



Water Supply and the St. Johns River: Florida's insatiable thirst threatens the health of our Rivers.

The St. Johns River and Ocklawaha River (a major tributary of the St. Johns) are being considered for major withdrawal projects that would provide water for projected growth in Orlando and Central Florida.

According to the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD), the traditional source of water, the Floridan aquifer, will not be able to meet future needs for this region beyond 2013. Communities and utilities have been instructed to seek alternative water supply (AWS) sources, such as surface water and desalinization.

St. Johns Riverkeeper Concerns:

- The SJRWMD is proposing to allow the withdrawal of over **260 million gallons a day (MGD)** from the St. Johns and Ocklawaha. The withdrawals will worsen existing pollution problems, increase salinity levels, and adversely impact the fisheries, wildlife and submerged vegetation in and along these waterways.
- Recently, a water withdrawal project was introduced for Central Florida that includes **five withdrawal sites** on the St. Johns and Ocklawaha Rivers and features a **500-mile pipeline**, the majority of which runs north to south.
- Most withdrawals will require treatment by reverse osmosis, or RO. The byproduct, or pollutant, that results from RO is called "concentrate". The concentrate has a high mineral and/or salt content and would most likely be discharged back into the river.
- One of the largest proposed water withdrawal projects, Yankee Lake in Seminole County, is located just upstream of the Wekiva Aquatic Preserve. This facility could eventually withdraw **up to 55 MGD** from the St. Johns and discharge its RO concentrate back into the river.
- Due to pressure from the public, the SJRWMD is evaluating the cumulative impacts of surface water withdrawals from the river in Central Florida. Despite the fact that the assessment will not be completed until the fall of 2010, the District staff has recommended the approval of the Yankee Lake permit.
- The proposed withdrawals could eventually cost more than \$4 billion, yet would only satisfy the additional water needs of Central Florida for approximately 10 years.
- **Proven and cost-effective water conservation measures have not been aggressively pursued as an alternative to avoid or delay the need for costly surface water sources.**
- Despite the looming water shortages, SJRWMD continues to recommend the issuance of permits that will further deplete our aquifer. District staff recommended the approval of a permit from California-based Niagara Bottling to withdraw **up 484,000 gallons of groundwater a day** from the aquifer for its water bottling facility in Lake County.
- An Orlando development, Eagle Creek, wastes almost 80 million gallons of treated drinking water each year because of infrastructure overdevelopment and lack of demand.

For more information, visit www.stjohnsriverkeeper.org.