

Tools for Promoting the Efficient & Effective Reuse of Reclaimed Water

Reclaimed Water Policy Workshop

November 19, 2008



Introduction

- Basic Concepts
 - FWEA UC, DEP, & WMDs all share the goal of promoting the efficient and effective reuse of reclaimed water.
 - Reclaimed water is a valuable resource, and only through thoughtful deliberation and cooperative policy development can we realize its full potential.

Policy Goals

- Five proposed policy tools designed to...
 - Expand the availability of reclaimed water for reuse
 - Add new agricultural, industrial, commercial, and residential reclaimed water customers
 - Decrease stress on Florida's potable water supplies
 - Achieve efficient and effective reuse without eroding a utility's ability to make local operational decisions

Proposed Policy Tools

1. Increase Utility - Water Management District Coordination
2. Mandatory Reclaimed Water Zones
3. Irrigation Education
4. Offsets Using Reclaimed Water
5. Goal-Based Water Conservation Plans

Utility-WMD Coordination

- Basic Concept: Policies should be in place to ensure that when a reclaimed water provider makes reclaimed water available, the applicable WMD will direct consumptive use permit applicants to use that reclaimed water.
- Action: Provide procedures to ensure that when considering a consumptive use permit application, district staff will communicate with the local reclaimed water provider to determine whether reclaimed water is available.

Utility-WMD Coordination

- How it would work:
 - Reclaimed water provider provides info to the WMD identifying the locations and quantities of available reclaimed water.
 - WMD considers that information when evaluating the ability to use reclaimed water as part of the review of a consumptive use permit application.
 - If the consumptive use permit applicant provides analysis concluding that using reclaimed water is not feasible, then the WMD transmits that analysis to the reclaimed water provider for comment.
 - If the WMD ultimately determines that reclaimed water cannot be used, then the staff report for the permit application to the governing board explains that decision and a copy of the explanation is provided to the reclaimed water provider for review and comment.
 - Any comments from the reclaimed water provider then presented to the Governing Board.

Mandatory Reclaimed Water Zones

- Basic Concept: Local governments need enhanced authority to direct water users away from traditional water supplies to available reclaimed water supplies.
- Action: Empower local governments to designate mandatory reclaimed water zones in areas where the reclaimed water provider has committed to provide reclaimed water for applicable non-potable water uses.

Mandatory Reclaimed Water Zones

- How it would work:
 - Local government establishes a mandatory reclaimed water zone.
 - Applicable WMD directs consumptive use permit applicants to use that reclaimed water, absent an affirmative demonstration by the permit applicant that reclaimed water is not appropriate for their proposed water use.
 - WMDs limit exemptions or general permits for private wells in mandatory reclaimed water zones.

Irrigation Education

- Basic Concept: Ordinances and rules restricting residential irrigation are difficult to enforce, and the public is less likely to follow good irrigation practices if the value of these practices is not understood.
- Action: DEP, WMDs, and reclaimed water providers should expand coordinated efforts to educate the public that all water resources have value and should be used efficiently and effectively.

Irrigation Education

- How it would work:
 - A consistent message from state, regional, and local government entities can reduce per capita water use in Florida.
 - The education initiative should include explaining the water supply challenges facing many areas of our state, the benefits of using Florida-friendly landscapes, and what it means to “irrigate efficiently.”
 - Regulatory agencies and local governments should consider increasing funds for currently underfunded initiatives, such as the Mobile Irrigation Labs program.

Offsets Using Reclaimed Water

- Basic Concept: A regulatory program is needed facilitate the efficient and effective use of reclaimed water as well as promote smart growth in water restricted areas.
- Action: Establish a regulatory program to promote the use of reclaimed water as a replacement for existing water uses and as a mitigation tool.

Offsets Using Reclaimed Water

- Attributes:
 - A statewide regulatory framework is needed to promote consistency among the districts and provide regulatory certainty to reclaimed water providers;
 - The entity creating the reduction or mitigation should get the credit for the offset; and
 - The offset credit to the utility should be irrevocable as long as the offset still exists.
- Let's get moving:
 - Rule development workshops beginning in Spring 2009 with the goal of having statewide offset rules in place by December 2009.

Goal-Based Water Conservation Plans

- Basic Concept: Wastewater treatment utilities and reclaimed water providers should be encouraged to adopt progressive policies and utilize flexible innovative tools to promote the efficient and effective reuse of reclaimed water.
- Action: Update the Conserve Florida program and underlying statute to facilitate the efficient and effective use of reclaimed water; remove unintentional statutory hurdles to promote the use of goal-based water conservation plans.

Goal-Based Water Conservation Plans

- How it would work (part 1):
 - In 2004, the Florida Legislature enacted § 373.227, F.S., which empowers public water supply utilities to “propose a goal-based water conservation plan that is tailored to its individual circumstances.”
 - Update the program to recognize actions designed to increase the efficient and effective use of reclaimed water, including reclaimed water irrigation restrictions, volumetric metering, efficient augmentation, and other proposed beneficial actions.

Goal-Based Water Conservation Plans

- How it would work (part 2):
 - The statute requires that the “utility must provide reasonable assurance that the [goal-based] plan will achieve effective water conservation at least as well as the water conservation requirements adopted by the water management district.” § 373.227(4), F.S.
 - This well-intended statutory requirement impedes the use of goal-based plans, because one cannot make a meaningful comparison between the two programs.
 - Revise statutory language to ensure robust plans but avoid requiring goal-based / standard plan comparisons.

Discussion

- Questions
- Next Steps...

The logo is a stylized map of Florida filled with various nature scenes like lakes, trees, and a beach. The text "Florida Water Environment Association" is written in large blue letters across the middle, and "Utility Council" is written in smaller white letters below it.

**Florida Water
Environment
Association**
Utility
Council