

APPLICATION PROCESS FOR THE ST. JOHNS RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT AGRICULTURAL COST-SHARE, FY 23/24

Program Objectives

The objective of the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) Agricultural Cost-Share Program is to engage farmers, growers, and ranchers in the shared goals of water conservation and runoff nutrient reduction; thereby helping to assure the sustainability of agriculture within SJRWMD.

Eligible Projects/Equipment

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

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.

Project Eligibility Criteria

- Project area is located primarily within the boundaries of SJRWMD
- Applicant has at least 3 years of experience owning or managing the subject farm or a similar farm
- 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 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 SJRWMD
- 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

- Cost effectiveness, based on SJRWMD calculations, falls within the following range for at least one category (as calculated by SJRWMD staff):
 - Conservation cost of \$3.00/kgal saved or less
 - Cost per pound of annual TN removal of \$80 or less
 - Cost per pound of annual TP removal of \$275 or less

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.

Cost-Share Amounts

Projects and/or Equipment:

Cost-share will be up to 75%, not to exceed \$250,000, 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.

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 Form

The application form is attached. Eligible projects will be funded on a first come, first served basis based on funding availability and Governing Board approval.

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
 2501 South Binion Road
 Apopka, Florida 32703
 Cell: 407-620-8133
 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 funding and Governing Board approval.

Cost-Share Agreement and Reimbursement 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, similar to the one provided with this document. A Statement of Work will be developed for each project that describes the work to be performed. Within the Statement of Work, tasks will be defined that will form the basis for payments.

Upon completion of the tasks, 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.