

NORTHWEST FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

MEMORANDUM

TO: Governing Board

THROUGH: Lyle Seigler, Executive Director
Andy Joslyn, Deputy Executive Director

FROM: Jack Furney, Director, Division of Administrative Services

DATE: September 23, 2026

SUBJECTS: Adoption of the Millage Rate for Fiscal Year 2026-2027
Adoption of the Budget for Fiscal Year 2026-2027

Recommendation

Staff recommends the Governing Board approve the ad valorem tax millage rate of 0.0201 of a mill for Fiscal Year 2026-2027 by adoption of Resolution Number 969.

Background

During the first public hearing on September 9, 2026, the Governing Board adopted the Northwest Florida Water Management District's tentative ad valorem tax millage rate of 0.0201 of a mill and the Tentative Budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2026-2027, and authorized staff to present the ad valorem millage rate and budget for final adoption by resolution on September 23, 2026, at this final public hearing at Gulf Coast State College in Panama City.

Using the 2026 gross taxable value for operating purposes of \$219,853,603,018 and the proposed 0.0201 of a mill, which is the rolled-back rate, the 2026 Truth-In-Millage (TRIM) estimated total taxes to be levied in FY 2026-2027 is \$4,419,057. Compared to the 2025 TRIM estimate of \$4,329,539, there is an \$89,518 or 2.1 percent increase in estimated tax revenues for the upcoming fiscal year. This tax data is based on property value estimates furnished by the 16 counties in the District. Because the District has historically collected slightly less than the amount estimated, ad valorem is budgeted at \$4,210,000. This budgeted amount for FY 2026-2027 is 95.3 percent of the property appraiser estimate of \$4,419,057 and \$83,288 or 2.0 percent more than the amount budgeted in FY 2025-2026.

After formal adoption of the ad valorem tax millage rate, the Governing Board is authorized to adopt a budget for the District's 2026-2027 fiscal year.

Recommendation

Staff recommends the Governing Board adopt Resolution Number 970 adopting the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 budget as presented herein.

Background

The proposed FY 2026-2027 budget is \$98,244,107, which is a \$12,007,788 or 10.9 percent decrease from the FY 2025-2026 budget. The proposed budget furthers the Governor's priorities, and the Legislature's

support of those priorities, and recognizes the importance of continued state funding critical to providing resources for water supply, water quality, flood protection, and water restoration activities. Additionally, this budget will provide adequate fiscal resources to effectively implement the District's core mission addressing water quality, water supply, natural systems, and flood protection, including:

- \$38.9 million for Springs Projects. This funding will enable the District to implement or continue restoration projects for Wakulla Spring, Jackson Blue Spring, Cypress Spring, and springs associated with the Chipola River and Econfina Creek.
- \$12.7 million for alternative water supply development, water supply development assistance, and water resource development to support northwest Florida communities. Alternative water supply development funding includes support for cooperative, multijurisdictional efforts to expand water conservation, surface water sources, and reuse of reclaimed water in northwest Florida. Water resource development activities include groundwater supply evaluations and hydrogeologic investigations.
- \$14.4 million for watershed and waterway restoration. This funding will advance efforts to protect and restore water quality and aquatic habitats through cooperative water quality improvement projects and best management practices. Initiatives include the Northwest Florida Watersheds Partnerships Program; Live Oak Point Living Shoreline project on Choctawhatchee Bay; a wastewater effluent force main replacement project in DeFuniak Springs; data collection and hydrodynamic modeling of water quality and freshwater inflow in St. Joseph Bay; and implementation of pilot distributed wastewater grant projects in Santa Rosa and Washington counties.
- \$8.2 million for land management and reforestation. This funding will allow the District to develop and maintain recreation sites for public use and safety, conduct habitat enhancement activities including reforestation, prescribed burning, groundcover restoration, and invasive exotic plant treatment in order to protect and enhance the water resources of northwest Florida. This also includes \$3 million in potential funding for the Dutex Breakwater and Living Shoreline Project.
- \$2.9 million for data collection and Minimum Flows and Minimum Water Levels technical assessments for the Floridan aquifer in coastal Bay County, the Floridan aquifer in coastal Planning Region II, Morrison Spring in Walton County, and the Shoal River.

Attachments:

Resolution Number 969, Resolution Number 970, FY 2026-2027 Budget



Lyle Seigler
Executive Director

Northwest Florida Water Management District

81 Water Management Drive, Havana, Florida 32333-4712
(U.S. Highway 90, 10 miles west of Tallahassee)

Phone: (850) 539-5999 • Fax: (850) 539-2777

RESOLUTION NO. 969

Authorization of Ad Valorem Tax Assessment

WHEREAS, the Florida Legislature created the Northwest Florida Water Management District under Chapter 373, Florida Statutes; and

WHEREAS, the Northwest Florida Water Management District is authorized by the Constitution of the State of Florida and Chapter 373, Florida Statutes, to assess ad valorem tax revenues to support the Water Management District's operations; and

WHEREAS, programs and projects which are of District benefit will be supported with ad valorem tax revenues as reflected in the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 budget; and

WHEREAS, the Northwest Florida Water Management District held a Public Hearing as required by Section 200.065, Florida Statutes;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Governing Board of the Northwest Florida Water Management District, that the District will implement its authorized ad valorem tax assessment at 0.0201 of a mill for Bay, Calhoun, Escambia, Franklin, Gadsden, Gulf, Holmes, Jackson, Leon, Liberty, Okaloosa, Santa Rosa, Wakulla, Walton, Washington, and western portions of Jefferson County. Based on the available estimates of property values, furnished by the various counties in the District, said millage rate to be levied to fund the District's Fiscal Year 2026-2027 budget is equal to the 0.0201 mill rolled-back rate.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the ad valorem revenues will be used by the District, by adoption of the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 budget to initiate and support projects of local or District significance as needed, requested, or required throughout the District as determined by the District's Governing Board.

DULY ADOPTED at a public hearing this 23rd day of September 2026, A.D.

Time Adopted _____PM

The Governing Board of the
**NORTHWEST FLORIDA WATER
MANAGEMENT DISTRICT**

ATTEST:

Chair

Secretary-Treasurer

GEORGE ROBERTS
Chair
Panama City

JERRY PATE
Vice Chair
Pensacola

NICK PATRONIS
Secretary
Panama City

JOHN W. ALTER
Malone

GUS ANDREWS
DeFuniak Springs

TED EVERETT
Chipley

TOM MORGAN
Apalachicola

KELLIE RALSTON
Tallahassee

ANNA UPTON
Tallahassee



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RESOLUTION NO. 970

Adoption of Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Budget

WHEREAS, the Florida Legislature created the Northwest Florida Water Management District under Chapter 373, Florida Statutes; and

WHEREAS, the ensuing 2026-2027 fiscal year of the Northwest Florida Water Management District shall extend from October 1, 2026, through September 30, 2027; and

WHEREAS, the Northwest Florida Water Management District is authorized by Chapter 373, Florida Statutes, to adopt a budget in accordance with the provisions of Section 200.065, Florida Statutes; and

WHEREAS, the Northwest Florida Water Management District held a Public Hearing as required by Section 200.065, Florida Statutes; and

WHEREAS, the Governing Board of the District has adopted Resolution 969, which establishes the millage-levy for Fiscal Year 2026-2027; and

WHEREAS, programs and projects which are of District benefit will be supported with ad valorem tax revenues and other funding sources as reflected in the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 budget of \$98,244,107.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, by the Governing Board of the Northwest Florida Water Management District, that:

1. The Fiscal Year Final 2026-2027 budget be adopted; and
2. This resolution will take effect immediately upon the adoption.

DULY ADOPTED at a public hearing this 23rd day of September 2026, A.D.

Time Adopted _____PM

The Governing Board of the
**NORTHWEST FLORIDA WATER
MANAGEMENT DISTRICT**

ATTEST:

Chair

Secretary-Treasurer

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Panama City

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KELLIE RALSTON
Tallahassee

ANNA UPTON
Tallahassee

**NORTHWEST FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT
TENTATIVE BUDGET SUMMARY
OCTOBER 1, 2026 – SEPTEMBER 30, 2027**

Proposed Ad Valorem Millage Rate

0.0201 of a mill

59.8% below the legally authorized rate of 0.0500 of a mill
0.0006 of a mill less than the rate in the current year
Ad valorem budgeted in the Tentative is \$4,210,000 or
\$83,288 more than the amount in the current year (budget is
95.3 percent of the TRUTH IN MILLAGE estimate of
\$4,419,057, to align closer with historical collections)
Rolled-back rate is 0.0201 of a mill

Total Expenditure Budget

\$98,244,107

10.9% lower than the Current Year Amended Budget,
including \$53,410,757 for Interagency Expenditures/Grants
Provides for 124.4 full-time equivalent positions, 118.0
authorized and 6.4 equivalent OPS.

Total Revenue Received/Earned

\$95,486,813

\$91.3 million in new revenue and revenue received in previous
years
\$4.2 million in ad valorem tax revenue

Estimated Use of Fund Balance/Reserves

\$2,757,294

Budget By Program Area

1.0 Water Resources Planning and Monitoring	\$ 8,705,177	8.9%
2.0 Land Acquisition, Restoration and Public Works	\$67,173,314	68.4%
3.0 Operation and Maintenance of Lands and Works	\$10,630,252	10.8%
4.0 Regulation	\$ 8,408,852	8.6%
5.0 Outreach	\$ 277,698	0.3%
6.0 District Management and Administration	\$ 3,048,814	3.1%
	<u>\$98,244,107</u>	

The combined Outreach and Management and Administration budget is 3.4% of the total District Budget.

**NORTHWEST FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT
FY 2026-2027 TENTATIVE BUDGET COMPARISON
BY FUND**

DESCRIPTION	General Fund	Capital Improv & Lands Acq	Special Projects	Lands Management	Regulation	Mitigation	TOTAL
Cash Balances Brought Forward	15,411,090	173,647	3,151,335	2,218,455	4,096,511	5,173,193	30,224,231
<u>ESTIMATED REVENUES:</u>							
Ad Valorem Taxes 0.0201 mills	1,855,083		2,354,917				4,210,000
Land Acquisition Trust Fund		9,297,751	31,676,104	4,922,026	4,547,599		50,443,480
Permitting and Licensing					655,000		655,000
Federal Grants			13,111,182	3,033,000			16,144,182
State Funds			16,184,415	500,000	4,008,368	1,678,963	22,371,746
Local Government Units			145,970	560			146,530
Timber Sales				250,000			250,000
Miscellaneous Revenues		813,798	200,000	127,077	125,000		1,265,875
Interfund Transfers	2,481,946		1,501,189				3,983,135
Total Estimated Revenues, Transfers and Balances	<u>19,748,119</u>	<u>10,285,196</u>	<u>68,325,112</u>	<u>11,051,118</u>	<u>13,432,478</u>	<u>6,852,156</u>	<u>129,694,179</u>
<u>ESTIMATED EXPENDITURES:</u>							
Salaries & Benefits	3,008,098	105,177	3,443,873	2,359,645	4,687,480	329,953	13,934,226
Other Personal Services	25,782		58,947	277,507	69,532	843	432,611
Contractual Services	376,602	310,991	7,810,889	4,232,561	1,337,511	1,220,500	15,289,054
Operating Expenses	737,694	1,300	697,523	1,266,864	1,429,424	51,173	4,183,978
Capital Outlay	112,800	9,673,575	123,801	186,400	884,905	12,000	10,993,481
Grants and Aids			53,410,757			0	53,410,757
Reserves	13,708,741	173,647	2,096,390	2,218,455	4,096,511	5,173,193	27,466,937
Interfund Transfers	1,778,402	20,506	682,932	509,686	927,115	64,494	3,983,135
Total Operating Expenditures, Transfers and Reserves	<u>19,748,119</u>	<u>10,285,196</u>	<u>68,325,112</u>	<u>11,051,118</u>	<u>13,432,478</u>	<u>6,852,156</u>	<u>129,694,179</u>

**NORTHWEST FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT
FY 2026-2027 TENTATIVE BUDGET COMPARISON
REVENUE CATEGORIES**

**FY 2026-27 TENTATIVE BUDGET COMPARISON
REVENUE CATEGORIES**

	FY 2024-25	FY 2025-26	FY 2026-27	Tentative O/(U)	
	Actuals	Amended Budget	Tentative	Amended Budget	
Ad Valorem Tax	3,943,640	4,126,712	4,210,000	83,288	2.0%
Federal Revenue	3,049,697	10,338,575	16,144,182	5,805,607	56.2%
State Revenue	30,831,310	88,172,473	72,815,226	(15,357,247)	-17.4%
Local Revenue	111,632	151,750	146,530	(5,220)	-3.4%
Permit Fees	652,932	655,000	655,000	0	0.0%
Timber Sales	271,363	250,000	250,000	0	0.0%
Miscellaneous	1,729,266	1,340,166	1,265,875	(74,291)	-5.5%
w/o Fund Balance	40,589,840	105,034,676	95,486,813	(9,547,863)	-9.1%
Fund Balance	19,845	5,217,219	2,757,294	(2,459,925)	-47.2%
w/Fund Balance	40,609,685	110,251,895	98,244,107	(12,007,788)	-10.9%

NORTHWEST FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT
FY 2026-2027 TENTATIVE BUDGET COMPARISON
EXPENDITURE CATEGORIES

	FY 2024-25	FY 2025-26	FY 2026-27	Tentative O/(U)	
	Actuals	Amended Budget	Tentative	Amended Budget	
Salaries & Benefits	10,604,358	12,961,512	13,934,226	972,714	7.5%
Other Personal Services	69,270	317,932	432,611	114,679	36.1%
Contracted Services	8,655,029	26,834,105	15,289,054	(11,545,051)	-43.0%
Operating Expense	2,601,573	3,668,973	4,183,978	515,005	14.0%
Operating Capital Outlay	1,104,670	776,001	779,001	3,000	0.4%
Operating Categories	23,034,901	44,558,523	34,618,870	(9,939,653)	-22.3%
Fixed Capital Outlay	1,820,564	10,451,950	10,214,480	(237,470)	-2.3%
Grants	15,754,221	55,241,422	53,410,757	(1,830,665)	-3.3%
Non-Operating Categories	17,574,785	65,693,372	63,625,237	(2,068,135)	-3.1%
GRAND TOTAL	40,609,685	110,251,895	98,244,107	(12,007,788)	-10.9%

**NORTHWEST FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT
FY 2026-2027 TENTATIVE BUDGET COMPARISON
PROGRAM LEVEL**

Program	FY 2024-25	FY 2025-26	FY 2026-27	FY 2026-27	Tentative O/(U)		Tentative O/(U)	
	Actuals	Amended Budget	Preliminary	Tentative	Amended Budget		Preliminary	
1 Water Resource Plan/Monitoring	6,765,147	8,602,904	9,295,374	8,705,177	102,273	1.2%	(590,197)	-6.3%
2 Land Acq/Restoration/Public Works	19,038,457	81,684,119	64,775,290	67,173,314	(14,510,805)	-17.8%	2,398,024	3.7%
3 Operations & Maint Land & Works	8,169,149	11,373,303	10,613,324	10,630,252	(743,051)	-6.5%	16,928	0.2%
4 Regulation	3,884,975	5,251,294	5,383,747	8,408,852	3,157,558	60.1%	3,025,105	56.2%
5 Outreach	151,897	168,038	286,756	277,698	109,660	65.3%	(9,058)	-3.2%
6 District Management & Admin	2,600,061	3,172,237	3,102,655	3,048,814	(123,423)	-3.9%	(53,841)	-1.7%
GRAND TOTAL	40,609,686	110,251,895	93,457,146	98,244,107	(12,007,788)	-10.9%	4,786,961	5.1%

Combined Outreach and Management & Administration as a Percent of Total Budget² 3,326,512 3.4%

The Legislative Budget Commission may reject the District's budget proposals:

¹In any individual variance in the Tentative Budget that exceeds 25% of the Preliminary Budget

²In these two programs that exceed 15% of the total Tentative Budget