

INDIAN RIVER COUNTY, FLORIDA

MEMORANDUM

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**TO:** Board of County Commissioners

**THROUGH:** John A. Titkanich, Jr., County Administrator

**PREPARED BY:** Andrew Sobczak  
Interim Community Development Director

**DATE:** August 15, 2023

**SUBJECT:** Renewal of a cost-share agreement with the St. Johns River Water Management District for abandoned artesian well plugging

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It is requested that the data herein presented be given formal consideration by the Board of County Commissioners at its regular meeting on August 29, 2023.

**DESCRIPTION AND CONDITIONS**

From 1990 through 2009, Indian River County participated in a cost-share program with the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) to plug abandoned artesian wells countywide, including wells on private property (subject to authorization from the private landowner). As a result of the program, an estimated 395 wells were plugged or repaired in Indian River County, saving millions of gallons per day of groundwater. The program was discontinued from fiscal years 2009/10 through 2014/15, due to a lack of funding as a result of the economic downturn. In June 2015, the Board approved an agreement with SJRWMD that reactivated the program, at the previous funding level of (up to) \$20,000 per agency per year.

The well plugging program is important because not only do abandoned flow-wells unnecessarily consume groundwater, they also pollute the surficial aquifer (primary source for private potable wells) with chloride.

**ANALYSIS**

Since 2015, the cost-share agreement with SJRWMD has been renewed every three years. Since the last agreement was approved in 2020, a new agreement is necessary to continue the program. While the agreement approved in 2020 remains valid until September 30, 2023, the new agreement extends the program until September 30, 2026. As with previous cost-share agreements, each agency (the County and SJRWMD) will allocate \$20,000 toward the program each year contingent upon annual budget allocations.

## **FUNDING**

For FY 2023/24, funding for the well-plugging program has been allocated in MSTU/ Planning/Code Enforcement Budget Account # 00420724-033190, under “Professional Services.”

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the Board of County Commissioners approve the cost-share agreement with SJRWMD to plug abandoned flow wells, and authorize the Board Chairman to execute the agreement.

## **Attachments:**

1. SJRWMD cost-share agreement