

July 31, 2015 comments on the Central Florida Water Initiative

I attended your Winter Haven meeting and I have been reading your books on the Central Fl. Water Initiative. I would suggest you have a list of the acronyms or abbreviations and what they mean in the appendix or in the front. One could flip back and forth to determine what you are talking about. It is like a foreign language, if you don't deal with this material on an everyday basis.

I would also like to see some of the maps have township and ranges identified so I can better determine where my properties are located in relation to what you are discussing or include individual county maps with township and ranges.

I do not agree with the suggestion at the meeting by an audience member that all existing owners of toilets that are not low flow be forced to convert to low flow toilets. My experience with low flow toilets is that I have to flush them several times whereas with the high flow, 1 flush was good. More flushes use more water. I did some research on low flow problems. I discovered the slope of the pipes in older homes was developed for the higher gallonage as the plumbing needs a certain amount of water to work properly without clogging etc. At the time no one ever thought the gallonage would be reduced. It is not practical to retro drill a concrete foundation and re-pipe a house to change the slope of the pipes to work with the new low flow toilets.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> reason I disagree with forcing someone change to low flow is it seems like we would be living in Communist Russia or Nazi Germany.

I hate the new more water efficient dishwashers because one wash does not get my dishes clean, and I have to wash them more than once which defeats the purpose of using less water the first time.

In your books the suggestion that agriculture use surface water to irrigate the crops is impractical with the new federal food safety requirements. The feds want you to test the surface water each time before you irrigate for bacteria etc. Your crops could die before the test results come back.

Precision Ag, automation and computerization sound like a good idea for irrigation systems but there are problems. This only works if you have electricity and do not have vandals and thieves. Our power units are all LP gas and are manually started and stopped. Additionally, all it takes is one lightning strike to wipe out a very expensive automated controller in the Lightning Capital of the US. We are always fixing underground irrigation pipes hit by lightning.

To me it seems a lot of your projected conservation comes from agriculture. Ag does not use its allotment on a daily basis but only on an as needed basis. Every time you start the power unit it costs you money, so you don't want to run it any more than you have to. Ag is actually a water bank because we don't use water every day. If you make it too difficult for a farmer to make a profit from farming the only other option is for the farmer to sell his land to development which then creates more daily water

users per acre. Ag provides a lot of green space which has been proven to uplift the human spirit and mental outlook from just driving by it. Ag also provides a home to wildlife.

I think the Blue Belt law that was enacted but never implemented should be put into use. This would give people some benefit for their property providing a place for water to be soaked up or recharged. It should cover wet lands as well as high recharge soils. Wet lands serve as a storage place for excess water. If vacant land or undeveloped is so important for putting water back in the aquifer then landowners should receive annual rent for this benefit.

On talking to one of the water management people about water issues, I mentioned every time people conserved water their water bill went up due to a decrease in funds coming into the cities. He said the conservation initiative overcame this problem by saving water that could further be divided up between more users thus enabling more development and maintaining the cities income level. This defeats the purpose of conserving water to ultimately spread it among more development. More development only increases the other demands and services that must be provided to more citizens ultimately putting a greater strain on Florida's ecosystem. Florida's BIG problem is it has too many people and a lot of them want to live on the waterfront of which there is a limited supply. Developing waterfront properties increases runoff as the filtering vegetation is removed. I do not think we should still be draining and developing wetlands. Wetlands serve a very important place in the Florida ecosystem.

Combining several counties in this initiative may seem like a good idea but I think it creates an opportunity for large population centers such as Orlando Metro to try to take water from other less developed areas

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sharon Garrett [garrettshabitat@aol.com](mailto:garrettshabitat@aol.com)