



The Peace River Option

Update Report

Issue 8, Fall 2002

H₂Oe-Down Celebrates Completion of Peace River Option



Sam Stone (right), environmental affairs coordinator with the Authority, talks with one of the H₂Oe-Down attendees about the expansion project.

After ten years of planning, the completion of the Peace River Option was celebrated at an H₂Oe-Down dedication ceremony held at the facility site in May. Dignitaries and invited guests enjoyed an old-fashioned, down-home barbecue lunch and were entertained with some good old country fiddlin' before and during the meal.

Peace River/Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority (the Authority) board members and county commissioners from Charlotte, DeSoto, Manatee and Sarasota counties were on hand to take part in the speeches and festivities. Representatives from the Southwest Florida Water Management District (the District) and contractors, engineers and builders also played a role in the dedication ceremony.

“We were very pleased to share this momentous occasion with so many people who contributed to this project,” says Pat Lehman, the Authority’s executive director. “We couldn’t think of any better way to celebrate the completion of such a collaborative regional effort.”

The expansion of the Peace River Facility was the result of a partnership between the Authority and the District. In fact, the District designated the Peace River Option a “cornerstone” project of its new water source initiative program, providing \$21 million in funding.

The construction of the Peace River Option included:

- increasing treatment capacity of the water supply facility from 12 to 24 million gallons per day,
- expanding the aquifer storage and recovery wellfield with 12 new wells and
- constructing a regional transmission pipeline to connect the Peace River Facility to the T. Mabry Carlton Water Treatment Plant in Sarasota County.



During the dedication ceremony, Pat Glass, Authority board member and Manatee County Commissioner, remarks on the coordination efforts necessary for the completion of the Peace River Option.

The project, which broke ground in February 2000, met all of its goals and was completed by its intended deadline of 2002.

Peace River Option Wins Council for Sustainable Florida 2002 Award

The Peace River/Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority’s Peace River Option was one of 17 business, community and government programs presented with a Sustainable Florida 2002 Award at an Oct. 7 awards ceremony in Tallahassee.

Sponsored by the Council for Sustainable Florida, the awards recognize business organizations and individuals from across the state for their successful efforts to manage, protect and restore Florida’s coastal areas.

The Peace River Option project was developed as a solution to the water shortage problem in the region the Authority serves. By capturing

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surplus surface water, the Peace River Option helps preserve groundwater sources. It provides for the withdrawal of surface water only when surplus water is available and limits withdrawals to ensure the maintenance and health of the downstream estuary and Charlotte Harbor. It includes a multi-source facility utilizing direct withdrawal from the river, an off-stream reservoir for raw water storage and aquifer storage/recovery wells for treated water.

Previously, the National Association of Environmental Professionals cited the Peace River Option as an outstanding environmental stewardship initiative because it integrates federal and state agency regulatory requirements, community and infrastructure development needs, environmental sensitivity, public issues and concerns, and recreation and commercial interests into a long-term functioning system.



Pictured from left to right: *William Nicholson, vice-president Council for Sustainable Florida, E. D. "Sonny" Vergara, executive director SWFWMD, Raymond Pilon, governmental affairs coordinator PRMRWSA, Patrick Lehman, executive director PRMRWSA and J. Allison DeFoor II, president Council for Sustainable Florida*

Peace River Expansion Update

Now that the first phase of the Peace River Option is complete, we can turn our full attention to looking ahead and planning for how we will meet drinking water demands even farther into the future. One project that will help us meet new demand is the next phase of the Peace River Expansion.

The Peace River Expansion will allow the Peace River/Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority to build up to its permitted capacity.

Plans include:

- expansion of the reservoir,
- expansion of the water treatment plant,
- doubling of aquifer storage and recovery wells and
- building a pipeline to better serve DeSoto County.

The project will withdraw water from the Peace River only when river flows meet or exceed the minimum flow levels set by the Southwest Florida Water Management District. This water will then be stored during periods of high rainfall when river water is plentiful. The Peace River expansion project will not affect aquatic environments downstream from the intake structure.

"By implementing this expansion project, we will be able to produce up to 32 million gallons per day and meet our region's drinking water demands into the year 2015," says Pat Lehman, the Authority's executive director.

A draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the next phase of the Peace River Expansion was recently presented to the Authority's board of directors. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) supports the facility expansion as a means of improving dependability of potable water supplies in Charlotte, DeSoto, Manatee and Sarasota counties. Once the EIS has been accepted, the EPA will release \$9 million in grant funding toward the project.

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