

ICHE TUCKNEE ALLIANCE STATEMENT TO SUWANNEE RIVER WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

January 12, 2016

It has been some time since the Ichetucknee Alliance requested a moratorium on large water use permits, so I am here today to re-state that call.

Here is what we want to see before any more permits are issued: Development of a water balance or water budget that must compare “income” to the district (the amount of water received from rainfall) to the district’s “expenses” (the amount of water leaving via runoff, evapotranspiration, and CUMULATIVE permitted withdrawals).

Our water is a shared resource that needs to be managed as a public trust with an emphasis on conservation. As Cynthia Barnett has written, we need to make sure that the way we are using water *today* does not jeopardize fresh, clean water for our children, businesses, and ecosystems *tomorrow*. **Without a water budget, none of us has any assurances that our water is being managed in this way.**

Secondly, the Alliance thinks that someone made a gross error in permitting the chicken CAFO in Fort White. Which state or local agency made that error is up for debate, but if this district values the Ichetucknee and Santa Fe Rivers and the drinking water that comes from our sole source aquifer, you need to take the initiative to find a way to correct that mistake.

Finally, as a member of the Florida Springs Council, the Alliance supports the Council’s recent point that the use of BMPs, BMAPs, and MFLs has never resulted in restoration of a single Florida spring. The people of Florida deserve to know whether these regulatory tools can be effective or whether they are bogus. To prove that they are effective, we urge you to work with DEP to make the Ichetucknee the focus of effective restoration efforts that will lead to success within 15 years. The Alliance stands ready to help in that process in any way we can.

Lucinda Faulkner Merritt
For the Ichetucknee Alliance