

**APPLICATION PROCESS FOR THE ST. JOHNS RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT (SJRWMD)  
AGRICULTURAL COST-SHARE, FY 20/21**

**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 \$4,000/acre (payout cap of \$3,000/acre at 75%).

**Grower Eligibility Criteria**

To propose a project for funding under this initiative, the project must be located primarily within the boundaries of SJRWMD. Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) representatives will confirm enrollment in applicable FDACS best management practices (BMPs) or will conduct a site visit to enroll funded applicants, if not previously enrolled. Enrollment is required to receive SJRWMD cost-share funding.

The applicant must 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. Projects must be for existing production. Projects to expand production areas will not be considered. 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.

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 deadline for submitting applications for cost-share under the SJRWMD Agricultural Cost-Share Program is **January 29, 2021**. The application form is attached. Projects will be selected and funded pending Governing Board approval anticipated for April 13, 2021. **The projects must be completed by September 30, 2021.**

### **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 regular mail, email, or fax, contact:

Suzanne Archer  
601 South Lake Destiny Road  
Suite 200  
Maitland, Florida 32751

Office: 407-215-1450  
Cell: 407-620-8133  
Fax: 407-659-4805  
Email: [sarcher@sjrwmd.com](mailto: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** – The Project Selection Panel will review, prioritize and recommend to the Governing Board proposed projects based on the considerations listed below.

**Considerations:**

- Project location
- Water supply (i.e. alternative water supply/conservation) benefits
- Water quality benefits
- Cost/benefit effectiveness
- Project timeline

**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 (\*\*New 08/01/16)**

\*\*Regarding SB 552: 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.

Participation in the cost-share program for certain activities, such as conversion to surface water or upgrading to a more efficient irrigation method, will require a modification to an existing Consumptive Use Permit. When the implementation of the cost-share product results in a lower water demand, the modification may result in a reduction in allocation. SJRWMD understands the need to evaluate new

irrigation sources and systems and will work with the applicant to develop a backup allocation until the system has been evaluated over a period of at least five years. In addition, some projects may require an Environmental Resource Permit, particularly if the project is in, on, or over wetlands or other surface waters.

For questions related to Consumptive Use Permits, contact David McInnes at [dmcinnes@sjrwmd.com](mailto:dmcinnes@sjrwmd.com) or at 386-329-4823.

For questions related to Environmental Resource Permits, contact Suzanne Archer at [sarcher@sjrwmd.com](mailto:sarcher@sjrwmd.com) or 407-215-1450.

## Agricultural Cost-Share Funding Criteria

Criteria: Each area of the application is scored in one-point increments based on the quality of the proposal and if the application meets the level of information required in the guidance. Scores ranging from 0 to the max allowed are possible based on the details provided in the application.		TOTAL MAX SCORE
<b>Support for SJRWMD Core Missions and Strategic Initiatives</b>		
A.	<p>Project addresses two or more of SJRWMD's Core Missions..... (6–10)</p> <p>Project addresses one area of SJRWMD's Core Mission..... (1–5)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Water Supply (reductions in water use)</li> <li>• Flood Protection</li> <li>• Water Quality (reductions in offsite movement of N and/or P)</li> <li>• Natural Systems protection</li> </ul>	10
	<p>Contributions to SJRWMD Priority Areas</p> <p>High.....Scoring Range..... (14-20)</p> <p>Project has the potential to decrease the impact of groundwater or surface water withdrawals at an Outstanding Florida Spring or for an MFL (Minimum Flows and Levels) water body whose status is prevention or recovery or whose proposed status based on a pending MFL is prevention or recovery through conservation or support of alternative water supply. The project will result in reductions within, or upstream of, a waterbody with an established PLRG (Pollutant Load Reduction Goals) or TMDL (Total Maximum Daily Load), or an adopted BMAP (Basin Management Action Plan), RAP (Reasonable Assurance Plan) or SWIM (Surface Water Improvement and Management) plan.</p> <p>Medium.....Scoring Range.....(7-13)</p> <p>The project provides demonstrable environmental benefits and is consistent with regional Water Supply Plan goals or provides environmental benefit to an MFL in prevention or recovery or an Outstanding Florida Spring. The project will result in load reductions within, or upstream of, a waterbody that is listed or proposed for listing on the State's Verified List of Impaired Waters for the assessed parameter but is not within, or upstream of, a waterbody with an established nutrient PLRG or TMDL, or an adopted BMAP, RAP or SWIM Plan.</p> <p>Low.....Scoring Range.....(1-6)</p> <p>The project will result in documented water savings but is not expected to provide a benefit to water resource issues of concern. The project will result in nutrient reductions to areas that are not considered impaired.</p>	20

<b>Water Resource Scoring (Section D-1 of the Application)</b>		
<b>B.</b>	<b>Water Resource Benefits</b>  High .....Scoring Range..... (14–20)  Project provides significant environmental benefit. The proposed project is expected to result in 15% or greater reductions in water use or nutrient offsite loading. Project conserves or makes available groundwater. Factors to consider include magnitude of the reduction and size of the watershed benefitted.  Medium .....Scoring Range..... (7-13)  Project provides demonstrable environmental benefits. The proposed project is expected to result in less than 15% and greater than or equal to 10% reductions in water use or nutrient offsite nutrient loading. Project conserves or makes available groundwater or surface water. Factors to consider include magnitude of the reduction and size of the watershed benefitted.  Low .....Scoring Range..... (1–6)  Project is expected to result in less than a 10% reduction in water use or offsite nutrient loading.	20
<b>Project/Practice Implementation Scoring (Section F-1 of the Application)</b>		
<b>C.</b>	<b>Likelihood of Successful and Timely Completion</b>  High .....Scoring Range .....(8 -10) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation starts within two months of approval and/or can be completed within a six-month time frame</li> <li>• Design is complete, if applicable</li> </ul> Medium .....Scoring Range ..... (5-7) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project implementation starts within six months of project approval</li> <li>• Design is underway, but not complete (if applicable)</li> </ul> Low .....Scoring Range ..... (1-4) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project design and permitting incomplete, unproven technology, uncertain funding, delayed construction start date</li> <li>• Uncertain permissibility and applicant has not spoken with Ag Support Team</li> </ul>	10

<b>Cost Effectiveness Scoring (Section G-3 of the Application)</b>		
D.	<p>Cost Effectiveness</p> <p>Cost-effectiveness scoring will be calculated for each project type separately (quantity, quality, etc.). The category (water conserved or made available, TN reduction, TP reduction) with the highest score will be used.</p> <p>Scoring Range.....(0-30)</p>	30
<b>Past Performance</b>		
E.	Deduct up to five points for poor past performance related to a previous cost-share project.	(-5)
	<b>TOTAL</b>	90