

Utility/WMD/FDEP Partnerships

Issue Definition

A key element of defining Florida's 2030 vision is "Utility/WMD/FDEP Partnerships". The Florida 2030 Task Force acknowledges that partnership is essential to how these entities work together in the planning, development and operation of public water supply facilities and infrastructure.

As with any organization or process, the opportunity always exists to improve its efficiency and effectiveness. Given the challenges inherent in meeting the future water needs of a growing population within an environment of constrained traditional supplies (fresh groundwater and surface water), Florida must continue to seek better ways to communicate and collaborate in the development of future water supplies. Better defined/adaptive roles and responsibilities can create an effective structure for the implementation and best management of our most precious natural resource - water.

Background

Past disputes over water, foreshadow the potential challenges that lie ahead in meeting Florida's future water needs. Florida has experienced disputes this past century regarding groundwater pumping and understands the animosity created when pumping water from inland rural areas to neighboring coastal cities and counties most notably in the Tampa Bay region.

However, through Utility/Water Management Districts (WMD)/Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) partnerships, the creation of multi-jurisdictional entities, such as regional water supply authorities has helped resolve many of these conflicts. Communication and collaboration, at a local and State level, has enabled the geographic expansion of water suppliers' service areas and new/refined governance to help reach these regional solutions.

Upcoming challenges can be better understood when considering that development of traditional supplies has become environmentally constrained causing a shift to alternative water supplies. The public can more aptly understand how the withdrawal of water from a river can affect others downstream. These impacts can reach beyond counties and regions and transcend to interstate conflicts as seen recently between Florida, Georgia and Alabama regarding Georgia's water take affecting flow in the Chattahoochee River. Therefore, surface water supply development will involve increased public awareness, multiple utilities and overlapping WMDs and County boundaries as has recently occurred regarding potential use of the Kissimmee River for supply to utilities in central Florida. This case exemplifies the need for more collaboration between the utilities that compete for limited available fresh water supplies, FDEP and Florida's WMDs.

In order to fully comprehend and evaluate relationships between these entities, it is important to first understand each entity's current role as related to water supply development and management.

Utilities

Drinking water supply utilities (Utilities) can be either private or public owned in the form of various governance structures. Private companies are involved in water supply development through consulting companies that provide engineering expertise during various stages of project development - design, construction and operation. In addition, private contractors have traditionally constructed facilities for Utilities. In some cases private companies also provide operating services which has created some controversy since the public often perceives private entities as prioritizing profit over quality. Public Utilities, in most instances, operate under the governance of counties or municipalities under the responsibility of local elected officials. Chapter 373, Florida Statutes, (F.S.) has created opportunity for public regional water supply authorities to act as wholesale water providers within a designated region. The regional water supply structure has proven to be very effective in resolving water policy conflicts, such as the establishment of the West Coast Regional Water Supply Authority which is now Tampa Bay Water.

As related to the development of water supply and infrastructure needs, both current and future, the responsibilities of all Utilities whether public or private involve similar activities. Utilities must start by providing their customers with adequate supply and infrastructure facilities to meet all current and short term demand by utilizing Best Management Practices. The use of Best Management Practices in the operation and maintenance of existing facilities allow these facilities to extend their useful life and meet their original intended use for as long as possible. Regarding future supply and infrastructure needs, it is the Utility's responsibility to adequately plan for both short term and long term demands, find and develop supply sources and alternative sources to meet these plans, secure funding to support the projects that will meet the short and long term planning horizons, and finally implement the projects to stay ahead of the demand projections. This implementation process involves time scheduling, funding, planning, design, permitting, property acquisition, construction and commissioning of facilities.

As part of the planning, funding and permitting process, Utilities must develop the necessary relationships and partnerships with many levels of regulatory agencies whether Federal, State, District or Local. One or more of these agencies are needed at almost every stage of the planning, funding and development funding of any supply or infrastructure project.

The FDEP has defined a public water system as one that provides water to 25 or more people for at least 60 days each year or serves 15 or more service connections. Very small water systems which provide water for public consumption, but which do not fall under the above definition, are regulated by the Florida Department of Health (FDOH) and the county health departments. Bottled water and water vending machines are regulated by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS), Division of Food Safety. Water wells, both public and private, and the quantities of water that may be extracted, are regulated by the WMDs: (<http://www.dep.state.fl.us/water/drinkingwater>).

The Water Management Districts

The five WMDs in Florida (Northwest Florida, Suwannee River, St. Johns River, Southwest Florida and South Florida) are responsible for managing the water resources within their respective jurisdiction. District responsibilities include water supply planning, water resource development, water use and environmental resource permitting and in some cases, various funding initiatives that encourage the use of alternative water supplies. FDEP provides

general oversight of the Districts primarily through the Water Resource Implementation Rule that provides goals, objectives, and guidance for the development and review of programs, rules, and plans relating to water resources.

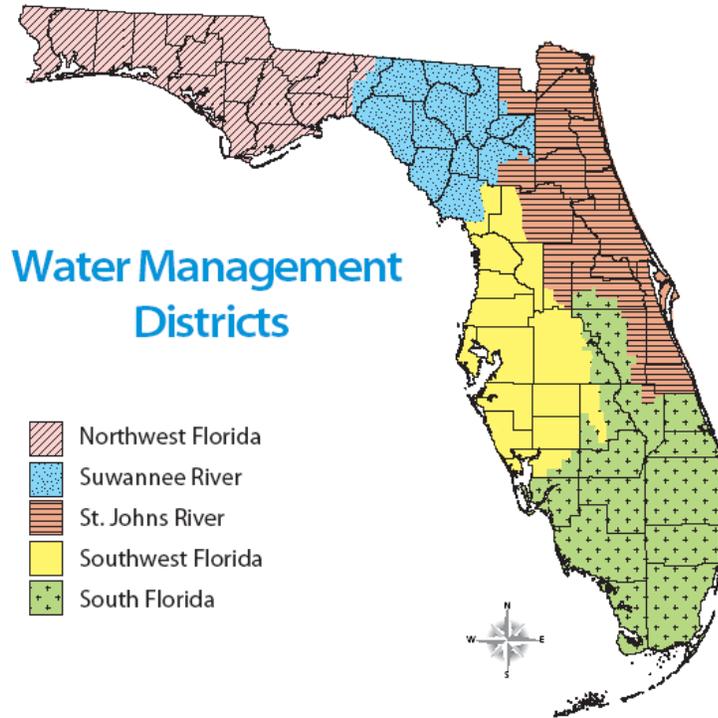


Figure 1 – WMDs within the State of Florida

The Florida Water Resources Act, Chapter 373, F.S., combines the principles of eastern (primarily riparian) and western (prior appropriation) US water law, and provides a comprehensive state water policy. Chapter 373, F.S., establishes the five WMDs as they exist today. The District boundaries were established based on surface water hydrologic basins. Of particular significance, Chapter 373, F.S., establishes very clearly that Florida's Water Resources belong to the people of the state of Florida, and should be managed on a regional basis by appointed, rather than elected boards.

In crafting Chapter 373, F.S., legislators recognized the importance of managing water on a regional basis to avoid local conflicts and parochialism in managing water resources. Chapter 373.217, F.S., declares that intent of the legislature was to provide for preemptive regulation of water use to the FDEP and the WMDs. As partnerships are developed among the WMDs, Utilities, and FDEP, particularly with respect to regulation, it is important to recognize the WMDs' responsibility and authority, and to be cognizant of the Legislature's intent. Challenges arise when local governments or Utilities are asked by WMDs to assist in the implementation of landscape irrigation rules by establishing local ordinances to implement irrigation restrictions. Additionally, utilities are required to remain within their Consumptive Use Permit (CUP) allocation, but must use caution when enacting local ordinances to avoid water use regulation.

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection

The FDEP is primarily responsible for implementing the Florida Safe Drinking Water Act (FSDWA) that requires that public water systems adhere to specific water quality monitoring criteria, reporting and record-keeping, operational and maintenance, construction, permitting, and public notification requirements. The FDOH has been delegated responsibility for the FSDWA program in nine of Florida's largest counties (Volusia, Palm Beach, Broward, Miami-Dade, Lee, Sarasota, Manatee, Hillsborough, and Polk). The FDOH furthermore provides laboratory support for the FSDWA program through the implementation of the state's laboratory certification program, and also has five laboratories (Central lab in Jacksonville, and regional labs in Pensacola, Tampa, Miami-Dade, and Lantana) that conduct analyses for chemical and microbiological contaminants in drinking water. The FDEP also has a role in the permitting of other water supply projects including aquifer storage and recovery well projects, reclaimed water projects and concentrate discharges for desalination projects.

FDEP also has primary responsibility for adopting drinking water, ground and surface water, and reclaimed water quality standards which establish thresholds for contaminants and ecological conditions to assure that public health and aquatic life are protected. Florida's surface water quality standards include a classification system of designated or beneficial uses to be protected, such as drinking water supply, shellfish harvesting, swimming and recreation, aquatic habitat for fish and wildlife, agricultural supply, limits on pollutants, and mechanisms to implement these requirements.

FDEP and the WMDs serve as the primary environmental regulatory agencies and co-funding providers for Utilities as described in greater detail below.

Issue Criticality for Water Supply

The relationship between the Utilities/WMDs/FDEP is vital to the future of Florida's water supply. This issue is interrelated to the other eight issues being studied as part of the Florida 2030 initiative as they are all components of the water supply development process. The development of new water supplies will require enhanced partnership for the following reasons:

- Tax reform challenges will create more competition for public funds to offset the capital cost of alternative water supply projects. More collaboration can enhance the ability to properly allocate water supply project funding priorities throughout Florida.
- Future water supplies will likely impact stakeholders that cross Utility jurisdictions and even WMDs.
- Need to develop a diversity of sources that takes advantage of Florida's climate variation.
- Communication early in the planning phases among all stakeholders can help identify fatal flaws in proposed multi-jurisdictional projects to avoid excessive time and financial losses.
- Enhanced communication can help utilities learn from the experiences of others in the development of alternative water supply projects.

In the absence of enhanced partnership, organization and communication, the potential consequences include:

- Inability to properly sequence the more cost effective and environmentally sound water supply projects.
- Greater legal costs required to settle disputes related to water use permit issuances.
- Delays in developing timely new water supply projects can lead to water supply shortages and greater project costs.
- Ineffective communication between subject entities can constrain future collaborative efforts.

Florida 2030 Vision

The Florida 2030 Vision must seek to achieve the most efficient and effective allocation and coordination of government responsibilities for the future. Inefficiency resulting from duplication of permitting should be eliminated where appropriate, including water supply, water quality and water quantity permitting functions. As water supply issues and challenges change, government must also change to better manage public funds and resources.

This paper will discuss the current allocation of Utilities/WMD/FDEP responsibilities and explore options that may improve the ability to select and implement the most environmentally sound and cost effective water supply options for the future. Partnership among these entities is a key element to realizing these goals. The following three key components of effective partnership have been identified: communication, consistency (where appropriate) and collaboration. The subsequent discussion topics in this paper will identify opportunities to improve partnership through these areas. This vision is represented below in Figure 2.

Future relationships should allow for easier evaluation of inter-WMD projects and encourage the development of regional or watershed based solutions to local water supply problems such that sufficient water is made available for all existing and future reasonable-beneficial uses and the natural systems, and that the adverse effects of competition for water supplies be avoided. One of the focuses will be on the "Vision Equation" to support development of the Florida 2030 water supply infrastructure. It is important to note that specific issues or topics discussed in this paper often overlap into the three partnership categories listed above.

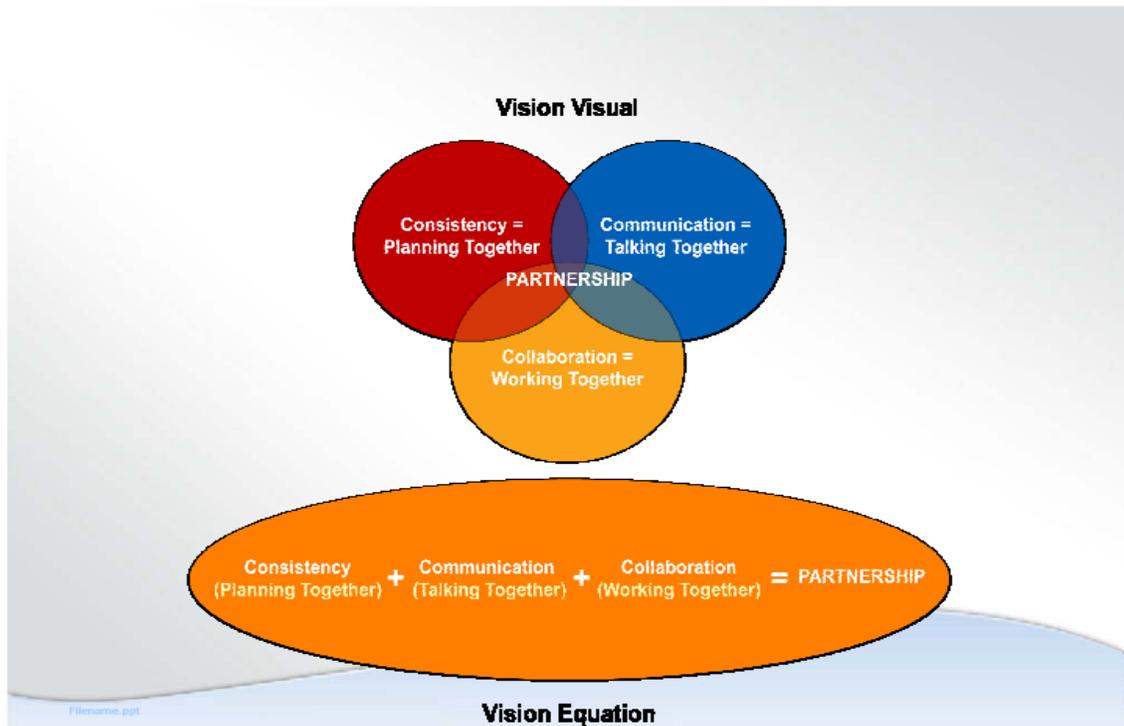


Figure 2 – Partnership Vision Equation

Issues for Consideration

The following opportunities are identified as alternatives for consideration that could improve the partnership between Utilities, FDEP and the WMDs. Following the listing of each opportunity heading, the applicable partnership vision categories (consistency, communication and/or collaboration) are identified below the heading.

Adoption of Regulatory/ Permitting Requirements for Water Resource Projects (Consistency)

In order to develop a consistent protocol for the adoption and implementation of Florida's statutes and rules as they apply to water resource management, an enhanced level of communication/coordination must be established by the regulatory entities involved in the review and oversight of specific projects. It should be noted that this paper does recognize that flexibility must be included to address site specific circumstances and a "one size fits all" approach does not necessarily work for water supply development. However, a certain degree of consistency can help improve the way in which regulatory/permitting is managed in Florida.

Since most water resource projects involve one of the five WMD offices, a framework needs to be set-up to coordinate water resource management activities statewide among the five WMD offices. As we've realized, water resource management goes beyond the boundaries of the respective WMDs, so there needs to be active coordination of regulatory activities

between individual WMDs to enhance the potential for achievement and optimization of regional and statewide water management goals.

Once there is a general understanding of regional water management goals among the WMDs, Utilities need to also be apprised of those goals and work as partners with the WMDs in achieving them. Active communication/coordination between Utilities and the WMDs, and an enhanced understanding of regulatory constraints associated with development as it affects Florida's groundwater and surface water supplies will ultimately have a major impact in streamlining the implementation of regulatory/permitting requirements for water related projects. This would include conservation, reuse, consumptive use, wastewater treatment and disposal, and water treatment options, including required infrastructure.

Since Florida's economy also depends upon agriculture, effective water resource management must also include the FDACS, and its stakeholders. Effective water management is an important and functional component of agriculture; therefore regulatory/permitting issues involving agricultural projects must also be incorporated into Florida's water management structure. Effective management of water and wastewater at agricultural facilities can only be enhanced by building an established system to coordinate the management of existing and proposed agricultural activities by state and local governments, and interested stakeholders. This would include the FDEP, FDACS, and the WMDs.

In addressing present and emerging water quality issues as they affect Florida's drinking water supplies, the FDOH and the FDEP are the primary state agencies involved in addressing regulatory/permitting issues affecting such. To enhance the present system that has been established between FDOH and FDEP to effectively implement federal and state laws and rules that affect Utilities, communication/coordination with Utilities could also be enhanced. The FDEP does involve stakeholders when it develops and adopts drinking water system rules, however an educational component could be added to assist Utilities in complying with those rules. The issuance of permits for specific projects often involves both state and local governments and their respective rules. This tends to complicate the goal of achieving compliance with those rules and receiving approval of given water resource projects. Additionally, many local governments require additional reviews and required permit fees for these projects. It should be emphasized that local governments should not duplicate the efforts of state agencies in the regulation of Florida's water resources. This complicates government regulation and wastes tax dollars. It is important that local governments and stakeholders have a good understanding of Florida's requirements as they relate to the management of drinking water, wastewater, reclaimed water, surface waters and storm water. By enhancing local/state coordination of water related projects, Florida can also improve the consistency in the development and subsequent compliance with water/wastewater regulations and better manage the state's water resources.

Resource Assessment (Consistency)

Florida has over 52,000 miles of rivers and streams, nearly 800 lakes, 4,500 square miles of estuaries, and more than 700 springs.

Utilities, Cities, Counties, WMDs, FDEP, FDOH, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and many others collect and analyze information on water quality and quantity from these resources for the specific needs of each entity. Since the needs of each entity differ,

often the data collection and analytical efforts are not coordinated among those who could benefit from each other's efforts.

Coordination in data collection and analysis for similar purposes would allow for maximum leverage of limited funds. Such coordination would allow the information collected and analyzed to be readily accessible, retrievable, and useable (reliable and valid) by all.

Given the enormity of the water resources and the numerous entities involved such coordination should occur on the watershed basis. A comprehensive watershed management strategy would view the state based on its natural boundaries, like river and estuary basins, rather than political boundaries. These naturally bounded areas (29 basins or watersheds) have been organized by FDEP into five basin "groups" (see Figure 3 below).

All entities are encouraged to coordinate their data collection efforts with FDEP's Integrated Water Resource Monitoring Network to provide statewide data and information on the important chemical, physical, and pertinent biological characteristics of water for the major surface water bodies, the major aquifer systems, and the coastal waters of the state. The information generated by the integrated network can be used for reporting and advising relevant entities on the status and trends of Florida's water quality and available quantities.

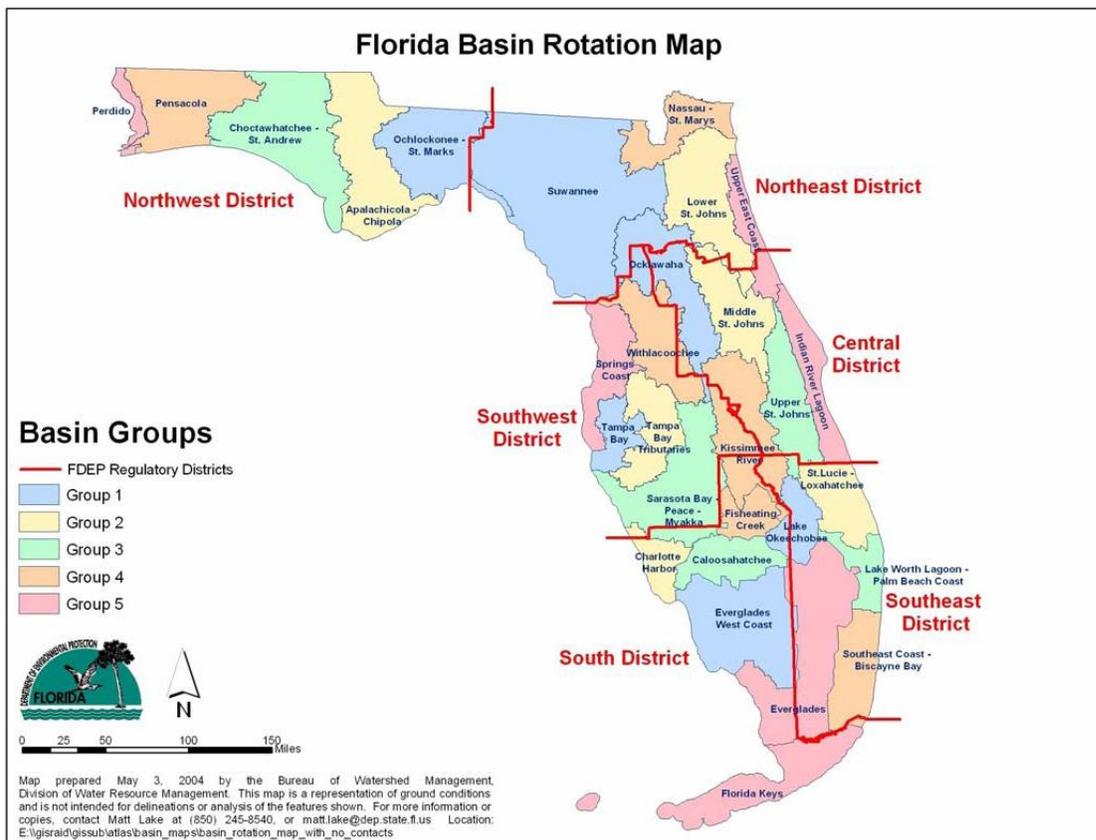


Figure 3 – Florida Basin Rotation Map

Communication Enhancement (Communication, Consistency, Collaboration)

Of the three C’s of water stakeholder partnership, communication is the cornerstone. Achieving and then maintaining consistency in the dynamic water environment requires frequent dialogue at all levels. Similarly, collaborative efforts among water stakeholders are both identified and implemented through effective communication.

Developing an effective sustainable communication plan among water stakeholders is an important element of Florida 2030. The communication plan must address two primary modes of communication: proactive and reactive. Proactive communication addresses key known issues and trends through regularly scheduled meetings, conferences, calls, newsletters, etc. Whereas, reactive communication addresses singular issues requiring decision or action.

The WMDs and FDEP currently have an effective communication forum in place to discuss consistency in rule interpretation and application. An Operating Agreement exists between the Districts and the FDEP to implement Part IV of Chapter 373, F.S., (the Environmental Resource Permitting (ERP) Program). This operating agreement was developed to define responsibilities among the agencies, since the implementation of Part IV is a shared responsibility between the WMDs and FDEP. Included in the Operating Agreement is the establishment of an “Interagency Committee” which meets at least twice per year to coordinate and communicate regarding a number of issues, which are defined in the Operating Agreement. Generally, the purpose of the meetings is to promote consistent interpretation and application of ERP rule criteria, to develop a statewide data set and data exchange methodology, and to discuss proposed amendments to ERP rules. This WMD/FDEP forum has been expanded to include one day for ERP collaboration and a second day for Consumptive Use Permitting (CUP) collaboration. The CUP meetings generally focus on consistency in implementation of Part II of Chapter 373, F.S., and include discussions on current rulemaking activities, proposed or pending legislative issues, and topics similar in nature to those included in the Operating Agreement. The forum will focus on ways to build upon the success of this effort by expanding the stakeholders and framing discussions/issues on a regional basis.

Table 1 outlines the framework for a proposed water stakeholder communication plan. The plan includes elements currently utilized and found to be effective, including annual meetings of WMDs, FDEP, FDOH, and water associations.

Table 1 – Florida 2030 Water Stakeholder Communication Plan Framework

Agency	Communication Forum
WMDs, FDEP and/or FDOH	Annual Conferences ¹ Bi-annual Boundary Meetings ² Quarterly Newsletters ²
Utilities	Utility Council Activities ¹ Legislative Day ²

Agency	Communication Forum
Interagency	Informal Communications among staff ¹ Water Stakeholder Technical Sessions and Roundtables at Annual Conferences ² Annual Regional Stakeholder Workshop ²
Notes: ¹ Indicates Existing Forum ² Indicates New Forum	

To enhance communication, several new activities are proposed:

1. Semi-annual meetings of an informal nature among key staff of adjoining WMDs, FDEP and FDOH. Consistency and collaboration state-wide are important; however, the greatest potential for realizing immediate benefits may need to occur at the regional level. As such, the communication plan includes regular meetings of staff from adjoining districts. Since many current issues involve groundwater sustainability issues, one suggestion is to establish regional work groups based on groundwater basin boundaries rather than surface water basin boundaries as the districts are currently defined. A committee will: develop proposed agenda; work with WMDs, FDEP and FDOH regional staff to support organization of these meetings; and recruit a champion within each organization and each region. Since groundwater and surface water (for example) are managed by different branches or divisions within these organizations, it will be important to align topics with the appropriate staff persons during meetings on specific topics. It may also be appropriate to involve affected local governments, Utilities, agricultural stakeholders, environmental stakeholders, FDACS etc. in certain meetings depending on the topic and affected region.
2. Develop and distribute quarterly informal newsletter by working with representatives from WMDs, FDEP and FDOH to develop newsletter templates. Overall newsletter coordinators will be recruited from WMDs, FDEP and FDOH. Additionally, coordinators will be recruited within each WMD, FDEP and FDOH region. The newsletters are intended to provide updates on major issues, initiatives, and policies that affect water supply/water resources within Florida.
3. Water stakeholder technical sessions at Florida Water Resource Conference (FWRC) and Florida Section American Water Works Association (FSAWWA) Fall Conference. To promote dissemination of information and outreach, dedicated technical sessions will be organized at the FWRC and FSAWWA Fall Conference. In addition, partnership round tables will be organized at each to promote exchange of ideas and extended interaction.
4. Annual Regional Partnership workshops will be organized using the regional structure of FSAWWA. FSAWWA will support regional chairs in developing annual workshops throughout the state with a focus on promoting partnership among neighboring Utilities.

It is somewhat obvious that additional communication would be helpful in avoiding or resolving interstate disputes regarding water supply. Stakeholder meetings could be held on an annual basis to create dialogue and information exchange to address water resource

constraints and potential solutions. These meetings of water professionals and other key stakeholders would not only help each party better understand the other's issues but, through collaboration, develop effective alternative solutions to these problems. The advantages of enhanced communication and collaboration seem to offer tremendous upside with few potential disadvantages. Disadvantages include involving entities at times on issues that they do not have a stakeholder interest in. Expanding the number of entities involved in meetings also tends to sometimes curtail the level of participation during those meetings and can also lead to difficulty in maintaining focus as the discussions can sometimes sidetrack off topic.

It may also be helpful for Utilities to conduct annual meetings to discuss water issues and invite the Florida Legislature and regulatory agencies to discuss concerns and potential solutions. The Florida Legislature could also work with other state Legislatures to develop a required framework to enhance communication amongst water resource professionals of the affected states so potential water resource solutions could be developed by water professionals and not through combative legal proceedings. Based upon recommendations from these groups, solutions could be proposed to specific legislative and regulatory bodies for approval to implement scientifically based/environmentally sound solutions.

Funding Allocations (Communication, Consistency, Collaboration)

Utilities use similar sources of funding to address their current short term and future long term supply and infrastructure funding requirements. Most Utilities set aside a portion of their year-to-year operating budget as a form of facility depreciation to “fund” renewal and replacement of existing facilities. Another internal source of funds can be the Utility’s connection fees or impact fees charged to support essential infrastructure. Also available to most Utilities is their ability to go into the Bond market to secure revenue bonds to help cover capital improvements.

To assist in offsetting the high cost of capital improvements, fund studies, provide an incentive to seek out alternative supply or innovative technologies, many government sources are also available to large and small Utilities. Some of these funding sources come in the form of WMD matching funds or outright grants, use of the State Revolving Fund [low interest rate funds], EPA grants [federally appropriated], U.S. Army Corps of Engineering matching funds, as well as specific project funding thru Florida legislative bills. The Florida Legislature, FDEP and the WMDs have done a good job of incenting utilities to develop alternative water supply projects via provision of co-funding opportunities.

In 2005, the Legislature passed a major growth management and water supply bill (Senate Bill 444), which the Governor signed into law in June 2005, creating the Water Protection and Sustainability Program (WPSP) and an associated trust fund known as the Water Protection and Sustainability Trust Fund (WPSTF). The WPSTF provides funding to supplement the WMDs' partnership programs (i.e., Water Supply and Resource Development and Cooperative Funding) for the development of alternative water supply. In addition, the funding allocation will achieve the stated goal for each WMD to annually contribute funding equal to 100 percent of the State's funding for alternative water supply development assistance.

One example of legislative interest in a specific geographic area experiencing water resource problems is the *Southern Water Use Caution Area (SWUCA)* within the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD). The SWUCA is an area encompassing

5,100 square miles in all or parts of eight counties in the west-central portion of SWFWMD. It includes all of Manatee, Sarasota, Hardee and DeSoto counties and portions of Hillsborough, Charlotte, Polk and Highlands counties. Water resource concerns associated with the SWUCA involve declining lake levels along the Highlands Ridge and advancing coastal saltwater intrusion in the Floridan aquifer. The West-Central Florida Water Restoration Action Plan (WRAP) Plan outlines SWFWMD's strategy for ensuring that adequate water supplies are available to meet growing demands, while at the same time protecting and restoring the water and related natural resources of the area. The WRAP prescribes the measures to implement the SWUCA Recovery Strategy and quantifies the monies needed, making it easier for SWFWMD to obtain funding for the initiative from state and federal sources. Since fiscal year 2007, the Legislature has made available \$15,050,000 for the WRAP program with the majority of the money (\$15,000,000) provided in fiscal year 2008. SWFWMD is currently in the process of allocating this funding to eligible water supply and resource development projects.

FL 2030 - Collaboration- Funding Sources	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Local Utility <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Revenues from Existing Rates ◆ Revenues from Future Rate Increases ◆ Contributions in Aid of Construction ◆ Impact & Tap Fees ◆ Lines of Credit ◆ Investment Income ◆ Revenue Bonds ◆ Private Activity Bonds ◆ Non-Recourse Financing ◆ Florida Water Management Districts - Matching Funds ◆ Florida State Revolving Fund 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Florida Department of Community Affairs - Florida Communities Trust ◆ Governor's Office of Tourism Trade and Economic Development ◆ Florida Legislative Actions ◆ Community Development Block Grant Program (Regional Planning Council) ◆ US Environmental Protection Agency Grants ◆ US Department of Agriculture - Rural Development Program ◆ US Corps of Engineers Matching Funds

Figure 4 – Various Funding Sources for Water Supply Projects

As seen in Figure 4, there can be the potential for a wide and varying array of potential funding sources. Coordinating, managing, requesting and tracking this wide array of funding sources is a daunting task for even the most sophisticated Utility. One of Florida 2030's many challenges is to suggest both short term and long term ideas for consideration to ease this task. Improvements may be realized by establishing a State Funding Coordination team that would cross district and local boundaries to study all non-utility funding sources inside the state and recommend coordination improvement alternatives

Water Supply Planning (Consistency, Communication and Collaboration)

Water supply planning is critical to the health of our natural resources and the ability of our regions to sustain projected growth. A robust water supply planning process, including communications between planners, resource managers, regulatory agencies, and water suppliers is critical to protection of our resources and insuring clean, reliable supplies for existing and future residents. A new water supply project usually takes 7 to 10 years to complete – and it all begins with the planning process.

Improvements in the process could yield more reliable supplies, fewer disputes over access/control of the resources, better resource management opportunities, all with favorable cost implications.

The water supply planning process has improved considerably in the past few years. In areas where resources issues have been identified, the WMDs must develop and update a water supply plan on a 5-year interval. Within 18 months of the WMDs adopting the water supply plan local governments must develop or update a 10-year water supply work plan for submittal to FDCA. The plan must include demand projections, water supply project lists, and project funding, etc., to meet those needs.

The implementation of this process and successful outcomes at the local level however are still in question. Improved communications coordination and understanding between the FDCA, regulatory agencies, FDACS, agriculture, other industries and Utilities would benefit the resource and the public.

The Florida 2030 vision should include the following water supply planning efforts:

- More robust and interconnected planning efforts on a regional and local level (improved inter-agency coordination and communication).
- Focus on resource management and cost economies associated with regional supply development.
- Consider extending the planning horizon beyond 20-years on a regional basis. This issue could be discussed at state and regional meetings to see if the current 20 year planning horizon is appropriate.
- Recognize and accept that there will often be differences between large regional, and local scale plans (yields and project details for example) for a particular resource, and that these are often attributable to scale differences, differing methodologies, etc. Regional plans should be established first to better assess whether the local plans are within planned water allocations.
- WMDs should evaluate the appropriateness of the current 20-year planning horizon for water supply and consider whether extending the planning period is appropriate. This process should include involvement from the Water FDCA, FDEP, FDOH, FDACS and Utility stakeholders.

Following are alternative measures that could be taken to enhance our water supply planning process along with associated advantages and disadvantages:

Table 2 – Opportunities to Enhance Planning Process

Idea	Advantage	Disadvantage
More Robust Planning Effort	Better communications among key stakeholders Preserves resources and improves supply availability Minimizes water-wars	More time and manpower Could involve more regulation and bureaucracy

Idea	Advantage	Disadvantage
Focus on Resource Management and Regional Supply Development	Better control and management of resources More reliable supply system Funding focus for state, regional and local dollars Fewer entities involved / simplified system	Reduction in “local control” of supplies and water costs Small source viability (financially) Local concerns about regional supply development within their jurisdiction
Extend regional planning horizon beyond 20 years	Better focus on the big-picture and long-term resource management May identify a sustainability threshold Integrates with basin management initiatives	Higher uncertainty May not coincide with other local planning horizons (roads, schools, etc.)
Recognize and differences between regional and local scale plans.	Better understanding between regional agencies and local suppliers Promotes idea exchanges and sharing of technical resources May reduce permitting timeframes	Requires commonly understood explanation of the cause of differences

Other issues to consider:

- WMDs should lead in the establishment of annual meetings within each WMD to include participation of all key stakeholders as identified below. Policy decisions involving water supply planning could be enacted by the WMDs, FDEP, FDCA and FDACS. For the efforts rooted in resource management, the WMD and FDEP should lead. For the more robust planning efforts the FDCA should lead.
- Establish a task force of water supply management professionals from Florida, Alabama and Georgia to study the interstate water conflict and recommend potential solutions to the Legislature.
- Utilities should consider having annual meetings to discuss water issues and invite water managers/key stakeholders to discuss concerns and solutions.