



## Springs Restoration Funding FY 2021-2022 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

### 1. Springs funding has been available for multiple years. What's new and what are the changes?

Millions of state dollars have been allocated statewide for springs restoration and projection since 2012. In October 2017 DEP issued Springs Funding Guidance to ensure clarity and consistency in the key data elements required in springs projects submitted for funding consideration. Additional DEP guidance was issued in January 2018 to clarify the role of water management districts, public comment periods, and project development and submittal processes. Also, consistent with the Governor's Executive Order in January 2019, springs restoration is a key element in the [Protecting Florida Together](#) initiative. Further, one minimum flow and minimum water level (MFL) was adopted in NFWFMD for the St. Marks River Rise (SMRR) in Leon County in June 2019.

### 2. What types of projects are eligible?

Eligible springs projects include land acquisition intended to protect springs and capital projects that protect the quality and quantity of water that flows to and from springs within the 16-county NFWFMD. Exclusions: Feasibility studies, data collection, or environmental reviews are not eligible. See the **Application Guidelines** for more information.

### 3. Who is eligible?

Eligible applicants and grant recipients are governmental entities (section 287.012(14), F.S.), and public and nonprofit water supply and wastewater utilities. Landowners and agricultural producers are also eligible grant recipients. Contact the District for more info.

### 4. Is match funding required?

Funding awards normally may not exceed fifty (50) percent of the overall project cost. The District's Governing Board and DEP may waive these requirements for projects serving rural, financially disadvantaged, or economically distressed counties or communities. Guidelines for claiming status as an economically distressed or "*financially disadvantaged small community*" are provided in the **Application Guidelines**. Refer to the NFWFMD **Quick Match Guide** for further information on allowable match sources and funds.

### 5. What is the maximum funding allowable and how much funding is available?

Funding is subject to state appropriations. There is no limit on project cost; however, note that in addition to match requirements, special consideration is given to projects proximate to springs, in spring and MFL groundwater contribution areas, and/or in other defined areas such as a BMAP or Priority Focus Area. Since 2013, grant allocations in northwest Florida have ranged from \$10,000 to several million dollars.

**6. Tell me more about MFLs and Recovery and Prevention Strategies and where can I find further information about them?**

As of November 2020, one MFL has been adopted for the St. Marks River Rise (SMRR) in Leon County. At the time of rule adoption in June 2019, the SMRR MFL was being met therefore no recovery or prevention strategies were required. Additional information, including ongoing and future water bodies on the MFL Priority List, is available on the District's [Minimum Flows and Minimum Water Levels](#) webpage.

**7. How are projects with multiple segments or phases addressed?**

The District recognizes that large capital improvement investments to improve water quality or quantity may require multiple years of funding to complete. For such projects, applicants should develop a multi-year funding plan that lists the full costs of the project over the required time period. Multi-year projects should have realistic implementation goals and having at least one project deliverable within the first 24 months is recommended. Partial funding may be recommended for one or more segment or phase, upon review by District staff and/or DEP. Multi-year applicants should consider leveraging multiple funding sources.

**8. I was awarded springs restoration funding in previous years. Am I eligible for FY 2021-2022 funding?**

Yes, previous funding does not preclude eligibility for the FY 2021-2022 funding cycle. However, applicants should ensure that any additional projects can be implemented within the same 24-36 month timeframe without impacting the schedule of existing projects. Also, applicants who submit qualified projects that have not yet received funding may be given priority consideration over existing grantees to ensure support and benefits are distributed as equitably as possible across the District.

**9. How many projects am I allowed to submit?**

There is no limit to the number of projects that may be submitted and may be funded in a given year. However, each project submitted will be evaluated independently and must meet the same timeframe and other requirements. If the applicant has several springs restoration projects, development of a multi-year capital improvement plan is recommended. Also note that applicants who submit qualified projects that have not yet received funding may be given priority consideration over existing grantees to ensure support and benefits are distributed as equitably as possible across the District.

**10. Do projects need to be “shovel-ready?”**

No. Projects may be conceptual, partially developed, or ready for implementation. However, unless the proposed project has a multi-year funding plan, projects should be capable of being completed within the preferred 24-36 month timeframe. Depending on the nature and scope of the project, construction projects that are well defined and close to shovel-ready may be ranked higher than others, since such a project would be more likely to be successfully implemented and completed within the given timeframe.

### **11. Would an “in-progress” project be eligible for consideration of funding?**

A project that has already been initiated but not fully funded is eligible for consideration. This is especially true for multi-phased projects. However, financial need should be clearly demonstrated, as project funds are not intended to replace existing sources of funds.

### **12. Can I resubmit my previously unfunded project?**

Applicants may resubmit projects that were not funded previously. However, if not previously funded, applicants are encouraged to have a conversation with District staff to see what if any aspect of the project did not meet evaluation criteria, and what type of improvements may be warranted. If the details of the project have changed, please resubmit the project using the ***Application Form***.

### **13. Is it possible for the District to provide funding up front, rather than on a reimbursement basis?**

Funds are provided on a reimbursement basis upon receipt and approval of the required deliverables. Funding on a cost-incurred basis may be considered for projects serving economically distressed communities on a case-by-case basis.

### **14. My community needs more funding to complete a springs project or a companion water project. Are there other funding sources available?**

Yes, other loan and grant programs may be available to applicants meeting certain qualifications and if meeting eligibility criteria. Among potential opportunities are:

- Protecting Florida Together: <https://protectingfloridatogether.gov/> and <https://protectingfloridatogether.gov/state-action/grants-submissions>
- Florida Department of Environmental Protection: <https://floridadep.gov/wra/wra/documents/water-resource-funding-florida>
- US Department of Agriculture – Rural Development: <http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/water-waste-disposal-loan-grant-program>
- Florida Department of Economic Opportunity – Small Cities Community Development Block Grant Program and Technical Assistance Planning Grants: [www.floridajobs.org/community-planning-and-development/](http://www.floridajobs.org/community-planning-and-development/)
- Florida Rural Water Association Loan Program: [www.frwa.net](http://www.frwa.net)
- Legislative Appropriations

For additional information and questions about funding options and opportunities, Mr. Darryl Boudreau, NFWFMD’s Resource Planning Program Manager, may be able to assist. Contact Darryl at: [Darryl.Boudreau@nwfwater.com](mailto:Darryl.Boudreau@nwfwater.com) or at (850) 539-5999.