

Community Conversation – Water & Wetlands

Panelist Suggested Questions

Del Bottcher

1. Isn't existing development our biggest problem? What policies/practices should be recommended for the existing urban landscapes? Irrigation and fertilization, are they really needed? Are there realistic (socially acceptable) alternatives?
2. Can developments be designed to enhance water resources beyond just trying to minimize impacts?
3. Can BMPs alone meet our water resource restoration targets?
4. What is the biggest concern, water quantity and quality? Why?
5. What is our most critical water resource issue in Alachua County, i.e. where should we focus our resources most, e.g. urban, industrial, agricultural, silviculture, surface water, groundwater?
6. How do we ensure science, not hysteria, is our principle guidance for decision making?

Marc Kramer

1. What are the key adaptation strategies which would best address vulnerabilities of Alachua County to future climate change impacts? (follow on from above question)
2. Has a climate change vulnerability assessment and adaptation strategy for Alachua been completed and what would a framework for such an approach look like if not?
3. What landscape-scale connections exist in Alachua County (environmental, social and economic) that could be used to develop a comprehensive risk assessment for future change?
4. What are the projected future impacts of adjacent counties in the region to Alachua County and how does Alachua County fit into the regional growth mosaic of Northern Florida?
5. Which portions of Alachua County are most and least vulnerable (from an environmental perspective) to future land use change and why?

Pierce Jones

What we discuss should be applicable to any future development anywhere in the County...

1. What data is available on water use in Alachua County? What do current water usage patterns in Alachua County look like? How are usage patterns trending in newer developments?

2. What drives water consumption in development projects? Where/when in the development project approval process is water consumption considered? What water conservation strategies could be integrated into the development approval process (before and after initial development approval)?
3. Water efficient landscaping, is Water Star and Florida Friendly enough?
4. What water conservation strategies might work for existing developments?

Mark Clark

1. With respect to the county's water resources, are some areas better than others for residential development, agriculture, commercial and industry to occur?
2. Are there practices available today that can reduce/minimize the impact(s) of new development and intensification of land use? If so can you give some examples and what might be preventing their widespread adoption.
3. How should County policies incorporate the known implications or uncertainties of climate change in the management of water resources?
4. If the expectation is for the population of Alachua County (and the broader region) to continue to grow, how do we stretch a finite supply of water?
5. If it is determined that wetlands and other water resources that occur on private lands are important to protect, what strategies exist to compensate the private land owner for the potential loss of their land to development or intensification?
6. similar to above) If changes in the comprehensive plan or development code were adopted to address protection of water resources, how should private landowners that may control those resources be compensated? Should they simply be obligated to protect the resource at their own expense (possible 5th amendment "taking" issue)? Is it possible to develop a payment for environmental services program to incentivize the protection of these resources? Should the county purchase the land to protect these resources for the public's benefit? Who should pay?
7. There are numerous water quality related policies at the state and regional level intended to protect water resources for public use, such as state water quality standards, stormwater infrastructure requirements etc. Are these state level policies adequate to protect local resources or should more be done locally to address water quality impacts.
8. How do you define the term sustainability in terms of water quantity and water quality? Relative to your definition, is sustainable water management attainable? If not is there a more appropriate management goal that is attainable?

9. Instead of trying to regulate land use activity on private property as a means to protect downstream water resources, is there a way to establish quantitative metrics that a landowner would need to meet that would be protective of the public's downstream water resources? This approach would allow the landowner to in theory do whatever they wanted on the land as long as they met the metrics established at the edge of the property. Enforcement of these metrics and implications if they were not met is likely a limitation, but is this approach vs. presumption of protection through land policy regulations potentially more effective at the end goal.