

# Water Resource Funding Program Opportunities

Compiled by Tatiana Borisova ([tborisova@ufl.edu](mailto:tborisova@ufl.edu)) and Tyler Pratt, Food and Resource Economics Department, University of Florida.

## Local Funding for Infrastructure Projects

**Local Government Infrastructure Surtax:** Section 212.055(2), Florida Statutes, authorizes a sales surtax of 0.5 or 1 percent, the proceeds of which must be used to "finance, plan, and construct infrastructure; acquire land for public recreation, conservation, or protection of natural resources; or finance the closure of local government-owned solid waste landfills that have been closed or are required to be closed" by DEP. (...) The surtax must be approved by voters in a countywide referendum after either a majority of the county's governing body passes an ordinance or municipalities representing a majority of the county's residents all adopt uniform resolutions calling for the referendum. The surtax rate is subject to limits enumerated in section 212.055, Florida Statutes, which depend on what other surtaxes are levied in the county and the aggregated surtax rate.

(This information is copied from pages 159-160 of *2021 Annual Assessment of Florida Water Resources and Conservation Lands* by Economic and Demographic Research, see [http://edr.state.fl.us/Content/natural-resources/LandandWaterAnnualAssessment\\_2021Edition.pdf](http://edr.state.fl.us/Content/natural-resources/LandandWaterAnnualAssessment_2021Edition.pdf)).

## Regional Funding Programs: Suwannee River Water Management District

- <https://www.mysuwanneeriver.com/373/Funding-Initiatives>
- email [Projects@SRWMD.org](mailto:Projects@SRWMD.org) or call 386-362-1001 and ask to speak to the Agricultural and Environmental Projects Team.

**Regional Initiative Valuing Environmental Resources (RIVER) Cooperative Funding Program** is available to county governments, municipalities, water supply authorities, and other interested government for projects that enhance or address the District's water supply, water quality, flood protection, and/or natural system responsibilities. (see more at <https://www.mysuwanneeriver.com/374/RIVER-Cost-Share-Program> ).

**Agricultural Cost-Share Program** provides cost-share funds to assist agricultural producers with projects to maximize irrigation system efficiency and advanced management tools that save water. Also, funds are available for dairy farms to enhance their wastewater management systems. These funds help protect and conserve water resources in the river basins and the hundreds of outstanding springs in our District.

(see more at <https://www.mysuwanneeriver.com/366/Agricultural-Cost-Share-Program> ).

**School & Community Water Resource Grants** are available for school and school-age educational community groups for projects that implement water conservation, water quality improvement, or efficient irrigation management. (see more at <https://www.mysuwanneeriver.com/395/Educational-Water-Resource-Funding-Progr> ).

# State Funding Sources

## Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

This state agency offers an online summary of various funding programs available for local governments, utilities, and other entities to construct, plan, design, or manage a water-related project. A summary is available on the webpage of the Division of Water Restoration Assistance at: <https://floridadep.gov/wra/wra/highlights/water-project-funding-sources> .

The list of contacts that can be contacted for additional information about the programs can be found at: <https://floridadep.gov/wra/wra/content/water-restoration-assistance-contacts>

## Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

**Agricultural Best Management Practice Cost-Share Programs:** the Department works with multiple partners, including the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, water management districts, and soil and water conservation districts, to provide funding to assist producers in implementing Best Management Practices. The Department prioritizes cost-share funding for projects and practices that provide the greatest benefits to water resources. To learn more, check <https://www.fdacs.gov/Agriculture-Industry/Water/Agricultural-Best-Management-Practices> .

**The Rural and Family Lands Protection Program** is an agricultural land preservation program designed to protect important agricultural lands through the acquisition of permanent agricultural land conservation easements. This program is intended to ensure sustainable agricultural practices and reasonable protection of the environment without interfering with agricultural operations. See more at <https://www.fdacs.gov/Consumer-Resources/Protect-Our-Environment/Rural-and-Family-Lands-Protection-Program> .

**Other programs:** see a summary of grant opportunities at <https://www.fdacs.gov/Business-Services/Grant-Opportunities> .

## Federal Funding: U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA)

**Rural Utilities Service's Water and Environmental Programs:** Rural communities obtain the technical assistance and financing necessary to develop drinking water and waste disposal systems. More information is available at the following website: <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/all-programs/water-environmental-programs> .

**Natural Resources Conservation Service:** the agency offers assistance for agricultural producers through three programs: EQIP (General Environmental Quality Incentives Program), RCPP (Regional Conservation Partnership Program), and the CSP (Conservation Stewardship Program). NRCS staff work with farmers and ranchers to develop a conservation plan to address natural resource concerns for individual operations. " (copied from an article by Dr. Andrea Albertin, UF/IFAS Extension; <http://nwdistrict.ifas.ufl.edu/phag/2020/05/22/funding-opportunities-to-implement-bmps-in-the-florida-panhandle/> )