



STRATEGIC PLAN 2008-2011



Suwannee River Partnership—Strategic Plan Overview

Introduction

The Suwannee River Partnership is a group of 63 Federal, State, and Local Agencies, State Associations, Private Businesses, and other organizations that have come together to improve and conserve water in the Suwannee and surrounding watersheds within the SRWMD.

The Partnership was established to reduce nutrient loading in the Middle Suwannee River Basin by encouraging land owners to use Best Management Practices through voluntary, and incentive based programs. Over the last six years the Partnership has expanded to cover the entire SRWMD.

The Partnership has been very successful in obtaining high level of participation from the agriculture industry in the basin. 70% of Crop farms 90% of Dairies, and 99% of Poultry Farms have agreed to implement practices that help protect and save water.

Over the last several years the Partnership has begun working with homeowners through the UF-IFAS Florida Yards & Neighborhoods Program to help protect and save water.

The Partnership has made great strides over the last 10 years. Still there is much work that needs to be accomplished in the coming years if the Partnership is to realize its potential in helping to preserve the water resources of the Suwannee, strengthen the economy, and maintain the way of life we enjoy.

The Partnership's Vision

To be an effective partnership for promoting excellent water quality and conservation for all citizens of the SRWMD.

The Mission

To provide researched based solutions that protect and conserve the water resources within the SRWMD by emphasizing the implementation of voluntary, or incentive- based programs.

Our Priority Areas

1. BMP Research, Education, and Implementation
2. Expanded Partnerships
3. Marketing, Awareness, and Accountability



Priority Areas

• **BMP Research, Education, and Implementation**

The Partnership will:

- o Continue to conduct research that verifies and improves the effectiveness of land management practices in protecting and saving water.
- o Continue to identify educational information that provides solutions to land users on management practices that helps protect the environment and that are feasible to use.
- o Continue to provide programs and incentives that help land owners implement management practices that help protect and save water.

• **Expanded Partnerships**

The Partnership will seek to form new Partnerships while promoting the non-regulatory incentive based approach with local leaders and citizens within springsheds.

• **Awareness, Marketing and Accountability**

The Partnership will:

- o Continue to inform land owners, citizens, partners, elected officials, and others about Partnership programs that protect and save water.
- o Continue to document how Partnership programs help protect and save water.

Goals, action items, and performance measures

The Partnership vision, mission, and goals will be achieved through the following strategies and action items.

Strategic Goal Areas

- #1:** *Develop and deliver water quality and conservation tools to increase and sustain agriculture production (while protecting and saving water).*
- #2:** *Develop and deliver water quality and conservation tools to increase and sustain non-agriculture participation (to protect and save water)*
- #3:** *Increase local government participation in the SRP*
- #4:** *Expand the SRP Approach to Springsheds*
- #5:** *Secure and Increase SRP Funding*
- #6:** *Develop public and youth awareness and education programs and activities.*
- #7:** *Communicate the impact of the Suwannee River Partnership to citizens, policy makers and participants*
- #8:** *Explore and research the feasibility of a branding program for SRP participants.*

BMP Research, Education, and Implementation

STRATEGIC GOAL #1

Develop and deliver water quality and conservation tools to increase and sustain agriculture production (while protecting and saving water).

A key component of the Partnership approach has been to provide land users the tools that help them manage fertilizer and irrigation. The intent of this goal is to evaluate how well these tools are being used, identify areas that need improvement, and identify new technology that may be used in this area.

Key Steps or Activities to Achieve Strategic Goal:

- 1. Conduct a survey to prioritize research and education needs**
 - a. ID areas needing BMP implementation
 - b. ID areas where BMPs are not working
 - c. ID issues (fertilizer, irrigation water management)
 - d. Provide results and input to the state inter-agency BMP Research & Education Committee process
- 2. Determine needed resources**
- 3. Conduct research and report information**
 - a. Research electronic devices that can help farmers
 - b. Continue effectiveness studies
 - c. ID short term benefits of BMPs
 - d. Quantify water quantity, water quality, economics benefits of progressive farms
- 4. Conduct and deliver education programs emphasizing the following:**
 - a. One-on-one communication with producers (techs, SRP staff, IFAS, NRCS)
 - b. Increase education of the importance of long term O&M
 - c. Farmer workshops and field days (provide practical-useful information)
 - d. Increase demo/progressive farms
 - e. Promote progressive farms approach to evaluate tools

5. Measure, document, and recognize participation

- a. Provide record keeping software & training
- b. Create a Florida version of Conservation Security Program (reward those doing a good job)
- c. Develop a performance based incentive program
- d. Maintain and improve Quality Assurance programs
- e. Develop additional recognition for demo farms

6. Increase the participation of crop producers to 85%

- a. Develop Quality Assurance and show benefits of current program

7. Promote operation and maintenance of BMPs

8. Measure water quality and quantity of water used

- a. Continued effectiveness studies
- b. Continue monitoring and evaluate five year regional trends
- c. Quantify water saved, improved, and economic benefits of progressive farms package for general public
- d. Develop a farmer water quality status report





Key Steps or Activities to Achieve Strategic Goal:

1. Conduct gap analysis to prioritize research and education needs
2. Inventory resources and determine needed resources
3. Conduct coordinated research and report information
4. Conduct and deliver education programs
5. Measure, document, and recognize participation.
6. Measure water quality and quantity used.
7. Develop plan to implement FYN throughout the SRWMD
8. Develop a program for community participation using The Ichetucknee Partnership as a model
9. Develop Low Impact Development Strategy for developers, and government
10. Develop and implement strategy/ plan for recreational activities (parks, golf courses, hobby ranches, etc.)
12. Develop and implement strategy/ plan for "Green Industries"

Measures of Success

- 1) Completed farmer survey to help prioritize research and education by 12/08
- 2) Resource inventory and needs determination completed by 9/08
- 3) Research/demonstrations at NFREC and on farms completed each year
- 4) Education programs delivered through IFAS Extension
- 5) Improved and maintained participation levels
- 6) Nitrate levels in springs and monitoring decrease over time
- 7) Increased percentage of participants keeping records, and maintaining and operating BMPs
- 8) Participant knowledge increased as a result of education programs

STRATEGIC GOAL #2

Develop and deliver water quality and conservation tools to increase and sustain non-agriculture participation (to protect and save water)

Similar to the agriculture approach the Partnership's main strategy in working with non-agriculture audiences is to provide land users (homeowners, landscapers, builders) Best Management Information and the tools that help them manage fertilizer and irrigation. The intent of this goal is to implement programs designed to assist non-agriculture land users.



Measures of Success

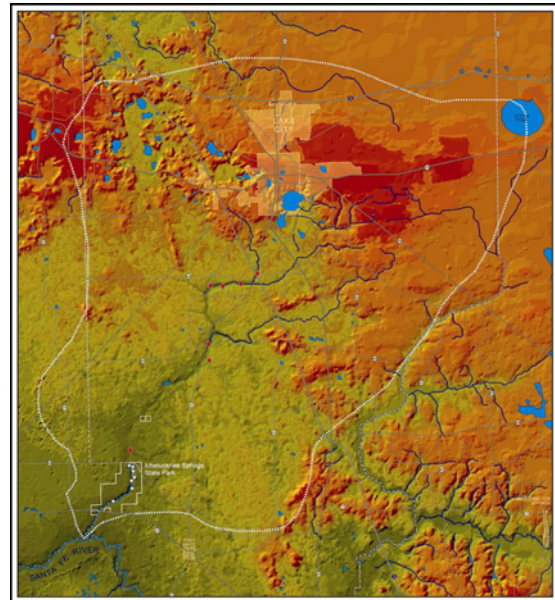
1. Number of homeowners participating in FYN
2. Number of developers using Florida Friendly Landscaping techniques
3. Number of Master Gardener trainings and their opportunities
4. Number of Local Governments participating
5. Measure reduction in water and fertilizer usage



3. Involve IFAS extension and other local partners in keeping local governments informed of SRP activities.
4. Sponsor a SRP local government field day and meeting.

Measures of Success

1. Regular participation by local government representative on the SRP Executive Committee .
2. Number of local governments provided updates on the SRP, and number of times, annually. (target of 20 contacts annually)
3. Number of local governments participate in annual field days.
4. Number of contacts with local governments by SRP staff (set a baseline the first year, and increase each year, as needed).



Expanding The Partnership

STRATEGIC GOAL #3

Increase local government participation in the SRP

Seek input and additional involvement from local governments to ensure the Partnership is addressing local needs.

Key Steps or Activities to Achieve Strategic Goal:

1. Establish a formal seat on the SRP Executive Committee for local government. Rotate the membership every two years among interested local governments.
2. Brief local governments annually on SRP activities.

STRATEGIC GOAL #4

Expand the SRP Approach to Springsheds

Expand the Partnership approach to springsheds within the SRWMD to help intensify efforts to improve water quality and save water.

Key Steps or Activities to Achieve Strategic Goal:

1. Brief SRP Executive Committee on current springshed efforts.
2. Identify springsheds needing partnerships.
3. Meet with affected local governments to inform them of the benefits of forming partnerships.
4. Establish clear connection between SRP and springshed partnerships
 - a. Have springshed partnership chairs be formal members of SRP Executive Committee.
 - b. Have regular updates on springshed partnership activities for SRP Executive Committee.
 - c. Invite springshed partnership members to participate in annual SRP dinner.

Measures of Success :

1. Number of springshed partnerships formed
2. Extent of local government participation in springshed partnerships
 - a. Number of local governments signing partnership agreement
 - b. Amount of funds and other in-kind contributions by local governments to partnership effort
 - c. Leadership provided by local governments in partnership effort

STRATEGIC GOAL #5

Secure and Increase SRP Funding

The Partnership is a successful public-private watershed initiative because the partners have pooled their resources to focus on common priorities. Future successes depend on the Partnerships ability to secure funding.

Key Steps or Activities to Achieve Strategic Goal:

1. Develop a priority funding needs list

2. Educate federal/state legislators and other potential funding partners about SRP goals, activities, and funding needs
 - a. Contact key members and legislative committees to get on interim meeting agendas, etc.
 - b. Contact other potential funding partners.



3. Expand grant-writing capacity in the SRP.
4. Identify grant opportunities and secure grants.
5. Assist local governments and other SRP partners in applying for and securing grants to support SRP goals.

Measures of Success :

1. Amount of funding acquired relative to needs identified.
2. Amount of funding provided to local governments for support of SRP goals, through assistance from the SRP (# and amount of grants secured, appropriations, cost-share partnerships, etc.)

Marketing, Awareness, and Accountability

STRATEGIC GOAL #6

Develop public awareness and education programs .

Key Steps or Activities to Achieve Strategic Goal:

1. Establish festival / activity day steering committee.
 - a. Get a commitment to serve by April 2010
 - b. Will be responsible for getting sponsorships, volunteers, exhibitors, media, sign-age for sponsors, participants, participant gifts .
2. Develop Agri-Science / Science curriculum committee. Curriculum emphasizes regional water resources.
3. Team up with IFAS / DOE / DACS on existing curriculum development for Environmental and Natural resource curriculum development.
4. Will could take approx. 1 year to develop 150 hours of course work and \$20,000.
5. Investigate "Summer Camp" program.
6. Set up presentations for K-12 levels as well as civic club presentations.
 - a. Need volunteers to supply information to develop power-point presentation applicable for 4 different level presentations.
 - b. Information for presentations needed by July 2010 to develop presentations for 09/10 school year.
7. Displays / pop-ups for festivals, in school presentations, fairs and other community events.
 - a. Upon committee approval DACS will design pop-up or pop-ups. SRP will pay for printing and development.

Measures of Success

Measures of Success:

- Dates set for annual festival or activity days.
- Sponsorships, media, local government participation, participation numbers.
- Dates set for curriculum development meetings.
- Information gathered to develop curriculum.
- Amount of interest for camp.
- Amount of volunteer support to run the camp.
- Number of times presentations are presented to schools or civic clubs.
- Number of times pop-up and displays are used at different events.

STRATEGIC GOAL #7

Communicate the impact of the Suwannee River Partnership to citizens, policy makers and participants

Key Steps or Activities to Achieve Strategic Goal:

1. Make appointments with elected officials and civic organizations to talk about SRP.
 - a. Develop SPR board member and staff calendar for elected official and civic appointments.
 - b. Develop Presentations and handouts.
 - c. Develop Calendar of SRP.
2. Hold field tours with elected officials.
3. Develop presentations, quantifiable data and short reports to deliver.
4. Create local newspaper ads and human interest stories.
 - e. Need approval from board to develop ads and purchase ad space if it is not considered public service.
 - f. DACS will design ads.
 - g. Need volunteers to supply information for human interest stories about SRP participants and SRP programs.

5. Continue communication with participants through workshops, small accomplishment reports and personal contacts.

- h. SRP staff needs to keep up with farmer visits and report to a central person. (done regularly)
- i. IFAS workshop development
- j. DACS develops accomplishment reports (done annually)

Measures of Success (outcomes to be measured and target level to achieve):

- Increased and stable source of funding
- Number of elected officials visited
- Number of farmers visited
- Number of newspaper ads and human interest stories published
- Number of IFAS workshops held
- Number of farmers attending workshops



STRATEGIC GOAL #8

Explore and research the feasibility of a branding program for SRP participants.

Provide additional incentive for participants to operate and maintain best management practices, and to strengthen the agriculture economy of the area.

Key Steps or Activities to Achieve Strategic Goal:

1. Develop an advisory group to evaluate a branding program .
 - a. Develop a list of possible members by July 2008
 - b. Members committed to serve by September 2008

Measures of Success (outcomes to be measured and target level to achieve):

- Recommendation from advisory group for action or inaction.

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