint meeting with the Suwannee River Water Management District. This plan will lead the way forward by providing guidance to the counties within its region. An example of this is the Black Creek Water Resource Development Project, which has received funding from the Legislature, and will divert up to 10 million gallons of water per day (mgd) of flood water to recharge the Floridan Aquifer, and benefit us all. Our commitment to creating sustainable water resources, fund alternative water supply (AWS) projects, and enhance conservation efforts has led to significant progress in creating a sustainable water supply. Working with local stakeholders, the District appropriated funds for 103 cost-share projects to provide 48 mgd through AWS, and another 0.64 mgd through water conservation.

The District is also looking forward to continuing the Eau Gallie dredging project, which will remove 632,000 cubic yards of muck, in addition to completing the C-1 Canal phase 1B project, which will divert nutrient loads away from the Indian River Lagoon. We have also taken steps to rehabilitate Lake Apopka by removing existing nutrient loads through our innovative flow-way system, gizzard shad harvesting, and dredging. In doing so, we intend for underwater aquatic vegetation to flourish, and encourage bass and other sport fish to continue growing in number, which will create a healthier habitat for the public to enjoy. As always, we will continue to lead the way in water policy, preserving the environment, efficiently utilizing the District’s talented workforce, and being good stewards of taxpayers’ money.

Sincerely,

John Miklos
Chairman, St. Johns River Water Management District

GOVERNING BOARD

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About the District

In 1972, the Florida Legislature established five water management districts. Each district has responsibilities in four broad categories: water supply, water quality, natural systems management and flood protection.

Florida’s water management districts are primarily funded with ad valorem taxes. Each district is governed by a Governing Board, whose members are appointed by Florida’s Governor and confirmed by the Florida Senate. Board members serve for four years as regional or at-large representatives. The Governor and Legislature have approval authority over the districts’ budgets and there is general oversight at the state level by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

The St. Johns River Water Management District (District) encompasses all or part of 18 counties in northeast and east-central Florida that includes 119 local governments and a total population of 5.02 million (as of 2017). The District operates from its headquarters in Palatka, and service centers in Palm Bay, Maitland and Jacksonville.

Our Mission:

To protect our natural resources and support Florida’s growth by ensuring the sustainable use of Florida’s water for the benefit of the people of the District and the state.
**Executive Summary**

In April 2013 the Governing Board adopted a strategic plan to replace the District Water Management Plan consistent with Section 373.036(2)(e), Florida Statutes (F.S.). The strategic plan is updated annually, is for a minimum five-year planning horizon and identifies goals, strategic priorities, strategies, success indicators, milestones/deliverables and funding sources for the District. This document is the annual update to the strategic plan and establishes a new five-year period of fiscal year (FY) 2017–2022.

**District Priorities**

The District will focus on the four core missions to complete the functions set out by the Legislature. The Priorities are:

- Water Supply
- Water Quality
- Natural Systems
- Flood Protection

The District looks forward to implementing these priorities and observing the success indicators throughout FY 2017-2018.

**Goals**

The District will execute goals that stay true to original requirements set forth by the Legislature in 1972. Moving forward, the District will focus its efforts on the four core mission areas. These goals and their implementation will facilitate the success of this strategic plan and future decision making.

**Water Supply**

Plan and Implement Water Supply Plans

Develop and Implement Minimum Flows & Levels

Implement Water Conservation Strategies

**Water Quality**

Provide Restoration Efforts to Springs

Provide Restoration Efforts to Coastal Bodies

Provide Restoration Efforts to the St. Johns River

**Natural Systems**

Implement Activities which Conserve or Restore Native Communities

**Flood Protection**

Maintain Federal Flood Control Systems

Maintain Non-Federal Flood Control Systems

**Supporting Activities**

Develop Supporting Activities that Efficiently Assist District Goals
Priority: Water Supply

In accordance with Chapters 163 and 373 of the Florida Statutes, the St. Johns River Water Management District must conduct water supply planning for at least a 20-year planning horizon for those regions where it determines that existing sources of water are not adequate to meet all existing and future reasonable beneficial uses and to sustain the water resources and related natural systems through the planning period. In order to address local resource concerns, the District has developed three water supply planning regions to cover the District, rather than a single districtwide plan. This approach will address local resource concerns expressed by stakeholders, improve planning efficiency and reduce costs. These planning areas consist of the Central Florida Water Initiative (CFWI), the North Florida Regional Water Supply Planning Partnership (NFRWSP), and the Central Springs and East Coast Planning area (CSEC).

The District, together with the Suwannee River Water Management District, approved the water supply plan for the NFRWSP area during a joint board meeting in January 2017. Similarly, in coordination with Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) and South Florida Water Management District, a CFWI WSP was passed by all three boards by November 2015. The districts are now finalizing the development of the 2040 water supply projections for the CFWI 2020 Water Supply Plan. District staff are also continuing stakeholder outreach in advance of development of the water supply plan for the Central Springs East Coast water supply planning region. A resource assessment will be conducted in FY 2017-2018 to determine those geographic areas within the CSEC that may have water supply challenges due to environmental constraints or water quality issues. Staff have also been working collaboratively with the SWFWMD to update the Northern District groundwater flow model that will be used to conduct a water resource assessment in Marion and Lake counties.

An integral element of the water supply planning effort is the development of annual population projections, estimated actual water use estimates and projected water demand for all water use classes through the planning horizon. These efforts are part and parcel to the water supply planning efforts and are developed annually to support the District’s water supply planning efforts. The District produces an Annual Water Use Survey, which includes a breakdown of estimated water use, population, reclaimed water use, and estimated per-capita use. This information is utilized in the five-year water supply plan updates.

Finally, water supply planning is responsible for development of prevention/recovery strategies when a water body does not currently meet or is projected not to meet the adopted MFL for that water body. The District must develop a prevention/recovery strategy that identifies technically sound, science-based solutions to ensure availability of sufficient water for future uses and achieve the MFLs for those impacted water bodies.
**Water Supply**

**Goal: Plan and implement Water Supply Plans**

The District’s water supply planning approach is comprised of three regional plans that will be updated at a minimum of once every five years, or as needed. Plans identify future water supply needs for at least a 20-year planning horizon and list projects and programs to ensure sustainable water supplies for all reasonable beneficial uses. Each plan must be approved by the Governing Board, or Governing Boards if appropriate, and is subject to multiple public hearings. The District is currently assisting local stakeholders in each region with the districtwide cost-share program, as a way to financially support these plans. Within the District’s portion of the Central Florida Water Initiative Planning Region, 25 projects are active that received cost-share funding. These 25 projects are estimated to conserve 0.41 million gallons of water per day (MGD) and develop more than 27 MGD of water through alternative water supplies. In the North Florida Regional Water Supply Planning Region, 43 projects are active that received cost-share funding. These projects are estimated to conserve 0.21 million gallons of water per day (MGD) and develop more than 8 MGD of water through alternative water supplies.

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<tr>
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<th>Deliverables</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Write and implement Regional Water Supply Plans</td>
<td>Write, publish, and implement North Florida WSP</td>
<td>5-year update for WSP initiated</td>
<td>Development of 2040 NFRWSP WSP underway</td>
<td>Approval of 2040 NFWI WSP by SJRWMD and SRWMD</td>
<td>Approval of 2040 NFWI WSP by SJRWMD and SRWMD</td>
<td>5-year update for WSP initiated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Write, publish, and implement Central Springs and East Coast Florida WSP</td>
<td>Development of 2040 CSEC WSP underway</td>
<td>Approval of CSEC WSP by SJRWMD Governing Board</td>
<td>Approval of 2040 update by Governing Boards of SJRWMD, SWFWMD, and SFWMD</td>
<td>5-year update for WSP initiated</td>
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<tr>
<td>Write, publish, and implement Central Florida WSP</td>
<td>Development of 2040 CFWI WSP underway</td>
<td>Continued development of 2040 CFWI WSP</td>
<td>Intake and discharge construction; phase 3 construction</td>
<td>5-year update for WSP initiated</td>
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<td>Complete Black Creek Water Resource Development Project (NFWSP)</td>
<td>Initiate design</td>
<td>Complete design; initiate permitting; acquire land; phase 1</td>
<td>Complete permitting; complete design; phase 2 construction</td>
<td>5-year update for WSP initiated</td>
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**Success Indicator:**

1. Progress toward meeting future water demands in each of the three water supply planning regions
   - **Target:** Implementation of Regional Water Supply Plans and MFL Prevention and Recovery Strategies (P/R)
   - **Measure:** Draft Regional Water Supply Plans and Strategies completed

2. Implement water conservation strategies to improve water use efficiencies
   - **Target:** Public water supply — Decrease in residential per capita water usage
   - **Measure:** Annual residential water usage per capita

   - **Target:** Agricultural water supply — Increase in percentage of agricultural acres utilizing efficient irrigation methods
   - **Measure:** Percent change in acres due to change in irrigation method
**Water Supply**

**Goal: Develop and Implement Minimum Flows and Levels**

Protecting water resources from significant harm due to water withdrawals by establishing necessary and sufficient minimum flows and levels (MFLs), re-evaluating MFLs as needed, and collaboratively developing technically, environmentally and economically feasible strategies to ensure at-risk water bodies achieve their MFLs.

In accordance with Section 373.042(2), *Florida Statutes* (F.S.), SJRWMD proposed a 2017 Minimum Flows and Minimum Levels (MFLs) Priority List and Schedule for establishing MFLs during the planning period 2018–2021. The 2017 Minimum Flows and Minimum Levels (MFLs) Priority List and Schedule was adopted by the Governing Board on November 14, 2017, and submitted to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for review and approval. Updates to the list from the previous year include the addition, removal, and rescheduling of select water bodies to reflect current priorities and to align more closely with scheduled model improvements and water supply planning efforts. The priority list is based on the importance of the waters to the state or region and the existence of potential for significant harm to the water resources or ecology of the state or region.

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<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Deliverables</th>
<th>Milestones</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Set MFLs for springs and water bodies within the District</td>
<td>Conduct evaluation or re-evaluation on springs and water bodies to set MFLs</td>
<td>FY 17–18</td>
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<td>• Lake Butler</td>
<td>• Lake Apopka</td>
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<td>• Lochlossa Lake</td>
<td>• Lake Griffin</td>
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<td>• Lake Brooklyn and Lake Geneva</td>
<td>• Harris Chain of Lakes (Beauclair, Dora, Eustis or Harris)</td>
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<td>• Wekiva River at SR 46 Bridge</td>
<td>• Wekiwa Springs</td>
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<td>• Wekiwa Springs</td>
<td>• Rock Springs</td>
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<td>• Little Wekiva River and associated springs</td>
<td>• Lake Sylvan</td>
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**Success Indicator (MFLs):**

1. MFLs setting and re-evaluation

**Target:** Protect water resources from significant harm due to water withdrawals by establishing necessary and sufficient MFLs and re-evaluating existing MFLs as needed.

**Measure:** Percentage of annual Priority List and Schedule milestones met on schedule.
**Water Supply**

**Goal: Implement Water Conservation Strategies**

Water conservation is the cornerstone of Florida’s water sustainability, whether it be below ground in the Floridan aquifer system or above ground in our rivers, lakes and streams. Today, water conservation continues to be a priority to meet the District’s future water needs. While significant conservation efforts have been implemented in the District, additional conservation is critical. The District currently has many active and ongoing water conservation programs, including outreach efforts, cost share projects, Blue School Grant program and the Florida Water Star program, which is a conservation certification program specifically designed to assist residential and commercial builders. In 2017, the District signed an agreement with the Florida Home Builders Association, to take over administration of the Florida Water Star program statewide.

Another conservation tool the District is using are reservoirs that store non-point source runoff on the landscape of integral parts of the Upper St. Johns River Basin. These projects are intended to protect the coastal estuaries which are affected by the changing salinity and increased nutrients and sediments from runoff. Several water management projects have been built with a partnership between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the District, which has allowed the District to move forward on several additional reservoirs on USACE property. The concept of dispersed water storage on private property is an innovative approach to assist in achieving both water supply and water quality goals. These programs provide storage for flood control, as an alternative source of irrigation, and reduce nutrient loads to important waterbodies. Dispersed water management incentivizes private property owners to retain water on their land rather than let it drain.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reduce per capita water use throughout the District</td>
<td>Implementation of Florida Water Star Program</td>
<td>1. Increase Commercial/institutional applicants</td>
<td>Review and consider revision of criteria</td>
<td>1. Implement revised criteria</td>
<td>Evaluate FWS residential performance in homes less than 5 years old</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outreach and education efforts</td>
<td>2-3 adult audiences per month. Water Conservation booth at three conferences per year</td>
<td>2-3 adult audiences per month. Water Conservation booth at three conferences per year</td>
<td>2-3 adult audiences per month. Water Conservation booth at three conferences per year</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cost Share projects</td>
<td>Find local partners or utilities that are interested</td>
<td>Find local partners or utilities that are interested</td>
<td>Find local partners or utilities that are interested</td>
<td>Find local partners or utilities that are interested</td>
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<tr>
<td>Review and implement a strategy to support dispersed storage programs</td>
<td>Facilitate/fund construction of two pilot projects on private property</td>
<td>Finalize permitting &amp; construction</td>
<td>Monitor water budgets &amp; nutrient reductions</td>
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**Priority: Water Quality**

Assessing and managing programs to protect and restore water quality is a critical component of water resource governance and a primary mission of the District. Water quality is essential to maintaining a high standard of living for our residents and for the health of natural systems. Strategies to achieve these water quality goals include a commitment to comprehensive monitoring of the condition of water resources and, where water quality is impaired, working with our partners to design and implement projects to improve water quality and normal ecosystem functions. A key component of this work is water quality monitoring and reporting. The agency’s Bureau of Water Resource Information currently operates the districtwide water quality monitoring network, with assistance from DEP. Monitoring provides a wealth of information that enables the District to make resource decisions based on accurate and timely information. In addition, residents can use the information to acquire a basic knowledge of groundwater, springs and water bodies in which they have an interest. As a way to coordinate water quality efforts, the District established boundaries for three areas in the District, which include:

1. Springs/Aquifer: Includes springs systems benefitted by the District’s Springs Protection Initiative
2. Coastal Waters: Includes two major systems, the Indian River Lagoon and the Northern Coastal Basins
3. The St. Johns River: Includes the Upper and Lower St. Johns River basins and tributaries
**Water Quality**

**Goal: Provide restoration efforts to Springs / Aquifer**

Springs provide natural, recreational, and economic benefits for Florida’s residents and visitors and ultimately reflect the health of the Floridan aquifer, the source of drinking water for a majority of the District’s population. To ensure the aquifer is protected, the District’s Springs Protection Initiative is focused on generating scientifically sound approaches and projects to reduce or eliminate pollution-related problems. Applied scientific research will improve the tools needed to evaluate potential projects for the most effective nutrient reductions. The District’s collaborative effort with the University of Florida entitled “Collaborative Research Initiative on Sustainability and Protection of Springs,” or CRISPS, which will be concluding this fiscal year, has provided a significantly enhanced scientific foundation to accomplish this mission. A Lastly, in 2016, the Florida Legislature committed to invest a minimum of $50 million per year for springs protection for 20 years.

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<tr>
<td>Continue Springs Protection initiative</td>
<td>Conduct CRISPS research</td>
<td>Complete CRISPS</td>
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<td>Restoration project identification and prioritization</td>
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<td>Fund additional springs specific cost share projects</td>
<td>Fund additional springs specific cost share projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>Springshed Enhancement/Management</td>
<td>Preservation and land acquisition</td>
<td>Evaluate easements and potential acquisitions</td>
<td>Evaluate easements and potential acquisitions</td>
<td>Evaluate easements and potential acquisitions</td>
<td>Evaluate easements and potential acquisitions</td>
<td>Evaluate easements and potential acquisitions</td>
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<td>Develop aquifer recharge projects on public lands</td>
<td>Provide cost-share funding to projects</td>
<td>Provide cost-share funding to projects</td>
<td>Provide cost-share funding to projects</td>
<td>Provide cost-share funding to projects</td>
<td>Provide cost-share funding to projects</td>
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<td>Provide monitoring within springs</td>
<td>Monitor Floridan aquifer and Outstanding Florida Springs</td>
<td>Continuous support</td>
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<td>Monitor priority spring runs</td>
<td>Continuous support</td>
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**Success Indicator (Springs/Aquifer):**

1. **Restoration Project Identification and Prioritization**
   - **Target:** Inform/support project prioritization
   - **Measure:** Number of strategically valuable projects

2. **Actively improve water quality and quantity in major springs via leveraging of District financial resources**
   - **Target:** Continued, aggressive cost-share project improvements in partnership with local governments and utilities
   - **Measure:**
     - Number of project
     - Money invested (District and collectively)
     - Nitrogen reduction achieved
     - Groundwater offset/increased reuse achieved

3. **Preservation/Conservation, Land Acquisition, and Management**
   - **Target:** Acquire full- or partial-fee interest in parcels strategic to springs restoration
   - **Measure:** Acres of land preserved or restored
   - **Recharge achieved**

4. **Monitor**
   - **Target:** Monitor status and trends, projects effectiveness, and integrate data into management decision making
   - **Measure:** Fulfill network and project objectives, complete reports of status, trends and projects
**Water Quality**

**Goal: Provide restoration efforts to Coastal Waters**

The St. Johns River Water Management District collaborates in the management and restoration of two major coastal systems, the Indian River Lagoon and the Northern Coastal Basins (NCB). These coastal waters yield substantial social, economic and ecological benefits, and their health reveals the efficacy of collective management throughout their watersheds because they integrate the influences of stressors delivered by their tributaries. Management focuses on reducing undesirable loads of freshwater, nutrients and toxicants, revitalizing altered habitats, tracking key indicators of ecosystem health, and expanding our understanding of existing and future threats to these valued systems. The District’s commitment to these basins is exemplified by its support for a multi-year applied research effort into the IRL’s recent algal blooms and seagrass losses. Through this research, District staff intends to identify more effective management actions, and by updating the NCB Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) Plan to include a collectively derived list of projects to enhance the basin’s water bodies.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rehabilitate the Indian River Lagoon</td>
<td>Reduce freshwater discharges into IRL</td>
<td>Complete design of C-10 WMA</td>
<td>Construction of C-10 WMA project</td>
<td>Construction of C-10 WMA project</td>
<td>Complete C-10 WMA project</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Complete dispersed water storage infrastructure (i.e. Fellsmere WMA)</td>
<td>Evaluate dispersed water storage</td>
<td>Assess long term viability of dispersed water storage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Treat urban stormwater before it is released into IRL and its tributaries</td>
<td>Fund identified projects via cost-share and other means</td>
<td>Fund identified projects via cost-share and other means</td>
<td>Fund identified projects via cost-share and other means</td>
<td>Fund identified projects via cost-share and other means</td>
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<td>Identify and fund projects through cost share and other means</td>
<td>Identify and fund projects through cost share and other means</td>
<td>Identify and fund projects through cost share and other means</td>
<td>Identify and fund projects through cost share and other means</td>
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<td>Reduce discharge from wastewater treatment plants and onsite sewage disposal</td>
<td>Continue dredging in the Eau Gallie River</td>
<td>Complete dredging operations</td>
<td>Complete dredging project</td>
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<td>Reduce nutrient loads via environmental dredging</td>
<td>Continue reconnection of mosquito impoundments</td>
<td>Continue reconnection of mosquito impoundments</td>
<td>Continue reconnection of mosquito impoundments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Restore and enhance natural state within the IRL</td>
<td>Seek a new grant from NOAA for tidal wetland restoration</td>
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<td>IRL algae bloom investigation</td>
<td>Complete investigation</td>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enhance the Northern Coastal Basin</td>
<td>Update Northern Coastal Basin’s SWIM Plan</td>
<td>Complete and adopt plan</td>
<td>Execute listed projects listed within the cost-share</td>
<td>Execute listed projects listed within the cost-share</td>
<td>Execute listed projects listed within the cost-share</td>
<td>Execute listed projects listed within the cost-share</td>
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**Success Indicator (Coastal Waters):**

1. **Reduce Loads from Watersheds**  
   **Target:** Initiate dispersed water projects  
   **Measure:** Reductions in fresh water, sediments, nitrogen and phosphorus loads

2. **Rehabilitate Natural Processes in Water Bodies**  
   **Target:** Successful implementation of a grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration  
   **Measure:** Acres restored and percent of planned projects completed

3. **Enhance Links to Coastal Wetlands**  
   **Target:** Wetlands connected to coastal waters  
   **Measure:** Number and size of reconnected wetlands

4. **Cope with Uncertainty and Demonstrate Accountability**  
   **Target:** Valued contribution to annual updates on progress to implement Basin Management Action Plans  
   **Measure:** Complete agreed sampling and submit update on schedule, support adaptation of projects in the plans, and demonstrate the value of completed project

The Northern Coastal Basins stretches along the northern Atlantic coast of Florida, extending approximately 125 miles from the St. Marys River and Amelia Island in Nassau County, south through the coastal watersheds of Duval, St. Johns, Flagler and Volusia counties to Ponce de Leon Inlet, near the city of New Smyrna Beach.
Water Quality

Goal: Provide restoration efforts to the St Johns River

The St. Johns River and its tributaries is comprised of the Lower, Middle, and Upper St. Johns River basins, Lake Apopka and the Ocklawaha River Basin. There are ongoing efforts to improve water quality throughout these basins, primarily to address cultural eutrophication. The District is also dedicated to continue funding major water quality projects, such as the C-1 Canal phase 1B, which will be completed in December 2017. These efforts support DEP-approved Basin Management Action Plans to address Total Maximum Daily Loads. Nutrient (phosphorus and nitrogen) load reductions are the focus of many efforts due to their role in stimulating excessive algal growth and bloom frequency and intensity which harm both native communities and human water uses.

In the Middle and Lower basins, water quality of the river is protected and managed through science-based planning and prioritized implementation of nutrient and other pollution reduction projects by leveraging District, local, state, and federal resources. In the Upper Basin, integrated strategies and protocols are implemented that optimize flood control, protect and enhance natural ecosystems, improve water quality, and provide for water supply for the upper St. Johns River. In Lake Apopka and the Ocklawaha River Basin, the ecological, recreational, and economic value of these water bodies is improved by reducing nutrient levels and refining lake level management consistent with flood protection priorities.

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<th>Strategy</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enhance water availability</td>
<td>Complete C-1 Phase 1B project</td>
<td>Construction of C-10 WMA</td>
<td>Construction of C-10 WMA</td>
<td>Construction of C-10 WMA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide load reduction projects to vital tributaries</td>
<td>Construction of Fellsmere WMA</td>
<td>Complete Fellsmere WMA</td>
<td>Identify and fund best management practices (BMP) cost-share projects</td>
<td>Identify and fund best management practices (BMP) cost-share projects</td>
<td>Identify and fund best management practices (BMP) cost-share projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>Operate Tri-County Agriculture Area’s (TCAA) stormwater treatment area</td>
<td>Identify additional TCAA facilities to assist</td>
<td>Identify and fund best management practices (BMP) cost-share projects</td>
<td>Identify and fund best management practices (BMP) cost-share projects</td>
<td>Identify and fund best management practices (BMP) cost-share projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>Siting/design, construction for projects at Crescent Lake and Lake Jesup</td>
<td>Implement and operate projects</td>
<td>Implement and operate projects</td>
<td>Implement and operate projects</td>
<td>Implement and operate projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>Remove existing nutrient loads</td>
<td>Gizzard shad harvesting</td>
<td>Gizzard shad harvesting</td>
<td>Gizzard shad harvesting</td>
<td>Gizzard shad harvesting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support pilot alternative treatment with DEP in Lake Jesup</td>
<td>Treatment alternatives pilot test or Lake Jesup</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provide structural modifications for hydrologic enhancement in upper basin</td>
<td>Investigate regulation schedule revisions for water supply &amp; environmental benefits</td>
<td>Investigate regulation schedule revisions for water supply &amp; environmental benefits</td>
<td>Initiate and evaluate regulation schedule revisions</td>
<td>Initiate and evaluate regulation schedule revisions</td>
<td>Initiate and evaluate regulation schedule revisions</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. Johns Marsh Conservation Area (SJMCA) Restoration</td>
<td>Design phase for structural modifications to restore SJMCA hydrology</td>
<td>Construction of structural modifications to restore SJMCA hydrology</td>
<td>Construction of structural modifications to restore SJMCA hydrology</td>
<td>Evaluate restoration effects on SJMCA hydrology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Strategy</td>
<td>Deliverables</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rehabilitate Lake Apopka</td>
<td>Remove existing nutrient loads</td>
<td>Gizzard shad harvesting</td>
<td>Gizzard shad harvesting</td>
<td>Gizzard shad harvesting</td>
<td>Gizzard shad harvesting</td>
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<td>Operate marsh flow way system</td>
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<td>Operate marsh flow way system</td>
<td>Operate marsh flow way system</td>
<td>Operate marsh flow way system</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wetland restoration and nutrient management</td>
<td>Implement North Shore Marsh habitat</td>
<td>Implement North Shore Marsh habitat</td>
<td>Implement North Shore Marsh habitat</td>
<td>Implement North Shore Marsh habitat</td>
<td>Implement North Shore Marsh habitat</td>
<td>Implement North Shore Marsh habitat</td>
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<td>Evaluate other nutrient sources (i.e. septic tanks)</td>
<td>Support and fund programs</td>
<td>Support and fund programs</td>
<td>Support and fund programs</td>
<td>Support and fund programs</td>
<td>Support and fund programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rehabilitate Ocklawaha River Basin</td>
<td>Provide enhancements to existing projects</td>
<td>Emeralda Marsh; Sunnyhill geotech analysis</td>
<td>Sunnyhill final design; Ocklawaha Prairie and Harris Bayou</td>
<td>Sunnyhill construction; Ocklawaha Prairie and Harris Bayou</td>
<td>Sunnyhill construction; Ocklawaha Prairie and Harris Bayou</td>
<td>Sunnyhill construction; Ocklawaha Prairie and Harris Bayou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide monitoring &amp; diagnostic assessments</td>
<td>Submit status and trend assessment &amp; progress to TMDL/PLRG targets</td>
<td>Continuous support</td>
<td>Continuous support</td>
<td>Continuous support</td>
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<td>Report assessment of wastewater management (wet season discharge to surface water)</td>
<td>Continuous support</td>
<td>Identify and implement projects</td>
<td>Identify and implement projects</td>
<td>Identify and implement projects</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Provide monitoring for algae blooms</td>
<td>Continuous support</td>
<td>Continuous support</td>
<td>Continuous support</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Provide contaminant monitoring on former agricultural areas</td>
<td>Continuous support</td>
<td>Continuous support</td>
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**Success Indicator (St. Johns River):**

1. **Watershed Nutrient Load Reduction**
   - **Target:** Progress toward Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL)/Pollutant Load Reduction Goal (PLRG) targets
   - **Measure:** Reduced nutrient loading to SWIM water bodies

2. **In-Water Body Restoration**
   - **Target:** Improved water quality
   - **Measure:** Improved nutrient concentration and water transparency, fewer algal blooms, increased submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV)

3. **Floodplain Enhancement**
   - **Target:** Improve floodplain functions related to water quality
   - **Measure:** Number of acres of functional floodplain restored

4. **Monitoring**
   - **Target:** Monitor status and trends, projects effectiveness, and integrate data into management decision-making
   - **Measure:** Fulfill network and project objectives, complete reports of status, trends and projects

5. **Diagnostic Assessments**
   - **Target:** Identify areas for cost-effective water quality improvement projects
   - **Measure:** Number of projects developed
Priority: Natural Systems

The District’s stewardship duties toward natural systems are split between lands in which the District has acquired a legal interest (fee or less than fee acquisitions) and the general natural lands and waters within the District. Aquatic natural systems are enhanced through efforts to improve water quality, restore hydrology, plant native species and control invasive exotic species. Most of the natural systems benefits to the lands not owned by the district are derived through effective permitting, water quality improvement projects, minimum flows and minimum levels, and cost share projects. While these efforts all affect and protect natural systems, they are tracked in other areas within this plan.

This section will focus on the stewardship efforts of the District toward the management, protection, and restoration of the lands in which the District has purchased a legal interest. Currently, the District has purchased conservation or flowage easements over 147,000 acres of land. These lands are inspected to ensure the private landowner is complying with the requirements of the easements. While performing the inspections, District staff also assist landowners with land management issues they may encounter like how to control the newest exotic invasive the landowner has encountered. Of the 611,000 acres of land the District has acquired in fee, our staff is responsible for managing 427,000 acres. The remaining 185,000 acres are managed by partner agencies ranging from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Florida Forest Service, and a number of local counties.

Providing the right balance between public access, outdoor recreation, and restoration activities can prove challenging at times, but currently over 98% of District lands are open for recreation. Ongoing management activities, such as prescribed burning and invasive plant control, are key to the protection of the natural state and condition. Restoration activities focus on encouraging natural vegetation through planting and by controlling or removing competitive invasive species. Because conditions change over time, a system of adaptive management system is used. Sound adaptive management requires an effective monitoring, in order to know how past treatments have worked, if new treatments are needed, and when actions should be taken. Managing the lands and restoring them can also include leases for a variety of resource-backed activities through “special use agreements” (SUA). These SUAs partner the public and private sectors to use public lands for a public good; uses include 28 grazing leases on 53,000 acres and eight apiary agreements on 33 different sites.

Lands titled to the governing boards of the districts shall be managed and maintained, to the extent practicable, in such a way as to ensure a balance between public access, general public recreational purposes, and restoration and protection of their natural state and condition.”
- F.S.373.1391

Approximately two-thirds of district land is open for hunting in designated areas and at specified times of the year. This includes the 39,663 acre River Lakes Conservation Area, located in Brevard and Osceola counties (shown above).
**Natural Systems**

**Goal: Implement Activities which Conserve or Restore Native Communities**

Ongoing management activities such as prescribed burning and invasive plant control are key to the protection of the natural state and condition. Restoration activities focus on encouraging natural vegetation through planting and by controlling or removing competitive invasive species. Due to conditions changing over time, a system of adaptive management is used. Sound adaptive management requires an effective monitoring system in order to know if past treatments have worked, if new treatments are needed, and when actions should be taken.

Currently more than 98% of District lands are open for recreation. In an effort to expand access to District lands, the following improvement have been, or are being, made:

- Restoring trails at Lake Apopka to pre-Hurricane Irma conditions;
- Connecting area three at Emeralda Marsh Conservation Area to allow increased access for hunters and fishers directly to and from Lake Griffin;
- Constructing multiple picnic pavilions and replacing inclement weather shelters;
- Installing concrete boat ramps at Emeralda Marsh and Fellsmere Water Management Area;
- Constructing Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-accessible boat ramps at McDonald Canal.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develop Geographic Information System (GIS) Technology and spatially linked abilities</td>
<td>Enhance technology to manage restoration and invasive plant management; focused on Carolina willow and old world climbing fern</td>
<td>1. Develop planning tools and protocol from study</td>
<td>Complete annual survey</td>
<td>Complete annual survey</td>
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<td>Complete annual survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>Survey, identify and prescribe treatment</td>
<td>Develop GIS database structure to facilitate the development of baseline assessments of invasive plant infestations</td>
<td>Complete Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) willow survey pilot project survey</td>
<td>Complete annual survey</td>
<td>Complete annual survey</td>
<td>Complete annual survey</td>
<td>Complete annual survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lake Apopka habitat and access improvements</td>
<td>Facility Improvements to include: boat access, dock improvements, parking, restrooms, and basic public use facilities</td>
<td>Expand habitat restoration to include areas newly released from USFWS</td>
<td>Expand habitat restoration to include areas newly released from USFWS</td>
<td>Expand habitat restoration to include areas newly released from USFWS</td>
<td>Expand habitat restoration to include areas newly released from USFWS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conduct wetland community mapping</td>
<td>Map marsh systems within Upper St. Johns River &amp; Ocklawaha River</td>
<td>Continuous Activity</td>
<td>Continuous Activity</td>
<td>Continuous Activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conduct land management activities</td>
<td>Provide invasive plant management</td>
<td>Continuous Activity</td>
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<td>Provide prescribed burns</td>
<td>Continuous Activity</td>
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<td>Continuous Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide additional access to District Lands</td>
<td>Install additional access points</td>
<td>Install concrete boat ramps at Emeralda Marsh and Fellsmere</td>
<td>Construct picnic pavilions and shelters</td>
<td>Construct picnic pavilions and shelters</td>
<td>Construct picnic pavilions and shelters</td>
<td>Construct picnic pavilions and shelters</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Success Indicators (Natural Systems):**

1. **Improve GIS-based technology capabilities for identifying, managing, and planning restoration and on District lands**
   **Target:** Identify, develop, and implement use of spatially linked techniques for condition assessments, survey and monitoring efforts, data storage, evaluation and planning of restoration, and invasive plant management projects
   **Measure:** Percent complete of identified tasks

2. **Restoration and Invasive Plant Management Survey and Treatment**
   **Target:** Survey Upper St. Johns River Basin and Ocklawaha River Basin for presence and coverage of Carolina willow and old world climbing fern
   **Measure:** Percent of annual survey and treatment acres complete

3. **Management Plans**
   **Target:** Develop plans that detail strategies for Carolina willow management and District invasive plant management activities to improve ecologic and hydrologic conditions
   **Measure:** Annual completion of identified documents, drafts, and plans

4. **Wetland Plant Community Mapping**
   **Target:** Maintain healthy and diverse wetland plant composition
   **Measure:** Reduction in percent cover of invasive species

5. **Adaptive Management of Wetland Restoration Areas**
   **Target:** Improved or restored wetland habitat
   **Measure:** Acres of wetlands restored/planted

6. **Land Management**
   **Target:** Healthy managed ecosystems on District lands
   **Measure:** Percent of District property rated Level 1 or Level 2 (out of 4) on scale of Ecological Condition Class
   - Acres prescribe burns
   - Acres of invasive plants treated

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The District is proud to support Operation Outdoor Freedom with the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACS). Wounded combat veterans are provided with the tools to hunt wild game on District lands.

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Erich Marzolf, Ph.D., tours the Lake Apopka North Shore with Dr. Shortelle and District engineers Bob Naleway and Karl Hankin.
Priority: Flood Protection

Florida has long been susceptible to flooding from natural disasters. Since the 1920s, state lawmakers decided to fund enormous projects to protect homes and families from the dangers of flooding. When the decision was made to form the District in 1972, the Legislature decided one of the four core missions must be flood protection. As of today, the District maintains 65 miles of canals in addition to the 105 miles of federal levees. Working with state, federal, and regional partners, the District has been able to construct structures that not only provide flood protection that will support local communities, but also support the core missions of water supply and water quality.
**Flood Protection**

**Goal: Maintain Federal Flood Control Systems**

The St. Johns River Water Management District is the local sponsor of two federal flood control projects: The Upper St. Johns River Basin Project and the Ocklawaha River Basin portion of the Four River Basins, Florida Project. These projects include approximately 105 miles of levees, 11 major water control structures, and approximately 50 minor water control structures. The District, as the local sponsor, is responsible for operation and maintenance (O&M) of these facilities. As the local sponsor, the District is responsible for acquisition of lands required for O&M of the federal project. In addition to the federal works, the district has projects that provide additional flood protection benefits, such as the Fellsmere Water Management Area and the Harris Bayou water control structure.

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<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operate and maintain the federal flood control project in compliance with USACE guidelines</td>
<td>Perform semi-annual inspections in the 1st and 3rd quarters</td>
<td>Continuous Support</td>
<td>Continuous Support</td>
<td>Continuous Support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Operate flood control structures and maintain water levels according to Water Control Manuals as approved by USACE</td>
<td>Continuous Support</td>
<td>Continuous Support</td>
<td>Continuous Support</td>
<td>Continuous Support</td>
<td>Continuous Support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deliver System-wide Improvement Framework (SWIF) to USACE for approval</td>
<td>Complete SWIF revisions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Complete rehabilitation of major water control structures and levees on schedule</td>
<td></td>
<td>S-96B concrete and gates</td>
<td>S-96C concrete and gates</td>
<td>S-96D concrete and Burrell gates</td>
<td>S-96 concrete and Harris Bayou gates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain &amp; support flood control water level data sites</td>
<td>Inspection and calibration of flood control water level data sites to ensure compliance</td>
<td>Continuous Support</td>
<td>Continuous Support</td>
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A District flood control structure, which is used to maintain a proper flow within the regulated lakes and water bodies.
**Flood Protection**

**Goal: Maintain Non-Federal Flood Control Systems**

The St. Johns River Water Management District is responsible for maintaining nearly 15 miles of non-federal levees, several major/minor water control structures, weirs, navigational locks, and pump stations. In addition to the federal works, the District has projects that provide additional flood protection benefits, such as the Fellsmere Water Management Area and the Harris Bayou water control structure. The District maintains over 65 miles of canals and 1,600 miles of roadways and trails.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operate and maintain non-federal flood protection projects in compliance with internal O&amp;M guidance.</td>
<td>Develop, document and implement inspection, O&amp;M procedures. To include slope stability, erosion, depressions/cutting, encroachments, vegetation and animal control</td>
<td>Continuous Support</td>
<td>Continuous Support</td>
<td>Continuous Support</td>
<td>Continuous Support</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintain and support flood control water level data sites.</td>
<td>Inspection and calibration of flood control water level data sites in compliance</td>
<td>Continuous Support</td>
<td>Continuous Support</td>
<td>Continuous Support</td>
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</table>

**Success Indicator (Flood Protection):**

1. Operate and Maintain the Federal Flood Control Project in Compliance with USACE Guidelines
   
   **Target:** Resolve all deficiencies identified by USACE within five years of SWIF approval
   
   **Measure:** Budget, schedule, and complete deficiency resolution by addressing animal burrow and encroachment deficiencies

   **Target:** Perform semi-annual inspections in the 1st and 3rd quarters
   
   **Measure:** Inspections complete on time, with reports finalized and submitted to USACE by the following quarter
   
   **Measure:** Deficiencies resolved prior to next inspection or programmed into work plan past the following quarter as approved by the O&M Bureau Chief

   **Target:** Complete rehabilitation of major water control structures and levees on schedule.
   
   **Measure:** Budget, schedule, and complete water control structure according to the maintenance cycle analysis of concrete and steel
   
   **Measure:** Budget, schedule, and complete levee rehabilitation according to levee capping/repair work plan

2. Operate and Maintain Non-federal Flood Protection Projects in Compliance with Internal O&M Guidance
   
   **Target:** Develop, document, and implement inspection and maintenance procedures
   
   **Measure:** All existing procedure documents are housed in digital format on District computer servers
   
   **Measure:** Inspections completed semi-annually (first and third quarter) with reports finalized by the following quarter

3. Maintain and Support Flood Control Water Level Data Sites
   
   **Target:** Inspection and calibration and maintenance of flood control water level data sites in compliance
   
   **Measure:** Priority sites are maintained and repaired within the time frames agreed upon by O&M and WRI.
   
   **Measure:** Complete year two of three calibration study
**Priority: Supporting Activities**

The District is dedicated to providing excellent service in support of our core missions; however, the District recognizes that it cannot support each mission without reaching out to local stakeholders and businesses within the District. In accordance with Chapter 373, *Florida Statutes*, the Governing Board may participate and cooperate with county governments, municipalities, water supply authorities, and other interested public and private entities in water management programs and projects of mutual benefit. These programs and projects must be consistent with the District’s statutory authority and will ensure proper development, utilization, and conservation of water resources and ecology within the jurisdictional boundaries of the District. The District currently procures three cost-share programs on an annual basis to support the core mission areas:

1) The Districtwide program;
2) The Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI) Communities / Innovative Projects program; and
3) The Districtwide Agricultural program.

In 2017, the District’s Governing Board approved approximately $21 million in cost-share funding for the FY 2017–2018 districtwide cost-share program. This funding supports to 43 projects, estimated to conserve 0.6 million gallons of water per day (mgd), develop more than 18 mgd of water through alternative water supplies, and reduce nitrogen and phosphorus loadings to our waterways by 204,585 and 98,630 pounds a year, respectively. Below is the approved long term funding approved by the Governing Board for the next five years:
Supporting Activities

Goal: Develop and Implement Supporting Activities that Efficiently Assist District Goals

The adopted budget for FY 2017-2018 anticipates that up to $25 million may be expended (reimbursed) on cost-share projects that benefit one or more of the District’s four core missions, which include alternative water supply and water conservation projects, nutrient-load reduction in support of water quality, natural systems restoration, and flood protection.

The Districtwide Agricultural Cost-Share program was developed in 2015 as a method to assist farmers in implementing best management practices on their operations that may otherwise be cost prohibitive. As a result, 20 projects were funded resulting in water conservation and nutrient loading reductions. This program is expected to continue funding projects to help meet TMDLs and water conservation goals. This upcoming fiscal year, the Governing Board has authorized committing $1.5 million for the districtwide program and $1.5 million for the Tri-County Agricultural Area cooperative, which consists of Flagler, Putnam, and St. Johns counties. The goal is to implement projects that contribute to improving the health of the St. Johns River while assisting the agricultural community.

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<th>FY 21–22</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>**Implement Districtwide Cost</td>
<td>Final construction documents and project completion Reports</td>
<td>Complete funding of projects from FY 15</td>
<td>Complete funding of projects from FY 16</td>
<td>Complete funding of projects from FY 17</td>
<td>Complete funding of projects from FY 18</td>
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<tr>
<td>-Share Program**</td>
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<tr>
<td>**Implement cost share spending</td>
<td>Implement cost share spending plan in accordance with Governing Board</td>
<td>Solicit applications, rank submittals and award projects</td>
<td>Solicit applications, rank submittals and award projects</td>
<td>Solicit applications, rank submittals and award projects</td>
<td>Solicit applications, rank submittals and award projects</td>
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<td>plan in accordance with</td>
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<td>Governing Board approval</td>
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<tr>
<td>**Implement Districtwide</td>
<td>Implement agricultural spending plan in accordance with Governing Board</td>
<td>Solicit applications, rank submittals and award projects</td>
<td>Solicit applications, rank submittals and award projects</td>
<td>Solicit applications, rank submittals and award projects</td>
<td>Solicit applications, rank submittals and award projects</td>
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<td>Agricultural Cost-Share Program</td>
<td>Governing Board approval</td>
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<tr>
<td>**Implement REDI Cost Share</td>
<td>Implement cost share spending plan in accordance with Governing Board</td>
<td>Solicit applications, rank submittals and award projects</td>
<td>Solicit applications, rank submittals and award projects</td>
<td>Solicit applications, rank submittals and award projects</td>
<td>Solicit applications, rank submittals and award projects</td>
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<td>Program**</td>
<td>Governing Board approval</td>
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**Success Indicator (Supporting Activities):**

1. Projects that Benefit the District’s Core Missions are Awarded Cost-Share Funding and Successfully Implemented
   **Target:** Quarterly reports to the Board
   **Measure:** Projects are completed in a timely manner and the deliverables document the project’s success

2. Districtwide Agricultural Cost-Share
   **Target:** Award funding to projects resulting in water conservation and nutrient loading reduction
   **Measure:** Percent allocated funds expended annually

3. Outreach to Agricultural Community
   **Target:** Present to commodity groups as requested
   **Measure:** Number of presentations completed
The Strategic Plan Annual Work Plan Report for FY 2016–2017, a “report card” of how well the District achieved its FY 2016–2017 milestones/deliverables and success indicators, will be available in the Consolidated Annual Report. You can find it at: