

## Water Conservation Meetings Strengthen Regional Collaboration

Water conservation coordinators from across the Central Florida Water Initiative (CFWI) region and beyond gathered for an impactful quarterly meeting hosted by the Toho Water Authority at the UF/IFAS Extension Osceola County. Representatives from the St. Johns River and Southwest Florida water management districts, along with delegates from numerous cities, counties and agencies throughout the state, came together to discuss regional water conservation efforts, share best practices and address challenges.

Highlights of the meeting included presentations on the Toho Efficiency and Outreach Programs, American Water Works Association's utility standards, University of Florida's H2OSAV (a UF/IFAS Extension program that helps measure savings from implemented water conservation programs), and the Villages' approach to water conservation and alternative water supply. Each presentation explored innovative strategies and reinforced the importance of integrating best practices to conserve and protect Florida's water resources.

"Our role is to keep the focus on conservation as a cornerstone of water supply planning," says Deirdre Irwin, the water conservation coordinator who covers the CFWI for the St. Johns River Water Management District. "By coordinating these gatherings and working together across utilities, agencies and communities, we can help Floridians see that every gallon saved today protects the water resources we will all rely on tomorrow."

Participants also shared recent successes in reducing residential water use, strengthening public outreach and engaging communities in water-saving behaviors. The group discussed opportunities to expand conservation partnerships while addressing persistent challenges, such as aligning homeowner association regulations with modern conservation practices and bridging gaps in public awareness.

Future meetings will continue the dialogue around this important regional effort. The next meeting will be held in December during the 2025 Florida Section of the American Water Works Association Fall Conference. For more information about the quarterly water conservation meetings, please contact Dierdre Irwin at [dirwin@sjrwmd.com](mailto:dirwin@sjrwmd.com).