

**JOINT STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT
FOR THE
DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF A
STATEWIDE COMPREHENSIVE WATER CONSERVATION PROGRAM
FOR PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY**

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection; the South Florida Water Management District; the St. Johns River Water Management District; the Southwest Florida Water Management District; the Northwest Florida Water Management District; the Suwannee River Water Management District; the Florida Public Service Commission; the Utility Council of the American Water Works Association, Florida Section; the Utility Council of the Florida Water Environment Association; and the Florida Rural Water Association; collectively hereinafter referred to as the SIGNATORIES, endorse the following Joint Statement of Commitment regarding the Statewide Comprehensive Water Conservation Program for Public Water Supply, herein after referred to as the PROGRAM.

Background

In 2001-2002, the SIGNATORIES to this Joint Statement, in collaboration with many other stakeholders, participated in the Florida Water Conservation Initiative. All water uses were addressed in this wide-ranging process and the participants collectively recommended many conservation tools in the April 2002 Report from the Water Conservation Initiative. It was recognized that enhanced water conservation would benefit all water uses, both economically and environmentally, as well as to ensure the sustainability of Florida's water resources.

As discussed in the Water Conservation Initiative, public water supply currently represents the second largest water use sector in Florida. Conservation is a very important demand management tool for public water supply utilities to enhance the sustainability of Florida's water resources. Many years of developing, implementing, and refining water conservation programs by public water supply utilities have created the opportunity for the next phase of effectiveness: the implementation of the Statewide Comprehensive Water Conservation Program for Public Water Supply.

WHEREAS conservation of water is an important means of achieving economical and efficient utilization of water and ensuring the sustainability of the water resources of Florida; and

WHEREAS the public water supply industry, in cooperation with the water management districts, has achieved substantial water conservation through existing programs but recognizes that meaningful improvements are still possible; and

WHEREAS social, economic, and cultural conditions vary by geographic region within the State, resulting in the need for public water supply utilities to have the flexibility to tailor conservation programs to reflect their individual circumstances; and

WHEREAS the current water use regulatory system allows flexibility in water use permitting with regard to water conservation but could be improved; and

WHEREAS a range of conservation practices are available for implementation to achieve more efficient use of water; and

WHEREAS individual utilities should be encouraged to implement water conservation practices that are economically efficient, effective, affordable, and appropriate; and

WHEREAS it is the intent of the PROGRAM to allow no reduction in utility-specific water conservation effectiveness; and

WHEREAS the PROGRAM should be goal-based, accountable, and measurable and developed and implemented collaboratively with water suppliers, water users, and water management agencies; and

WHEREAS individual water conservation programs should focus upon cost-effective measures for the unique characteristics of particular utility service areas incorporating analyses of economic efficiency of individual practices, where appropriate; and

WHEREAS it is essential to establish a centralized clearinghouse to encompass new and existing information on water conservation programs and practices to support sharing of results, identification of benchmarks and performance measures for effectiveness, and continual assessment of water conservation programs and practices; and

WHEREAS the successful development and implementation of the PROGRAM will require the allocation of financial resources.

THEREFORE, the SIGNATORIES agree that a goal-based, accountable, and measurable PROGRAM should be developed and implemented to allow public water supply utilities the flexibility to tailor cost-effective conservation programs to reflect their individual circumstances so as to achieve greater water use efficiency. Towards implementing the PROGRAM, the following should be undertaken:

A. Improve the Measurement and Evaluation of Water Conservation Programs and Practices

- Develop standardized public water supply conservation definitions and measurement practices.
- Collect public water supply information using standardized conservation definitions and measurement practices.
- Develop quantitative and qualitative performance measures in an overall system for assessing and benchmarking the effectiveness of water conservation programs and practices.

- Develop processes for evaluation of the effectiveness of utility-specific water conservation practices such as cost-benefit analyses, cost-effectiveness analyses, or other suitable methods.

B. Improve the Design and Implementation of Water Conservation Programs

- Develop a consistent approach to the design, implementation, evaluation, and adaptation of utility-specific water conservation programs. The attached flowchart (“Utility Process for Statewide Comprehensive Water Conservation Program for Public Water Supply”) should serve as the framework for the design of that overall approach.
- Develop a minimum set of water conservation practices (scaled to utility size) to be implemented by all utilities.
- Develop and maintain a Florida-specific water conservation guidance document, as a part of the overall PROGRAM, to support the design and implementation of utility-specific water conservation programs.

C. Ensure Regulatory Frameworks Adequately Support Flexibility in the Design of Water Conservation Programs

- Collaboratively develop a consistent regulatory process to implement the PROGRAM.
- Collaboratively develop utility-specific water conservation goals, and require utilities to be accountable for achieving those goals.
- Provide regulatory flexibility in the selection of water conservation practices for each particular water supply utility by focusing on the effectiveness of the utility’s water conservation program.

D. Enhance Assistance and Information Sharing Regarding Water Conservation Programs

- Establish a water conservation clearinghouse to include an accessible, integrated database for information collection, evaluation of conservation effectiveness, and distribution of qualitative and quantitative information on water conservation programs and practices.
- Utilize the clearinghouse as a resource to assist in the development and implementation of water conservation programs and practices.
- Identify other forms of assistance the public water supply utilities need to assess and select appropriate water conservation practices.

- Explore opportunities for research to support refinement of water conservation practices and development of utility-specific programs.

The SIGNATORIES agree that collaboration is essential for the achievement of the above goals. The SIGNATORIES further agree to undertake the following two-step process:

Step 1. Within twelve (12) months of the execution of this Statement, a Work Plan will be developed with specific tasks, interim milestones, completion dates, estimates of costs for each task, and assignment of responsibilities to:

a. Develop standardized definitions and performance measures for water conservation data collection and analysis.

b. Establish a clearinghouse for water conservation programs and practices that will provide:

- An integrated statewide database for the collection, evaluation, and dissemination of quantitative and qualitative information on water conservation programs and practices and their effectiveness.
- Technical assistance capabilities to aid in the design, refinement, and implementation of water conservation programs and practices.
- Continual assessment of the effectiveness of water conservation programs and practices.

c. Develop and implement a standardized process for utilities consistent with the attached flowchart titled “Utility Process for Statewide Comprehensive Water Conservation Program for Public Water Supply”.

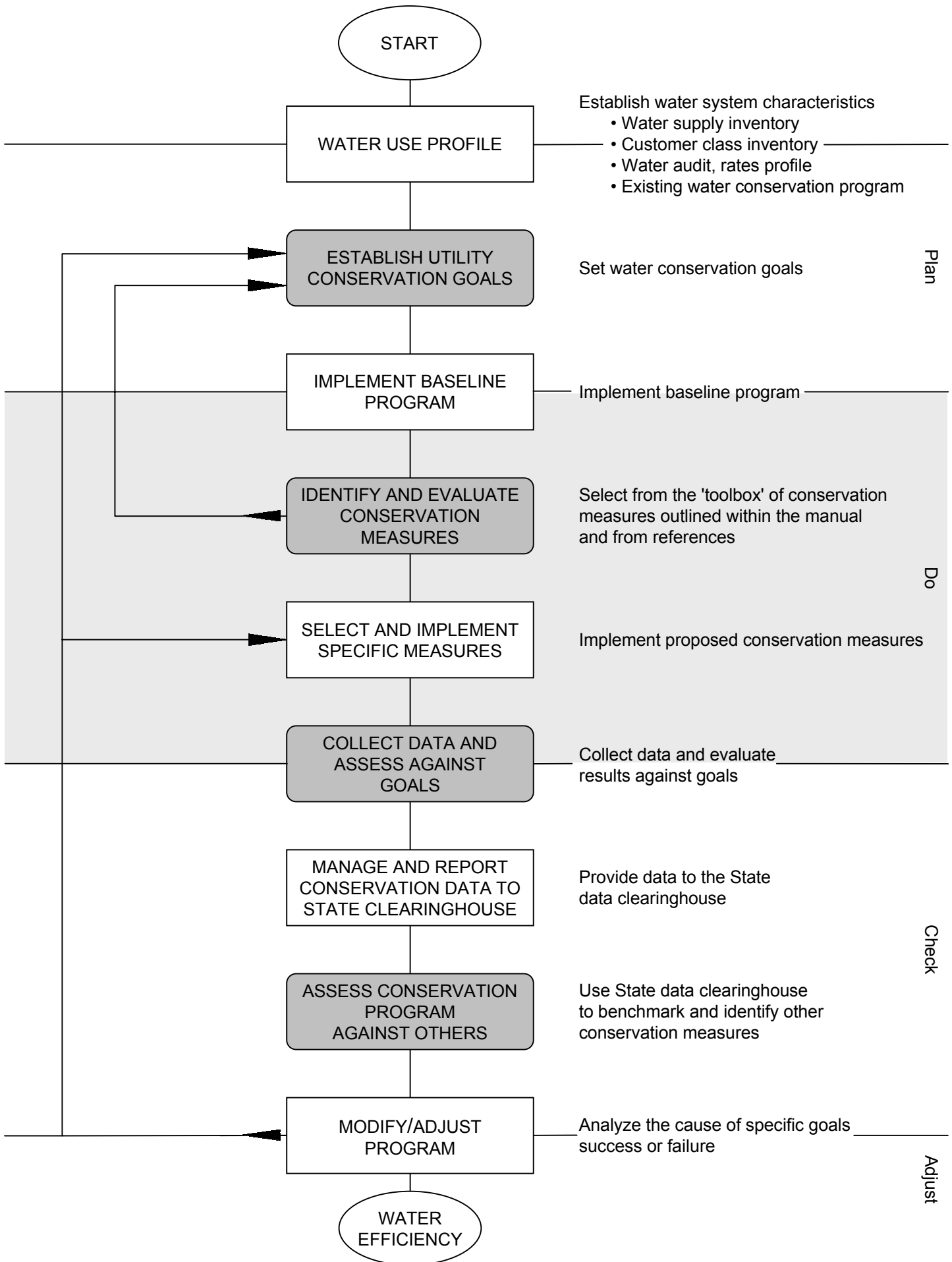
d. Develop and maintain a Florida-specific water conservation guidance document to assist public water suppliers in the design and implementation of a utility-specific water conservation program incorporating the standardized process specified above.

e. Implement pilot applications of various elements of, or the entire PROGRAM, through cooperative agreements with volunteer utilities.

Step 2. The signatories will consider and approve for implementation as appropriate the elements of the Work Plan.

It is recognized that the final Work Plan, which will include more specific detail than the outline above, may deviate from that outline, but will continue to represent the overall intent of the Signatories to pursue greater efficiency in public water supply use as indicated in this Statement. Towards that end, the ongoing collaborative efforts to develop and implement the PROGRAM should move forward as rapidly as feasible.

FLOW CHART – UTILITY PROCESS FOR STATEWIDE COMPREHENSIVE WATER CONSERVATION PROGRAM



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