

## Introduction

The St. Johns River Water Management District continually works to ensure the sustainable use and protection of water resources for the benefit of the environment and the residents of northeast and east-central Florida. Aligning the District with the focus and priorities of Florida’s governor, Legislature and Department of Environmental Protection has resulted in heightened efficiencies that are protecting water resources, reducing taxpayers’ costs and providing enhanced service to the public.

In preparing its fiscal year (FY) 2011–2012 budget, the District considered its core missions, priorities and organizational structure to identify ways to streamline operations and ensure environmental protection.

A key District goal is to enhance the agency’s responsiveness to the needs of the people in its 18-county area. To be responsive and effective, the District will continue to adapt and evolve, and will continue to actively seek and encourage open dialogue with the public it serves.

Through such dialogue, the District has developed aggressive initiatives to streamline the permitting process — such as simplified forms and enhanced technical assistance. Such actions will save the public and the District time and money, while continuing to protect water resources.



A purple gallinule treads carefully among shoreline vegetation.

## **How our work is funded**

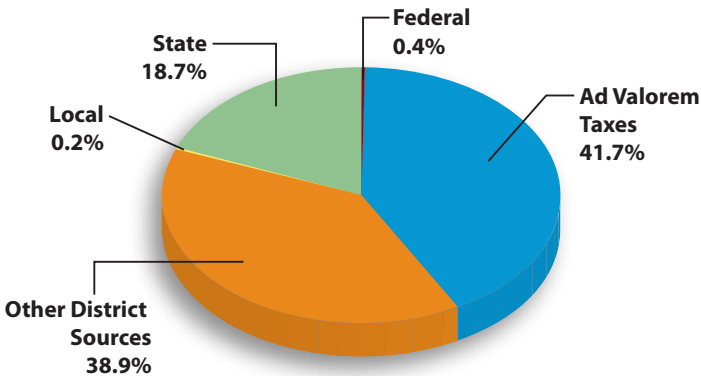
As an agency of the state of Florida, the District’s work is funded through a combination of property taxes, fees, grants and some funding from local, state and federal sources.

In keeping with provisions provided by the passage of Senate Bill 2142 in the 2011 Florida legislative session, the District’s Governing Board set the millage rate at 0.3313 for the 2011–2012 fiscal year (Oct. 1, 2011, through Sept. 30, 2012) to raise a maximum of \$85.33 million in property tax revenue. This represents a 23.02 percent reduction from FY 2010–2011.

Under the 0.3313 millage rate — 33.13 cents for every \$1,000 of assessed property value — the owner of a \$200,000 house with a \$50,000 homestead exemption will pay \$49.69 in property taxes to the District.

The FY 2011–2012 total budget is \$204.68 million, which is about \$40.13 million — or 16.4 percent — less than the FY 2010–2011 budget. In addition

### **Fiscal Year 2011–2012 Revenue Funding Sources**



to decreased property tax revenue, other decreases in the budget are attributed to declines in local, state and federal funding, resulting in reduced expenditures in most District programs.

The District began in January 2011 evaluating all aspects of its operations, such as travel, capital and cost-share projects, contractual services and staffing, to identify opportunities to reduce costs for the remainder of FY 2010–2011 and in preparation for FY 2011–2012.

This work followed about five years of ongoing efforts to reduce budget expenditures as the state experienced declines in assessed property valuations. While the District’s ad valorem rate remained constant at 0.4158 mills from FY 2007–2008 through FY 2010–2011, property tax revenues declined by 23.4 percent during that same period. The 0.4158 millage rate generated \$144.7 million in FY 2007–2008 and that same millage rate generated \$110.9 million in FY 2010–2011.

**What a typical District homeowner can expect to pay in 2012 for the water management district portion of their tax bill at 0.3313 mills**



Assessed value.....	\$50,000
Homestead exemption —	25,000
<b>Taxable value.....</b>	<b>\$25,000</b>
<b>Tax at 0.3313 .....</b>	<b>\$8.28</b>

Assessed value.....	\$200,000
Homestead exemption —	50,000
<b>Taxable value.....</b>	<b>\$150,000</b>
<b>Tax at 0.3313 .....</b>	<b>\$49.69</b>

Assessed value.....	\$500,000
Homestead exemption —	50,000
<b>Taxable value.....</b>	<b>\$450,000</b>
<b>Tax at 0.3313 ....</b>	<b>\$149.09</b>

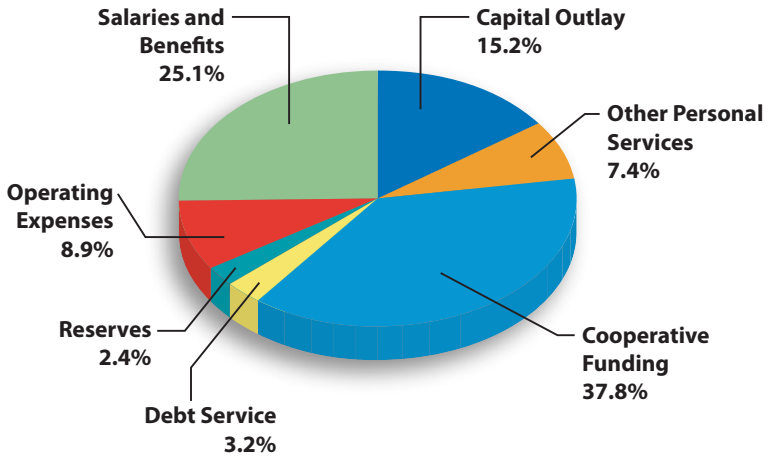


The District's Governing Board holds monthly public meetings.

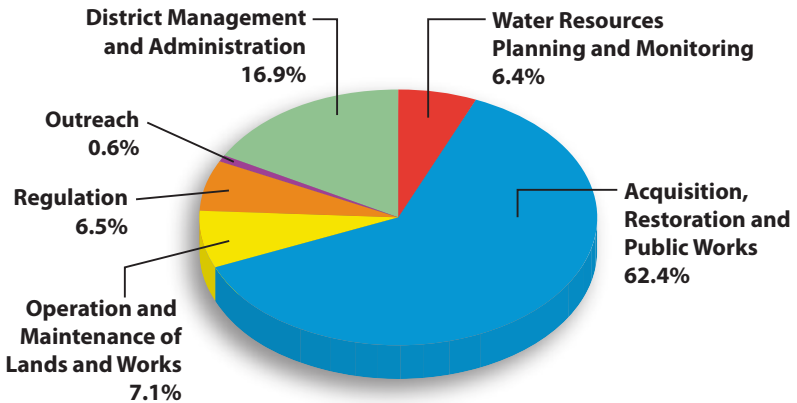
To meet the challenges of protecting the region's water resources with reduced funding, the District has taken aggressive steps for FY 2011–2012. Budget preparation has focused on:

- Ensuring that staff are properly aligned with core missions, making reassignments, staff reductions and other adjustments. A reduction in workforce resulted in eliminating 196 full-time equivalent positions (126 District personnel and 70 contracted/contingent workers).
- Ensuring that contractual services are properly aligned with core missions, which led to reductions in operation and maintenance expenses, including: computer technology; media production; engineering; vegetation management; well capping, plugging and construction; data collection, scientific research and analysis; travel; and staff training.
- Reducing and eliminating cooperative funding, including alternative water supply, reuse initiatives and stormwater projects.
- Reducing operating expenses, and reorganizing and refocusing program areas.

### Fiscal Year 2011–2012 Expenditures by Spending Category



### Fiscal Year 2011–2012 Expenditures by Program



### Budget priorities

Through various cost-cutting measures and the utilization of assigned fund balances, the FY 2011–2012 budget is in balance and all expenditures are fully supported with reduced revenues. To achieve water resource protection, the FY 2011–2012 budget focuses on core missions and projects with the highest priorities.

#### Core mission responsibilities include:

- **Water supply** — To implement a regional strategy to provide sufficient water for users and the environment
- **Flood protection** — To prevent increases in flooding and operate and maintain the District’s regional flood control projects
- **Water quality and natural systems protection and improvement** — To protect water quality and natural systems of the District and improve those resources within Surface Water Improvement and Management basins
- **Organizational effectiveness** — To provide for organizational structure and tools that result in and reward continuous improvement and enhanced service delivery

#### Major project areas include:

- Restoration projects that improve water quality and develop alternative water supplies
- Water supply planning, including water conservation, and minimum flows and levels prevention and recovery strategy development
- Monitoring water quality and quantity trends to ensure that appropriate data continues to exist on which to make sound scientific decisions
- Land management activities, such as prescribed burns; control of invasive exotic plants; and operation and maintenance of levees, locks and other structures
- Streamlining regulatory programs



A District engineer reviews a project area map.

## Restoration

This portion of the budget includes maintaining commitments to completing major District projects to improve water quality, some of which may be developed as alternative water supplies.

### Among the projects are:

**Fellsmere Water Management Area** — The project involves the construction of a new 10,000-acre reservoir to treat agricultural discharges prior to entering the St. Johns Water Management Area, provide water supply potential and improve wildlife habitat. This is one of the final components of the Upper St. Johns River Basin project, restoring more than 150,000 acres at the headwaters of the St. Johns River.

**Canal 1/10 redirection** — The project will divert stormwater runoff from Palm Bay to the C-1 Retention Area where it will be pumped through the Sawgrass Lake Water Management Area for water quality improvement prior to discharging it to the St. Johns River. This project benefits the Indian River



**Top:** A culvert installation and other construction enhance the water flow among water treatment cells at the Lake Apopka North Shore Restoration Area.

**Bottom:** As part of work to monitor water quality, measurements are taken of the spring's discharge at Salt Springs.

Lagoon and upper St. Johns River project areas by treating storm water before it reaches downstream waterways.

**Lake Apopka north shore restoration** — The project includes long-term restoration of the former farmlands along the north shore of Lake Apopka, including shallow flooding to be consistent with the environmental conditions on the site. Infrastructure such as levees, water control structures and other nutrient control efforts will be needed as part of the restoration work.

### **Water supply**

To meet current and future water use demands, the District has undertaken and continues numerous water supply development and water conservation projects, many in cooperation with local governments, utilities and other entities.

#### **Among such water supply projects are:**

**St. Johns River Taylor Creek** — This major alternative water supply project, with the cooperation of several utilities, involves the expansion of the existing Taylor Creek Reservoir water supply system, which is owned and operated by the city of Cocoa. Identified in the District Water Supply Plan 2004 Interim Update, components include facilities expansion, treated water for aquifer storage and recovery or direct aquifer recharge, and new and upgraded pumping and transmission systems.

**Seminole County Yankee Lake** — This project involves the construction of a plant to treat water from the St. Johns River to remove color and total suspended solids. The plant (near Lake Monroe) will provide water treated to meet public access reclaimed water standards to supplement existing reuse supplies. Seminole County is currently participating with the cities of Sanford and Lake Mary to receive alternative water supplies to augment its reclaimed water supply.

**Water Conservation and Demand Management cooperative funding projects** — With utilities, businesses and homeowners' associations, the District is investigating new methods of conserving water and reducing water demands to stretch existing supplies. Projects include demonstrating reliability and performance that can be achieved with soil moisture sensors in residential landscape applications; linking integrated billing records, geographic information



The C-54 structure is one of several water control structures in the Upper St. Johns River Basin that stores and controls storm water.

system (GIS) mapping software and a computerized maintenance management system to plan, monitor, track and implement water conservation measures; and rainwater collection systems to supplement irrigation for retail garden centers.

**Minimum flows and levels (MFLs) prevention and recovery strategies development** — The District is facilitating a process to develop prevention and recovery strategies for water bodies within the District where MFLs are currently not being met or are projected not to be met within 20 years. The District and stakeholders are working collaboratively to develop long-term comprehensive strategies to achieve the MFLs. District water supply planning during the past few years has included further, detailed evaluation of adopted MFLs. To organize the process, the water bodies have been grouped into six strategy development areas.

## **Water quality monitoring**

The District collects and analyzes information to use as a foundation on which to make informed decisions based on sound science in managing Florida's water resources. Each year, more than 16 million measurements are collected, verified, processed and stored, such as rainfall amounts, well levels, and surface water levels and fluctuations. In addition to District uses for its projects, the data are shared with local governments and other entities that use the data, for example, to designate areas to protect drinking water supplies and land use planning and development.

### **Some of the projects included in this section of the budget are:**

**Groundwater resources assessment** — The resource assessment group performs detailed hydrologic assessments, designs and evaluates monitoring networks, and conducts interpretive investigations in support of water supply management, water use regulation, and minimum flows and levels programs. This is done through construction and maintenance of monitoring wells, contractual drilling services, aquifer performance testing and related hydrologic testing, and providing geophysical well logging services.

**Rough fish harvesting and alum treatment** — As part of multifaceted waterway cleanup efforts, the District is reducing the “rough” fish population in several central Florida area lakes. The removal of gizzard shad reduces the availability of nutrients that feed the growth of already overly productive algae in some water bodies. Likewise, liquid alum is used in nutrient-rich water bodies such as Lake Apopka to reduce the amount of phosphorus in discharge water to minimize nutrient loading.

**Flood control structure rehabilitation** — This budget area focuses on rehabilitation of flood control structures in the Upper St. Johns River Basin and Ocklawaha River Basin. The District strives to use natural measures to control flooding, such as by storing rainwater in stormwater systems and treatment areas. In a few cases, some structures are needed to control water movement due to development that occurred prior to stormwater rules. For example, the upper basin project is a semistructural system of water management areas, marsh conservation areas, and marsh restoration areas covering more than 150,000 acres in Indian River and Brevard counties.



A District land manager uses a drip torch to set a prescribed fire, which burns off excess undergrowth that could fuel wildfires.

**Geographic information system (GIS) imagery** — Large numbers of users across many District programs and projects use GIS technology as a tool for mapping, analysis and decision making. In addition to District uses, the information is provided on the agency’s website to benefit local governments and other entities that use the information in various projects.

### **Land management activities**

This area of the budget covers prescribed burns; control of invasive exotic plants; and operation and maintenance of levees, locks and other structures. The District has purchased land to preserve, restore, enhance or develop water resources to provide flood protection, naturally filter pollutants from stormwater runoff, prevent erosion, and protect plant and animal habitat.

Planned activities for FY 2011–2012 include reducing shrub growth to restore former herbaceous marshes, accelerating lygodium control in the Upper St. Johns River Basin, maximizing prescribed burning and wildfire readiness and control of invasive species infestations.



District staff spray herbicides to control invasive aquatic plants.

In the past, the District relied on the state’s Water Management Lands Trust Fund (WMLTF) to fund the majority of its land management activities. The state WMLTF has provided no new funding since FY 2008–2009. Since FY 2009–2010, the District has reallocated some fund balance and ad valorem revenues to fund land management and invasive plant control activities.

### Permitting

The District is retooling its permitting programs — Consumptive Use Permits (CUP) and Environmental Resource Permits (ERP) — to more proactively provide assistance to the public to save them time and money, to be more efficient, and to strengthen communication between the District and permit applicants. The District is aggressively streamlining its operations and has reduced its budget while continuing to protect valuable water resources.

#### **The changes already made or proposed include:**

- Increased proactive communications with applicants, targeted at reducing paperwork and letters requesting additional information.

## Budget in Brief

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- Increased use of electronic permitting to save applicants and consultants money and to reduce District staff processing time.
- Establishing pre-application meetings for potential applicants so staff can answer questions and provide technical support and materials prior to application submittal.
- Enhanced outreach with additional and simplified web resources and workshops.
- Increased cross-training for staff to enhance their understanding of all aspects of the permitting process and better prepare them to make decisions.
- Reduced and simplified CUP water use categories (from 23 to seven).
- Expanded CUP modifications that can be made through a letter, rather than through a new application.
- Reduced CUP reporting requirements for small-volume water users.

## Looking ahead

The District developed an FY 2011–2012 budget that utilizes available resources to meet its core missions. The District will continue to evaluate the capacity of available revenues to fund priorities and statutory requirements, which will become even more critical in future fiscal years when higher growth rates are projected.



**Top:** Millions of hydrologic measurements are collected, verified, processed and stored each year by District staff, including testing of water samples in its on-site laboratory.

**Bottom:** A District staff member, left, visits a farm in Hastings to work with a farmer who is using an enhanced water pump controller as a best management practice for water conservation.

### Facts about the District

- A nine-member Governing Board sets the policies for District operation. Members, who serve without pay, are appointed by Florida's governor to four-year terms, confirmed by the Senate.
- The Board meets monthly at District Headquarters in Palatka. Meetings are open to the public.
- An executive director administers the Board's policies on a daily basis.
- Within its 18-county service area, the District serves 101 municipalities.
- Counties entirely or partially within the St. Johns River Water Management District are: Alachua, Baker, Bradford, Brevard, Clay, Duval, Flagler, Indian River, Lake, Marion, Nassau, Okeechobee, Orange, Osceola, Putnam, St. Johns, Seminole and Volusia.
- The District covers 12,283 square miles, which encompasses 7.8 million acres, or 23 percent of Florida.
- Approximately 4.7 million people (25 percent of the state's population) live within the District's boundaries.
- The District operates and maintains more than 100 major and minor water control structures, including 11 spillways, three navigational locks, approximately 300 miles of levees, and 30 pump stations.
- The District's namesake is the longest river entirely in Florida — the northerly flowing 310-mile-long St. Johns River.
- Other significant waterways in the District are: the St. Marys River, which serves as the northern boundary between Florida and Georgia; and the Nassau, Ocklawaha, Matanzas, Halifax and Indian rivers. The District contains 96 springs and more than 1,400 lakes.