

UCSWD Board Meeting October 27, 2015

Present:

Pete Cameron - Chair

Buddy Finley - Vice Chair

Duke Emerson - Treasurer

Laurel Schaafsma - Secretary

Wiley Feagle - NRCS Representative

The UCSWD meeting began at 6:30 pm.

The meeting opened with an announcement by Pete Cameron, Chair, that he would be discussing wastewater reuse with the goal of educating members on this important water conserving area. He read from a DEP draft report on the beneficial use of reclaimed water.

First, it was pointed out that Union County is in a "water resource caution area: as designated by the SRWMD, which means we can expect water shortages within the next 20 years.

Currently, the report cites, Florida disposed of 960 million gallons per day of wastewater effluent using deep injection wells, ocean outfalls (ocean dumping), and surface water discharges. "This represents a waste of a valuable resource." The report then proceeds to list a number of uses of wastewater which are a benefit and not a waste.

All of the following require some level of treatment to purify the wastewater before dispersing it. The closer the dispersed wastewater is to entering a human drinking water source, the more treatment (secondary treatment, disinfection) required prior to dispersal.

1. Slow rate land application: restricted public access. The spray irrigation of Lake Butler wastewater onto a field across CR 231 is an example of this category.
2. Slow rate land application: public access. Examples would be irrigation of golf courses, parks, residents, edible crops.
3. Rapid rate land application: wastewater applied to rapid infiltration basins (sink holes or man-made basins), percolation ponds, absorption fields.
4. Aquifer storage and recovery: injection of wastewater into the ground for storage and later recovery. This technique is used prevalently in South Florida (though not here in North Florida.)
5. Indirect potable water reuse: discharges to Class I (reservoirs) waters or waters connected to such. Require high level of purification prior to discharge.
6. Wetlands creation, restoration, enhancement
7. Industrial uses: for cooling or processing.

A chart was presented showing that the SRWMD uses significantly less of its reclaimed wastewater than any other WMD.

The report mentioned that \$18 million state dollars were allocated for reclaimed wastewater projects through the Small Communities Wastewater Facilities Grants Program.

It was pointed out that cost being the major obstacle to reuse projects; indirect recharge through the use of rapid infiltration basins or wetland infiltration basins (Paynes Prairie project) is generally cheaper than the other options.

An example of a successful project is the Water Conserv II in Orange County. It is the largest in the world (3725 acres) serving agricultural and residential irrigation needs and promoting aquifer recharge through a series of rapid infiltration basins. It has 21 miles of transmission pipeline (from water reclamation site to the project area) and 70 miles of distribution pipeline within the area.

Mr. Wiley Feagle mentioned the adapted method of reclaimed water used in some dairies. Cow waste is moved to a holding area where it naturally separates and both are used as fertilizer, liquid spray and solid deposit.

Mr. Pete Cameron noted a study of the effectiveness of ASR wells in isolating the injected water from adjacent ground water. The injected reclaimed water was retrieved after four days underground and it was found to contain higher levels of salts than before injection. The study raises issues about safety of the ASR process.

Mr. Buddy Finley had questioned the purpose of tanks put in a low lying area in Alachua near Bevs. The board members had no knowledge to the purpose of these tanks. The board speculated that these tanks were for collecting excess runoff (reclaimed water) since there is no other place for it to collect (other than in someone's building and on the road). For future growth within the town of Union County, these tanks may be beneficial to "moving" standing water where it interferes with man-made structures and/or road use.

Questions arose to the purpose of the large "water tower" located within the town of Lake Butler. No one was able to clearly explain what it is used for. Mrs. Laurel Schaafsma will take the responsibility to find out any information.

Mrs. Laurel Schaafsma passed out copies of the Union County Soil and Water Conservation District LONG RANGE PLAN 2013 - 2023. Due to time restraints, she asked that everyone read it.

Wiley Feagle is still taking applications for EQIP for the 2016.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:04 pm.