Have you ever noticed that Florida’s population seems to increase after every cold winter up north?! Of course, with the increased population comes increased demand for drinking water; however, Florida’s beautiful natural systems need water, too. Ultimately, utilities implement water conservation strategies, but they may also need to look to alternative water sources to meet the demands. Well, your Florida Section is assisting on both fronts!

**Education and Training**

First, the Water Use Efficiency Division (WUED) of the Technical and Education Council is working hard to promote water conservation and to educate Florida utilities on best management practices that have proven to help reduce demand and save our precious resource. Led by Deirdre Irwin, chair, and Dave Bracciano, vice chair, the division has produced several activities and programs:

- Coordination and presentation of a successful water conservation symposium at the FSAWWA Fall Conference, presenting a number of topics, including:
  - Tampa Bay Water’s Offset Expansion Program
  - Central Florida Water Initiative Conservation Update
  - Miami-Dade’s Declining Per Capita Through Planning
  - Implementation of Water Conservation Strategies

These presentations can be great “how to” examples for creating or improving a conservation program and allow members to network with their fellow conservation professionals. Other division activities include:

- Met with Florida’s commissioner of agriculture to discuss water conservation issues and garnered support from the five water management districts for Water Conservation Month.
- Promote and judge FSAWWA’s annual Water Conservation Awards for Excellence at the fall conference. These awards recognize innovative and outstanding achievements in water efficiency throughout Florida. The 2018 winners are shown in this column.
- Provide water conservation training that is available to the regions (see map). I definitely encourage region chairs to contact Deirdre at Dlrwin@sjrwmd.com to set up training in their regions.

**Other Water Sources**

Second, your section’s Utility Council is working to develop alternative water supplies by partnering with FWEA and FWPCOA to form the Florida Potable Reuse Commission (PRC). The PRC is a consensus-based body of stakeholders representing multiple interests focused on developing technical guidance and a regulatory framework to implement potable reuse as a water supply alternative.

The goal of PRC is to meet Florida’s growing potable water demands, while protecting public health and the environment through the expansion of potable reuse in Florida. This effort will be another “tool” from the utility tool box to meet water supply needs due to growth and resource limitations.

The PRC convened top engineers, utility directors, state government officials, public health officials, environmentalists, and private-sector agriculture and industry representatives.
from across the state to develop a framework for the implementation of potable reuse. The commission has held monthly meetings, open to the public, since February 2018 and has conducted two public workshops.

The PRC is now completing a detailed report containing recommendations for technologies and techniques to ensure that potable reuse projects protect public health and the environment. The group is also translating these technical recommendations into proposed state policies. Consensus has been achieved for a majority of the recommendations that will be contained in the framework.

Currently, PRC is working to finalize policy recommendations on two main issues: 1) addressing emerging constituents (pharmaceutical and personal care products) in potable reuse projects to ensure public safety, and 2) protecting public reclaimed water utility investments in potable reuse projects.

Subcommittees have been formed to address these issues and bring recommendations forward to the commission.

Other efforts by stakeholders are also currently underway:

 Policymaker Initiative. Briefing Senate and House committees on the PRC’s work and the cutting-edge reuse pilot and demonstration projects already being implemented in Florida.

 Public Education and Outreach. Working with stakeholder groups across the state to educate Floridians about the benefits and safety of potable reuse.

 Setting the Table for Policy Enactments by the January 2020 Session. Obtaining buy-in from the new governor’s administration, legislators, news media, and an even broader array of stakeholders, with the expectation of proposed legislation for the 2020 session.

Conservation Proclamation

Every year, the section and the state’s water management districts ask local governments, water utilities, and other organizations to adopt a resolution or proclamation declaring “April as Water Conservation Month,” and then report this back to FSAWWA.

It’s important that your organization add a Water Conservation Month proclamation to the statewide list. Each year, FSAWWA works with the state governor and cabinet to proclaim “April as Water Conservation Month.” By adopting Water Conservation Month and adding your proclamation to the statewide list, you’re letting Florida’s elected officials know just how important water efficiency and water conservation practices are to local governments, water utilities, and other organizations in Florida.

The section wants to have utilities and other groups throughout the state adopt this proclamation to get your efforts in water conservation recognized. To get a copy of the proclamation, or to add yours to the statewide list of entities proclaiming Water Conservation Month this year, please email Jenny Arguello at jenny@fsawwa.org. The due date for the proclamations is April 15, 2019.

So as you can see, your section is taking a leadership role in helping our industry ensure sufficient water for future generations, while protecting the natural systems and conserving Florida’s very precious resource.