

County of Volusia
SUPPORT Local Control of Septic Tank Distances in Vulnerable Areas

The County of Volusia *supports* legislation that would allow Volusia County to regulate the location and functionality of new septic systems in critical areas where water quality is a concern.

Current Situation

The Volusia County Health Department estimates that there are approximately 90,000 on-site sewage disposal systems (septic tanks) in the county. Septic tanks discharge liquid waste, high in nutrients (nitrogen), bacteria, and other harmful substances, into the soil through a drainfield. Traditional septic tanks do not treat nutrients, however, there are alternative systems that provide for nutrient removal.

Septic tank placement is solely regulated by the Florida Department of Health through Chapter 381, Florida Statute. New septic tanks continue to be permitted in vulnerable areas, exacerbating water quality degradation.

Several water bodies in Volusia County have been, or are in the process of being, identified as impaired for nutrients and/or bacteria. Volusia Blue Spring is under a TMDL to reduce the amount of nitrogen in the spring. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection has estimated that at least 62% of the nitrogen in Blue Spring is attributed to septic tanks within the springshed. The Indian River Lagoon system, including Mosquito Lagoon, has experienced algae blooms and negative impacts to fish and other wildlife species. Nitrogen has been documented as a contributing factor to the decline in water quality.

It is imperative that Volusia County have the ability to limit the location and functionality of new septic systems near critical water bodies to meet regulatory standards and improve water quality.

Proposed Changes

Support changes to state law that would allow Volusia County to limit the location and functionality of new septic systems in critical areas, based on the vulnerability of the site. Volusia County would develop a vulnerability index, in cooperation with the Florida Department of Health, to identify those sites that are not suitable for traditional septic systems. New traditional septic systems would be prohibited on sites determined to be unsuitable.

In spring systems, which are primarily groundwater fed, the vulnerability index would include distance to the spring, hydraulic conductivity of the soil, and recharge rate into the Floridan Aquifer. In surface water systems such as the Indian River Lagoon, the vulnerability index would include soil type and distance to the surface water.

The local Health Department would permit, regulate and enforce the locational restrictions as determined by the vulnerability index.

Impact Analysis

Volusia County is an EPA-designated Sole Source Aquifer. Regulation of the location and functionality of new septic systems will reduce nutrient inputs into the aquifer and our critical surface water bodies.

Volusia County Septic System Elimination Plan (Mosquito/Indian River Lagoon)

Five Year Capital Improvement Program (millions \$)

Plan Pg. #	Project Title	YR 1	YR 2	YR 3	YR 4	YR 5	Total
6	Indian Harbor Estates	\$ 6.08	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 6.08
7	Jackson Hole RV Park, Mosquito Lagoon RV Park and Seminole Rest State Park	\$ -	\$ 2.10	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2.10
9	Waterfront Park	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1.20	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1.20
9	Lyon Subdivision	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1.47	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1.47
10	Jones Fish Camp	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2.11	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2.11
10	Oak Hill East	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 6.19	\$ -	\$ 6.19
11	Mobile Home Village	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 4.73	\$ 4.73
Total CIP Expenditures		\$ 6.08	\$ 2.10	\$ 4.78	\$ 6.19	\$ 4.73	\$ 23.88

Note: Estimated costs for each project includes engineering, design, permitting, construction, septic tank abandonment, and connection to central sewer system.

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