

**APPLICATION PROCESS FOR THE ST. JOHNS RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT (SJRWMD)  
AGRICULTURAL COST-SHARE, FY 21/22**

**Program Objectives**

The objective of the SJRWMD Agricultural Cost-Share Program is to engage farmers, growers, and ranchers in the shared goals of water conservation and run-off nutrient reduction; thereby helping to assure the sustainability of agriculture within SJRWMD.

**Eligible Projects/Equipment**

Project types and cost-share items that will be considered for funding include those listed below; however, other ideas that would further the program's objectives may be proposed. Permitting, preparation of bids and costs associated with daily operations and normal repairs will not be considered eligible for funding.

***Projects and Equipment:***

- Surface Drip Irrigation
  - Center pivot or Linear Move Overhead
  - Center Pivot Retrofits
  - Expanded Waste Storage
  - Soil Moisture/Climate Sensor Telemetry
  - Fertilizer Application Equipment with GPS
  - Other Conservation/Quality Projects that meet program objectives
  - Micro-Irrigation
  - Irrigation/Drain Tile
  - Tailwater Recovery and Reuse
  - Over Saran Irrigation (Freeze Protection)
  - Precision Agriculture Equipment
  - Variable Frequency Drive for pumps
- ✓ Note that requests for high tunnels will not be considered for funding.
- ✓ Requests for sub-irrigation drain tile will be reimbursed up to \$4,500/acre (payout cap of \$3,375/acre at 75%).

**Eligibility Criteria**

To be eligible for project funding under this initiative, both the project and the grower must satisfy program eligibility criteria described below. In addition, the agricultural operation must be in compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules and regulations, SJRWMD rules and regulations (including, but not limited to, Land Management rules), SJRWMD-issued permits, and SJRWMD funding agreements.

***Grower Eligibility Criteria***

The Grower applicant must:

- Be enrolled (or become enrolled) in the applicable Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) best management practices (BMPs). FDACS representatives will confirm enrollment in applicable FDACS' BMPs or will conduct a site visit to enroll funded applicants, if not previously enrolled.

- Own the land or have control of the land for the anticipated life of the project or equipment, agree to Mobile Irrigation Lab evaluations and water quality monitoring, if requested by SJRWMD.

### ***Project Eligibility Criteria***

The project must:

- Benefit the resource by conserving water, making water available and/or reducing offsite nutrient loading of Nitrogen and/or Phosphorus.
- Support at least one of the SJRWMD Core Missions (water supply, water quality, flood protection or natural systems protection).
- Be located primarily within the boundaries of SJRWMD.
- Be for existing production. Projects to expand production areas will not be considered.
- Satisfy at least one of the following categories of cost-effectiveness, as based on SJRWMD's calculations:
  - Conservation cost of \$3.00/kgal saved or less
  - Cost per pound of annual Total Nitrogen (TN) removal of \$60 or less
  - Cost per pound of annual Total Phosphorous (TP) removal of \$200 or less
- Have an expected completion date of September 30, 2022.

Eligible projects include those that convert to a lower quality water source, conserve water and/or reduce nutrient run-off. Projects that do not fall within the scope of the program may not be considered.

### **Outstanding Florida Springs Minimum Flows and Levels**

Cost-share recipients who are subject to any Minimum Flows and Levels for Outstanding Florida Springs with a project that will create a resource benefit that could be used to offset impacts from their existing permitted water use, will be required to designate the water resource as a receiving entity of any excess benefit up to a maximum of the percentage of funding provided by SJRWMD for the project, and to modify their Consumptive Use Permit(s) accordingly.

### **Application Form**

The application form is attached and must be submitted **by March 14, 2022**. Projects will be selected and funded pending Governing Board approval. The projects must be completed by September 30, 2022.

### **Cost-Share Amounts**

#### **Projects and/or Equipment:**

Cost-share will be up to 75%, not to exceed \$250,000 annually, for the engineering, design, construction, and implementation costs of an approved project. Please note that multiple related entities (i.e. those related by corporate structure or financial resources) shall have a shared cap. The applicant will be

expected to cover maintenance costs; however, requests for items associated with long-term maintenance (such as drip tape or center pivot retrofits) may be considered for funding. Examples of projects include irrigation retrofits and tailwater recovery and reuse. Equipment may include items such as variable rate fertilizer spreaders, soil moisture sensors and irrigation controllers.

**Please note that this is a reimbursement program. Proof of payment will be required prior to reimbursement. Multiple invoices may be submitted to assist with cash flow.**

### **Application, Review, and Selection Process**

**Application** – Interested applicants who meet the eligibility criteria should submit an application, along with requested documents (listed in application, Section G-4). For assistance with the application process and to submit applications by email or fax contact:

Suzanne Archer  
Cell: 407-620-8133  
Fax: 407-659-4805  
Email: sarcher@sjrwmd.com

**Site Visit** – A site visit after the project is completed will be scheduled to verify that the project was implemented as proposed in the application.

**Project Selection** – SJRWMD staff will review applications to ensure projects satisfy the Program's goals and eligibility criteria. Final selection of eligible projects is subject to Governing Board approval.

### **Cost-Share Agreement and Payment Process**

Quotes from consultants, contractors and equipment vendors will be required as part of the cost-share application. If a project proposal or practice/equipment funding request is selected and approved for funding, the applicant will be notified and will enter into a cost-share contract with SJRWMD. A Statement of Work will be developed for each project that describes the work to be performed and/or the results to be achieved. Within the Statement of Work, tasks will be defined that will form the basis for payments.

Upon completion of each task, the applicant will submit an invoice and proof of payment to SJRWMD. SJRWMD will issue a check made out to the applicant. Verification of tasks by SJRWMD personnel may be required prior to issuance of payment.

### **Permitting**

SJRWMD's agricultural cost-share program has been funded with the goal of increasing water conservation and thereby reducing water use. Participation in the cost-share program is entirely voluntary. To ensure that expending these funds provides a return on investment in the form of an actual reduction in water use, one requirement of the cost-share agreement is that the recipient be willing to memorialize the savings produced by SJRWMD funds through a modification of their

consumptive use permit. Any reduction in allocation that does occur as a result of receipt of funds through the cost-share program would have a backup allocation for a minimum of five years, while the new system is being evaluated to ensure the reduction would not impair the permittee's ability to continue their operation. If a grower chooses to fund his/her own conservation project, there would be no reduction in permitted allocation during the term of the permit in compliance with Florida Statutes. Additionally, in order to promote conservation, SJRWMD may provide longer duration permits to those who have demonstrated conservation on their farms, regardless of funding source.

### **Agricultural Cost-Share Funding Criteria**

**Projects must meet the following criteria to be eligible for funding:**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>✓</b>
Project is located primarily within the boundaries of the SJRWMD	
Project benefits the resource by conserving water, making water available and/or reducing offsite nutrient loading of Nitrogen and/or Phosphorus	
Project is for existing production (projects to expand production areas are not eligible)	
Grower is enrolled (or willing to be enrolled) in the applicable Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services best management practices (BMPs)	
Grower owns the land or has control of the land (lease etc.)	
Grower agrees to Mobile Irrigation Lab evaluations or water quality monitoring, if requested by the District	
The operation must be in compliance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules and regulations and SJRWMD rules and regulations, SJRWMD-issued permits and funding agreements	
Proposed project supports at least one of the SJRWMD Core Missions (water supply, water quality, flood protection or natural systems protection)	
Cost effectiveness, based on District calculations, falls within the following range for at least one category: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Conservation cost of \$3.00/kgal saved or less</li> <li>✓ Cost per pound of annual TN removal of \$60 or less</li> <li>✓ Cost per pound of annual TP removal of \$200 or less</li> </ul>	
Project is expected to be completed by September 30, 2022	