

Public Water Supply Utilities Climate Impacts Working Group (PWSU-CIWG)

Draft

Declaration of Collaboration

May 2011

Stakeholders representing several Water Supply Utilities, Water Management Districts, and Academic Organizations in Florida have mutually agreed to establish a COLLABORATION that will focus on increasing the relevance of climate change and variability information, data and tools to the planning and operations of Florida's public water supply utilities.

Participating Organizations include

Water Supply Utilities  
Gainesville Regional Utilities  
Miami-Dade Water and Sewer  
Department  
Palm Beach County Water  
Utilities  
Peace River Manasota  
Regional Water Supply  
Authority  
Tampa Bay Water  
Others?

Water Management Districts  
Saint Johns River WMD  
South Florida WMD  
Southwest Florida WMD  
Others?

Academic Organizations  
University of Florida Water  
Institute  
Florida Climate Institute  
Florida State University, COAPS  
South East Climate Consortium  
UF/IFAS Center for Public Issues  
Education  
Others?

**Statement of Need**

The impacts of climate variability and climate change on water supply reliability, and adapting to changing hydrologic conditions is becoming a particularly pressing challenge for major public water suppliers in Florida. In addition to these uncertainties, the Florida utilities face multiple issues including: a push toward the use of alternative water supplies; environmental, social, fiscal and regulatory challenges; and implementing both short and long range solutions complicated by risks and uncertainties. To meet current and future water demands in the face of uncertainties and risks presented by climate change and variability, public water supply utilities will need reliable information on probable impacts for Florida at local and regional spatial and temporal scales.

A lack of climate change models with probable scenarios for sea level rise, temperature change, and altered rainfall patterns for Florida is a challenge to updating water supply planning. The uncertainty of the information, the credibility, complexity, and scales of existing data and models present significant challenges. Understanding, monitoring and modeling climate variability/change and sea level rise at the local to regional scale, and assessing the relevant uncertainties in this information, is important before this information can be used to improve operations/forecasting/ planning.

**Timeframe**

The collaboration will be for 24 months, from \_\_\_\_\_ through \_\_\_\_\_; however, the Partners acknowledge the right of the other to extend or discontinue the collaboration at any point.

## **Interests served by Collaboration**

Partners are interested in the unique opportunity and potential benefits that this unique collaboration could provide to inform the water industry, water resource management, and climate science to better address the need for locally relevant quantitative information. It will help to jointly define research and activities focused on areas that are closely aligned to specific interests of water utilities and to explore innovative ways to better prepare for and adapt to the potential effects of climate change climate variability/change and sea level rise on Florida's water resources.

**Participating utilities** want to address uncertainty in climate predictions (rainfall, temperatures, extreme events and sea level rise) at time scales relevant to operations (3-12 months), permitting (20 years) and capital planning (20-50 years). There is also a need for decision strategies that can benefit from appropriate climate tools and models. This requires the best available climate science and technology for use in their planning or decision making. Several Utilities have been substantially engaged in various regional, state and national programs to assess potential impacts climate change on the water industry and to establish research and education programs to address these potential impacts and bring considerable expertise to the collaboration.

**Participating Water Management Districts** want

**Participating Academic Organizations** want

### **Goals**

Our goals in establishing this collaboration include:

- Increasing relevance of climate science, tools and models to the public water supply sector, making them more useable for planning both the supply of and demand for water
- Helping shape the development and implementation of science-based climate information for operational and longer-term planning and management decisions.
- Promoting cross-institutional/organizational recognition of the unique institutional situations of each of the utilities and diverse needs and responses to the climate challenges.
- Expanding and enhancing membership of all stakeholder types;
- Attracting new funding sources to the collaboration.

### **Areas of Mutual Benefit**

Recognizing that regional and institutional differences exist, we will strive to create an environment that facilitates a common base for communication and will provide mutual benefits to encourage institutional buy-in for participation by all represented stakeholders. As a united group we can:

- Identify and address specific issues of particular relevance to the water supply utilities and help inform the future conditions in which they will have to make decisions.
- Share in the development of tools, decision strategies and strategies that are useful to water supply utilities.

- Provide access to tools and data, tap into useable information, explore ways to “filter” all information that is available and find ways to identify what we all can agree on. A “clearinghouse” that would include vetted information, data, model assessments and scenarios, reports, quarterly newsletter, webinars, seminars and workshops.
- Identify opportunities to harmonize methods when they are technically feasible, legally permissible, and consistent with program objectives.
- Share information that will be useful for more comprehensive policy analysis for budget and resources.
- Provide a network for dissemination of research findings to Florida Water Utilities.
- Influence research priorities of those doing relevant research, funding relevant research and posing research questions
- Better leverage funding opportunities, particularly at the Federal level.

### **Examples of Collaboration**

Several activities can advance knowledge and to inform viable and useful outputs of the collaboration.

- Periodically share information on partners’ and other scientific research projects
- Develop a research agenda and form and facilitate research coalitions to fill gaps in research pertinent to Florida
- Explore options for active technical level collaboration as appropriate.
- Access or develop improved prediction tools for Florida (North, Central, and South) at seasonal (1-12mo.) and Midterm (10-50yrs)
- Develop working/white papers that synthesize and disseminate national research pertinent to Florida Water Resources and Demand and Climate Science and Impacts.
- Contribute to the development of the project proposals
- Exchange of information
- Plan and coordinate joint seminars, workshops, meetings, consultations;
- Share scare materials, samples, resources, and provide any technical assistance as required;

### **Ways to Evolve the Collaboration**

- Organize information and data sharing discussions, meetings, website, conference calls, publications
- Identify and engage new partners and donors
- Define level of commitment of partners
- Identify possible beneficiaries and possible benefits (resilient water supply)
- Identify opportunities to work collaboratively
- Establish lead points of contact for interest areas as they are identified
- Develop strong mission statement and strategic plan
- Establish a steering committee, staff, roles and responsibilities
- Identify and solicit funding jointly for the Partnership whenever appropriate and advantageous. Develop strategies for federal funding to support climate model research specific to the southeast and coastal Florida.

## STATEMENT OF SUPPORT

In a spirit of collaboration and shared interest, we the undersigned representatives of the \_\_\_\_\_ undertake this unprecedented collaboration to better advance our missions and serve the people of Florida. Focused on climate related impacts on urban water resource planning, this effort comes at an important time. As a key stakeholders in Florida's water resources including providing a safe water supply, managing water resources and regional water supply plans and providing relevant climate and hydrologic science, we sincerely believe that this Collaboration will provide an opportunity for our organizations to both contribute to and gain expertise that is essential to reaching our mutual, and mutually exclusive goals of addressing the uncertainties and risks presented by climate variability and change. We look forward to growing and continued collaboration.

Sincerely,

All organizations signatures follow,,,

Gainesville Regional Utilities \_\_\_\_\_  
NAME .... from our organization will serve as representatives to the Collaboration.

Miami-Dade Water and Sewer Department \_\_\_\_\_  
NAME .... from our organization will serve as representatives to the Collaboration.

Palm Beach County Water Utilities \_\_\_\_\_  
NAME .... from our organization will serve as representatives to the Collaboration.

Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority \_\_\_\_\_  
NAME .... from our organization will serve as representatives to the Collaboration.

Tampa Bay Water \_\_\_\_\_  
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UF/IFAS Center for Public Issues Education \_\_\_\_\_  
NAME .... from our organization will serve as representatives to the Collaboration.

OTHERS???

NAME .... from our organization will serve as representatives to the Collaboration.

DRAFT