

**Indian River Citrus Area
Water Quality/Quantity
Protection Program**



Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
St. Johns River Water Management District
South Florida Water Management District
Applicant's Handbook
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Water Quality/Quantity Protection Program

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1.0 Introduction

This handbook provides guidance to applicants (grove owners and grove caretakers) who wish to obtain funding under the Indian River Citrus Area (IRCA) Water Quality/Quantity Protection Program (WQQPP). It contains the necessary information to understand the program and the application form. Specific application procedures to be followed will vary depending on the sub-region where the farm is located and the local organization that has been contracted to deliver program funds on behalf of the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS).

2.0 Joint-Agency Water Resource Mandates

The St. Johns River Water Management District (District) was created by the Water Resources Act of 1972 (Chapter 373, Florida Statutes). Section 373.016 sets forth the District's purpose and scope. Similarly, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) has responsibility under sections 403.067 and 570.085, Florida Statutes. These responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a) To provide for the management of water and related land resources;
- b) To promote the conservation, development and proper utilization of surface and groundwater;
- c) To develop and regulate dams, impoundments, reservoirs and other works to promote water storage, for beneficial purposes;
- d) To minimize degradation of water resources caused by the discharge of storm water;
- e) To preserve natural resources, fish and wildlife; and,
- f) To restore impaired waterbodies pursuant to the state's Total Maximum Daily Loads program.

3.0 Purpose of the Program

This program has been established to promote agricultural BMPs (refer to section 5.0) in the IRCA, in order to achieve the goals and objectives described primarily in Section 2.0 (b), and to provide an overall water resource benefit to the Indian River Lagoon (IRL) and Upper St. Johns River (USJR) watersheds. Through the program, FDACS will provide reimbursement for select agricultural practices that have potential water conservation, sediment control, and water quality benefits. It is anticipated that this program will provide area citrus growers with economic assistance that would facilitate their voluntary implementation of BMPs that would not otherwise be economically feasible.

4.0 Key Participating Agencies and Organizations

- Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS)
- St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD)
- South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD)
- USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)
- Indian River Soil and Water Conservation District (IRSWCD)
- University of Florida / Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences - Cooperative Extension Service (Indian River County)
- Indian River Board of County Commissioners
- Treasure Coast Resource Conservation and Development Council (TCRC&D)
- Central Florida Resource Conservation and Development Council (CFRC&D)

5.0 Eligible Practices

- Aquatic Weed Barrier
- Chemigation Infrastructure
- Conversion / Repair of Flash Board Riser Water Control Structure
- Conversion to Low Volume Irrigation System
- Grade Stabilization
- On-site Water Detention/Retention
- Permanent Agrichemical Mixing Facility and/or Equipment Washdown Facility
- Portable Agrichemical Mixing Station
- Precision Application Equipment
- Water Table Observation Well

6.0 Description of Practices

Aquatic Weed Barrier A structure installed upstream of outfall control structures to reduce offsite discharge of aquatic vegetation and subsequent decay of plant debris and secondary release of nutrients. Accumulated vegetation should be physically removed periodically and should not be treated chemically.

Chemigation Infrastructure This practice includes equipment (i.e. pumps, storage tanks, etc.) that can be used to facilitate the application of fertilizers and other appropriate chemicals through a micro irrigation system. Chemigation can be used to improve water quality by minimizing the loss of fertilizer and pesticides during storm events. Drip emitter micro irrigation systems are not eligible for reimbursement under this category.

Conversion / Repair of Flashboard Riser Water Control Structure Flashboard risers are used to facilitate water table control in citrus groves. As secondary benefits, flashboard risers also improve sediment control and water quality. Cost share is available for conversion to flashboard structures and for the replacement of existing flashboard structures that are no longer functioning properly.

Conversion to Low Volume Irrigation System Converting from high volume flood (or seepage) irrigation to low volume microirrigation conserves water improves water quality. With micro-irrigation, water is distributed through a network of

underground pipe and above ground lateral tubing and applied directly to the soil above the plant's root zone. Modifications to existing microirrigation systems that can be expected to increase system efficiency and reduce offsite movement of nutrients, pesticides, and sediment are also eligible.

Grade Stabilization This practice includes the use of structures, pipe, concrete, rock, vegetation, synthetic fabrics, and other materials to maintain the stability and integrity of soils in ditches, swales, water furrows, and other erosion prone areas. This practice also includes equipment for chemical mowing of ditch banks to promote the proliferation of grasses through the exclusion of higher growing weeds and brush.

On-Site Water Detention/Retention This practice will provide for the attenuation of both the rate and volume of off-site water and sediment discharge following heavy storm events. The water may be stored for future use or released off-site later at reduced discharge rates.

Permanent Agrichemical Mixing/Rinsing Facility and/or Equipment Washdown Facility This practice provides for the construction of a permanent facility to contain and recover spillage or rinsate from a fertilizer or pesticide mix and load area or from an equipment washdown site. It is intended to prevent fertilizer or pesticide contamination of ground or surface waters. The facility may include a concrete containment pad, pesticide storage building, sump/pump, rinsate tank, mixing tank, holding tank, and removable or permanent roof.

Portable Agrichemical Mixing Station A portable device used in the field to prevent unintentional release of agrichemicals to the environment during mixing and loading of agrichemicals. The portable device must meet published standards and specifications (USDA-NRCS Field Office Technical Guide – Interim Standard, Code 703). The device can be used at more than one citrus grove.

Precision Application Equipment Specialized equipment that allows nutrients and pesticides to be applied in a precise manner relative to the target of application. This includes sonic or optical sensors, devices that apply pesticides in a pre-defined, regulated manner, and equipment that uses GIS technology to allow application based on a pre-defined map. Precision application equipment often varies the rate of application, materials used, and location of application to achieve precise placement of the materials. Through this program, the department intends to cost share the precision elements of new equipment or retrofits to existing equipment that are needed to convert a non-precision spreader or sprayer into a precision spreader or sprayer.

Water Table Observation Well This practice facilitates observation of the water table in a citrus grove and will help the manager to determine when groundwater levels are optimal. This practice will also improve irrigation efficiency and conserve water within the USJR and IRL watersheds by providing growers with an empirical tool to more accurately determine irrigation scheduling needs.

7.0 Individual Program Cost-Share Rates and Alternative Rates for Joint Program Participation

7.1 Cost-share funds are available through this program for each of the practices listed in section 7.2 below at the designated “program reimbursement rate”. The program reimbursement rate represents the percentage of the total BMP cost to be paid through the program. Cost-share may also be available through the USDA-NRCS “Environmental Quality Incentives Program” (EQIP), and participants are encouraged to utilize both programs when possible to maximize the distribution of limited program funds. Those who choose to utilize both programs will generally be eligible to receive a higher overall rate of cost-share through a combination of the two programs. **The maximum cost-share amount available from this program is \$50,000 per agricultural operation (individual or business) per fiscal year.** Cost-share amounts in excess of \$50,000 are possible when cost-share is received from a combination of programs as explained in section 7.3 below.

7.2	<u>Practice Title</u>	<u>Maximum</u>	<u>Program Cost-Share Rate</u>
	Aquatic Weed Barrier		75%
	Chemigation Infrastructure		70%
	Conversion / Repair of Flash Board Riser Water Control Structure		75%
	Conversion to Low Volume Irrigation System		75%
	Grade Stabilization		75%
	On-Site Water Detention/Retention		70%
	Permanent Agrichemical Mixing/Washdown Facility		60%
	Portable Agrichemical Mixing Station		60%
	Precision Application Equipment		60%
	Water Table Observation Well		75%

- 7.3** When EQIP funds are received to support a practice or group of practices, the participant is **also eligible to apply** for program funds. In this situation, the program will pay **up to** one half of the grower's **remaining** portion of the total project cost, **not to exceed the \$50,000 annual maximum the IRCA WQQP Program allows. Distribution of program funds is based on the most benefit for the lowest cost to receiving water body, (refer to Section 3, Paragraph 1, above).**

8.0 Application Procedure

- Step 1: The applicant should schedule a pre-application meeting with staff of the local delivery organization covering the County where the farm or grove is located (see Section 12 entitled "Local Program Delivery Organizations"). It would be helpful to bring a recent aerial photo showing the proposed project area, grove block orientation, and layout of the grove infrastructure (e.g., beds, ditching, pump location, etc.). Your local Property Appraiser's office can provide you with the needed aerial photos.
- Step 2: Complete the enclosed "Application For Cost Share" (Appendix A, Form 1) and submit the application to the appropriate local delivery organization as identified in Section 12.0 below.
- Step 3: If the request is approved, the applicant should consult with the local NRCS office (or contractor of their choice) for the development of a project plan to include the design, cost estimate, and an operation and maintenance (O&M) schedule. The project plan should then be submitted to the appropriate local delivery organization identified in Section 12.0.
- Step 4: A cost share agreement (to be provided by the local delivery organization) will be signed by the applicant and executed by the local delivery organization. Execution of the contract shall serve as authorization to proceed with practice implementation in accordance with the agreement.
- Step 5: Participant will notify program staff of project completion and schedule an inspection to verify that the practice has been installed or constructed in accordance with the project plan.
- Step 7: The participant will submit a "Request for Payment" (Appendix A, Form 2), (including copies of all applicable receipts for work completed) to the appropriate local delivery organization.
- Step 8: The applicant will follow the O&M schedule provided for each practice. Program staff will periodically conduct site visits to verify that the O&M schedule is being followed. Program participants will be required to reimburse the state on a pro-rated basis for cost-share funding received for any practice that is improperly maintained, removed, or destroyed before the end of the maintenance period (see Section 10.0, Maintenance Requirements).

9.0 Applicant Eligibility

To be eligible for funds under this program, grove owners must have all applicable permits, pursuant to Chapter 40(X)-2, F.A.C. (Consumptive Use Permit), Chapter 40(X)-4, F.A.C. (Environmental Resource Permit), or Chapter 40(X)-44, F.A.C. (Agricultural Surface Water Management Systems Permit). Grove "caretakers" (who do not own the land where BMPs are to be implemented) are also eligible for cost share if they meet the eligibility criteria of the local delivery organization and file a notice of intent with the landowner's signature. Participation in this program is open to all eligible applicants without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, age, sex, marital status, and mental or physical handicap.

10.0 Maintenance Requirements

The following practices must be properly maintained and operated for the number of years listed below.

<u>Practice I.D. #</u>	<u>Practice Title</u>	<u>Maintenance Period</u>
IR-1	Aquatic Weed Barrier	3 Years
IR-2	Chemigation Infrastructure	5 Years
IR-3	Conversion / Repair of Flash Board Riser	5 Years
IR-4	Conversion to Low Volume Irrigation System	10 Years
IR-5	Grade Stabilization	5 Years
IR-6	On-site Water Detention/Retention	10 Years
IR-7	Perm. Agrichemical Mixing/Washdown Facility	10 Years
IR-8	Portable Agrichemical Mixing Station	5 Years
IR-9	Precision Application Equipment	5 Years
IR-10	Water Table Observation Well	1 Year

11.0 Primary Administrative Agencies / Contacts Phone Number

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services:

Mark Jennings (Tallahassee)	(850) 488-6249
Carol Johnson (Palatka)	(386) 329-4500
James (Jody) Lee (Palatka)	(386) 329-4500

St. Johns River Water Management District:

Vince Singleton (Palatka)	(386) 329-4197
Victor McDaniel (Orlando)	(407) 897-4313
Troy Rice (Palm Bay)	(321) 984-4938

12.0 Local Program Delivery Agencies / Contacts for Each County

<u>County</u>	<u>Local Delivery Organization</u>	<u>Contact</u>	<u>Phone</u>
Indian River	Indian River SWCD	James Karl	(772)770-5005
	USDA-NRCS	Clare Nichols	(772) 562-1923
Martin/St. Lucie/ Okeechobee	Treasure Coast RC&D	Donna Smith	(772) 461-4546
Brevard	East Central Florida RC&D	Steve Cox	(407) 443-2689
	USDA-NRCS	David Millard	(321) 633-1702
Volusia/ Palm Beach	Florida Association of RC&D Councils	Travis Davis	(850) 623-0355

APPENDIX A

Form 1: Application for Cost Share

(Complete a separate application for each grove/block)

Date: _____

Owner's Name: _____

Business Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Street Address: _____

Business Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

Grove Name: _____

Block Number: _____

Acreage: _____

Check (✓) the boxes below to indicate which practices you are requesting cost-share assistance for this grove/block.

- IR-1 Aquatic Weed Barrier
- IR-2 Chemigation Infrastructure
- IR-3 Conversion / Repair of Flash Board Riser Water Control Structure
- IR-4 Conversion to Low Volume Irrigation System
- IR-5 Grade Stabilization
- IR-6 On-site Water Detention/Retention
- IR-7 Permanent Agrichemical Mixing/Washdown Facility
- IR-8 Portable Agrichemical Mixing Station
- IR-9 Precision Application Equipment
- IR-10 Water Table Observation Well

Application must include a completed copy of the Notice of Intent to Implement.

INCOMPLETE APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

APPENDIX B - REQUEST FOR COST SHARE PAYMENT

THE PARTICIPANT LISTED BELOW ATTESTS THAT THE IDENTIFIED BMPS HAVE BEEN IMPLEMENTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH APPLICABLE STANDARDS AND THAT THESE PRACTICES WILL BE MAINTAINED FOR THE IDENTIFIED MAINTENANCE PERIOD PURSUANT TO THE "INDIAN RIVER CITRUS AREA – WATER QUALITY/QUANTITY PROTECTION PROGRAM. THE PARTICIPANT FURTHER ATTESTS THAT THE LEVEL OF COST SHARE REQUESTED IS BASED ON ACTUAL COSTS AND IS CONSISTENT WITH THE COST SHARE PERCENTAGES IDENTIFIED IN THE APPLICANTS HANDBOOK.

NAME: _____

PROJECT REFERENCE # _____

BUSINESS NAME: _____

PRACTICE #(s) (REFER TO HANDBOOK): _____

DATE WORK COMPLETED: _____

TOTAL PROJECT COST (INCLUDE COPY OF ALL INVOICES): \$ _____

PORTION OF COST SHARE PAID BY GROWER: \$ _____

PORTION OF COST PAID BY USDA-EQIP (Include copy of Form 1245): \$ _____

PORTION OF COST TO BE PAID BY PROGRAM: \$ _____

SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT _____

DATE _____

APPENDIX C

Program Area

