

NEFLRIC

Highlights

Monthly Report of the Northeast Florida Regional Council

January 2008



Council President, Commissioner Harold Rutledge addressed a crowd of close to 300 audience members at the recent Water Supply Summit hosted by the Regional Council. Commissioners Tom Manuel, St. Johns County; Marianne Marshall, Nassau County and Nancy Harris, Putnam County listen intently to his remarks.



(Left to right) Mr. Ebenezer Gujjarladpudi, representing the City of Jacksonville, Commissioner Robert Bradley, Clay County and Commissioner Jim O'Connell, Flagler County, participate in the discussion surrounding the importance of the St. Johns River.

shoe shaped table to analyze the topic, listen to speakers and share ideas and opinions in an effort to form a consensus. Nearly 300 people were in attendance.

Commissioner Rutledge welcomed the crowd shortly after 1:00 pm and set the stage for the topic at hand. University of North Florida President and former Jacksonville Mayor John Delaney, who is currently the Chairman of the St. Johns River Water Alliance also welcomed the crowd and shared a perspective of the proposed withdrawal.

Other speakers who participated were: Mr. Hal Wilkening, Director of the Department of Resource Management for the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD), speaking on behalf of SJRWMD Executive Director Kirby Green; Mr. Neil Armingeon, the St. Johns Riverkeeper; Mr. Thomas Drage, County Attorney for Orange County, Florida, speaking on behalf of Orange County Mayor Richard Crotty; and Mr. Steve Siebert, Executive Director of the Century Commission for a Sustainable Florida.

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The proposal to withdraw up to 261 million gallons of water per day from the St. Johns and Ocklawaha Rivers to help satisfy the potable water needs of Central Florida in the year 2013 and beyond has been a hot topic through out the Region.

Recently there has been a great deal of media coverage on this issue and communities in Northeast Florida are individually taking positions on the withdrawal proposal. In response to the issue, the Northeast Florida Regional Council hosted an event led by Council President, Clay County Commissioner Harold Rutledge entitled: **The Northeast Florida Regional Water Supply Summit: The Future of the St. Johns River.**

The core purpose of the Water Supply Summit was to educate attendees on the issue, and determine if there is a common position that can be developed for our Region and to plan for next steps.

On Friday, January 25, 2008, the Summit was held at the St. Johns County Convention Center at the World Golf Village, in St. Augustine. Although the Summit was open to the public, its target audience was the local Chief Elected Officials, who convened at a horse-

shoe shaped table to analyze the topic, listen to speakers and share ideas and opinions in an effort to form a consensus.

Following the presenters, Council CEO, Brian Teeple, facilitated a group discussion aimed at building consensus among the Chief Elected Officials. Audience members were permitted to submit questions, thoughts, comments and concerns on "input cards"; some of which were addressed at the Summit.

A comprehensive review of the Summit is posted on its Web site at www.RegionalH2O.com. For more information, please contact Brian Teeple at (904) 279-0885 x 103.



A crowd of nearly 300 gathered at the St. Johns County Convention Center at the World Golf Village in St. Augustine, Florida on Friday January 25, 2008, to discuss the importance of the future of the St. Johns River.

Council staff participates in regional evacuation study presentation

On Monday, January 14, 2008, staff from the Northeast Florida Regional Council (NEFRC) participated in a regional evacuation study meeting at the Indian River County Emergency Operations Center (EOC). It was a joint meeting arranged by Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council and included the East Central Florida Regional Council along with the NEFRC.

The NEFRC's Director of Emergency Preparedness was the main presenter and served as subject matter expert on the topic and the policy issues raised at the meeting. One important outcome of the meeting was a follow up list of issues/questions that will be submitted to the Department of Community Affairs (DCA). This document is intended to address many of the local government issues that have been raised regarding the regional evacuation study, and the new Coastal High Hazard Area (CHHA) statute, as it relates to Comprehensive Plans.

For more information, please contact Margo Moehring, at (904) 279-0885 x 161.

Emergency simulation drill prepares region for potential disaster

Staff from the Northeast Florida Regional Council (NEFRC) Emergency Preparedness program area joined about 75 others to participate in a full-scale emergency simulation Wednesday, January 23, 2008.

The simulation included reports of of an explosion and chemical spill at a local paper mill. Injuries, contamination and a toxic cloud on the move. And, at the same time, an armed terrorist targeting Rodman Dam with a biological attack.

Members of Putnam County Emergency Management, Putnam County Sheriff's Office, Palatka Police and Fire Departments, and other agencies worked together to manage the multiple emergencies.

The purpose of the exercise was to challenge local responders and emergency management officials and to help identify any potential issues and improve plans before an actual event occurs.

The simulation was designed and executed by the NEFRC, which has conducted numerous exercises of this type, most notably a full-scale event prior to the 2005 Super Bowl in Jacksonville.

Most of those involved in the drill were posted at the county's new emergency operations center on State Road 19 in Palatka. The simulation provided valuable information to the agencies involved, and was particularly helpful in allowing participants to become used to new equipment.

Two new systems used in the exercise include Citywatch, which uses computers to notify residents by telephone of an emergency. Also, officials tested computer software that allowed emergency crews from various agencies to easily share up-to-the-minute information.

For more information, please contact Joe Garcia at (904) 279-0885 x 133.