



City of Green Cove Springs

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Magnolia Point Reclaimed Water Project

Overview

In June 2024, the City began a project in the Magnolia Point neighborhood to install reclaimed water pipes. The project's design and permitting has been funded by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's State Revolving Fund. The project began with a survey of the area, including the identification and mapping of underground utilities. The surveying and mapping process may take up to a year. Subject to funding and phasing, construction for this project is expected to commence between 2026 and 2027, with completion anticipated before 2032.

Project Purpose

- In 2022, Florida passed Senate Bill 64, which requires utilities to stop discharging treated wastewater into surface waters (like the St. Johns River) by 2032. This law aims to improve water quality by reducing nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus) that can harm ecosystems.
- Magnolia Point is the highest and most concentrated user of irrigation water in the City.
- Currently, the water has always been sourced from the Floridan Aquifer (a limited resource) for irrigation.
- Clean drinking water is precious, especially with Florida's growing population.
- The city wants to reduce water usage both inside homes and for irrigation.
- The plan is to switch all of Magnolia Point's irrigation systems from using drinking water to reclaimed water.
- When fully implemented, this conversion will save about 73.9 million gallons of Floridan Aquifer water each year.
- Conversion of the irrigation system to reclaimed water will remedy the low-pressure conditions in the higher elevation areas of Magnolia Point, which is caused by irrigation taking place during morning hours when residents are starting their day (heavy water usage).

Frequently Asked Questions

- **Why did Florida enact the Surface Water Discharge Elimination Act?**
 - This law aims to improve water quality by reducing nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus) that can harm ecosystems.
- **Why reclaimed water?**
 - Reclaimed water directly reduces the use of drinking water for irrigation.

- It also provides nutrients to landscapes.
- **When does the project begin?**
 - Surveying and design of the project and at water plants are currently underway.
 - Actual construction of the reclaimed water system is anticipated in late 2026 / early 2027.
- **Is reclaimed water safe for both me and my pets?**
 - According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), reclaimed water is generally considered safe for both people and pets after it has undergone proper treatment and disinfection. This extensive process, which will be followed by the City of Green Cove Springs, eliminates harmful contaminants, making the water suitable for various non-potable uses such as irrigation. However, it is not recommended for consumption or bathing. It is recommended that people wash their hands after handling it. For pets, it's fine for them to walk and play in areas irrigated with reclaimed water.
- **Is it safe for my plants and grass?**
 - When used appropriately and within regulatory guidelines, reclaimed water can be a safe and effective option for plant irrigation. It helps conserve freshwater resources and provides a sustainable water source for landscaping and agriculture. Before using reclaimed water, it is advisable to check the salinity tolerance and nutrient requirements of your plants.
- **Are there any health concerns posed by eating fruits and vegetables grown in an area irrigated by reclaimed water?**
 - According to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), “reclaimed water should not be directly applied to the surfaces of vegetables or other edible crops that are not peeled, cooked, or thermally processed before being consumed.” Therefore, fruits and vegetables that have been directly irrigated with reclaimed water (reclaimed water touches the edible portion) may be consumed if they are peeled or properly cooked. Fruit and vegetables that have been indirectly irrigated with reclaimed water (reclaimed water does not touch the edible portion) are considered safe to consume even if they are not peeled, cooked, or thermally processed.
- **What are the benefits of using reclaimed water?**
 - **Resource Conservation:** It reduces the demand on fresh water supplies by recycling and reusing water that would otherwise be wasted.
 - **Environmental Protection:** Using reclaimed water helps in maintaining higher levels of water in natural habitats such as rivers and wetlands, thus protecting ecosystems and wildlife.
 - **Sustainable Landscaping:** It provides an alternative source for irrigation, helping to maintain landscapes, parks, and golf courses during droughts without tapping into potable water.
 - **Economic Benefits:** Reusing water can lead to cost savings, as it reduces the need for energy-intensive processes involved in water extraction and distribution.

- **Reducing Pollution:** By treating and reusing wastewater, we minimize the discharge of pollutants into oceans, rivers, and other bodies of water, contributing to cleaner environments.
- **Agricultural Use:** Reclaimed water can be used for agricultural irrigation, providing a steady supply of water for crops and reducing the strain on freshwater resources.
- **Industrial Applications:** It can be used in various industrial processes, including cooling systems and boiler feed water, thereby conserving fresh water for other uses.

- **Will the reclaimed water system improve the water pressure at my home?**
 - Reclaimed water plays a crucial role in enhancing water pressure for various applications. By reusing treated wastewater for non-potable purposes, such as irrigation and industrial processes, we reduce the demand on the main water supply system. This alleviates pressure on freshwater resources, allowing for more consistent and improved water pressure in residential and commercial areas. Additionally, reclaimed water systems are designed to operate efficiently, providing a reliable and sustainable solution for maintaining optimal water pressure while conserving our precious water resources.
- **How often is the quality of the water measured and is the salinity of the water higher than potable water?**
 - Our reclaimed water is similar to that of the Clay County Utility Authority and other utilities across the state. "Salinity" is not a required parameter for testing by utilities. In March 2025, the City of Green Cove Springs had both potable and reclaimed water tested by Advanced Environmental Laboratory. The results showed that both samples had analyte levels "below detection limits," meaning any salinity present is too low to be detected by the testing equipment.

Additional Resources

- A good resource for methods to reduce water consumption, in addition to regulations on irrigation ("watering days/times", etc.) is the St. Johns River Water Management District. The link to their water conservation website is <http://www.sjrwmd.com/waterconservation/>.
- The City follows the St. Johns River Water Management District regulations on irrigation ("watering days/times", etc.). The link to their water restrictions website is: <http://www.sjrwmd.com/wateringrestrictions/>.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/>

Contact Information

- To ask additional questions about this project, please contact:
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