

# TOO FAR NEWS

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Protecting & Conserving Our Water

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### Mischief

The Withlacoochee Regional Water Supply Authority, WRWSA, is the way to avoid Local Sources First. Yes, most of you remember or have heard of the water wars and the fight against a water pipe from the Tsala Apopka Lakes to Tampa. We won and our then Senator Nancy Argenziano led the fight to stop the long distance water piracy. The roadblock was Local Sources First which still gets a lot of lip service but the stealth forces came up with a new approach. It was patterned after Tampa Bay Water the public co-operative that built and put together a massive combination of water facilities including the desalination plant and the reservoir. Ignoring the years of delay and design flaws, it is finally functioning. The project was so big that it made sense to combine the multiplicity of governments into a regional authority.

Now zoom into the Citrus, Hernando, Sumter and Marion - 4 county area: the WRWSA. After years and hundreds of thousands of dollars spent they generated a plan. The first part of the plan was submitted to their board for implementation on June 16th. Their board members are representatives of the various cities and counties that make up the authority. None of the board members are elected to the board by the public.

TOO FAR has members in all 4 counties but Citrus County was in the barrel for this first phase. Citrus County has 4 representatives on the board. Ken Hinkle Councilman from Inverness missed the meeting on June 16<sup>th</sup>. The other three are County Commissioners and all were present.

An 8 page memo supported the budget to "implement" the plan. The plan shows a new well-field in south-central Citrus County with a "proposed interconnect" to Hernando County. Citrus County was well represented in the audience filling most of the chairs in a full house. TOO FAR had four members there, including me. Citrus County Council had six members there including Teddi Rusnak, President. Norman Hopkins, Director of the Amy Remley Foundation and Jim Bitter, President of the Homosassa River Alliance were also there. Some belonged to more than one organization. The guests begged, pleaded and instructed the Commissioners to no avail. The Executive Director assured the Commissioners that the "interconnect" from Citrus County to Hernando County would carry no ground water but only Alternative Water Source (AWS) water in the distant future. This was in spite of the fact that the plan drawings clearly show that the "interconnect" (read "pipe") will exist before any AWS is available.

Hopefully the Citrus County Commissioners as well as the other board members will wake up and see this is a real danger and protect the resources of their areas.

This is just the beginning - Jack Sullivan and Pete Hubbell (you remember him) have the Withlacoochee and Lake Rousseau in their sights. Their plan includes a four foot diameter pipe taking water out of Rousseau potentially to the detriment of the Gulf estuary and the lower Withlacoochee River.

I pray that the vision of the board members clears up.

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