

SAVE OUR LAKES



OCTOBER 2021 Volume 21, Issue 10

Mike Register is the New District Executive Director!

The Governing Board of the St. Johns River Water Management District chose long term employee, **Michael A. Register, P.E.** to be the new **Executive Director for the District.** Those of us who have been with the Save Our Lakes Organization for many years have worked with Mike on the MFLs (Minimum Flows and Levels) for our lakes as they have been written and (thankfully) re-written as well as the development of the Black Creek Water Resource Project. His appointment is further evidence of the Board and the District's support of SOLO's efforts to restore our lakes. On September 23, 2021, Mike spoke to the District staff of his vision of the mission of the St. Johns River Water Management District. His presentation is provided here as it shows his vision of leadership for the District which in turn profoundly impacts the lives of our SOLO members. It is taken from the Streamlines Newsletter on the District website, www.sjrwmd.com/streamlines/.

District Executive Director Michael A. Register speaks to staff Sept. 23 to share his vision and priorities.

It was a little over 31 years ago when I walked into the St. Johns River Water Management District reception area to begin my first job out of college as an Engineer I in the regulatory program. Since then, I've been blessed to have the opportunity to work with teams of talented individuals in almost every section of the District. It is the experience and knowledge gained from those teams that has made it possible for me to take on this new role as Executive Director.

Looking ahead, I'm excited for what we are going to accomplish together. Although there are significant challenges ahead, I know that, just as in the past, we will rise up to meet those challenges and ensure that we accomplish our mission. We will work tirelessly to improve water quality, protect our springs and water resources, and ensure a resilient water supply to support the environment and economic growth. With the rapid rate of growth in our state, the work of our regulatory programs is even more essential to our mission. By dedicating the required resources, we can provide superior customer service to help applicants meet environmental requirements efficiently and effectively. Staff across the agency will also continue to build productive relationships with not only the regulated public,



but also environmental stakeholders, agricultural interests, local governments, elected officials and the general public. Enhancing these relationships will allow us to better understand their needs, help find solutions to challenges and do the things that we do well to benefit the environment.

Our multifaceted work to protect water resources is accomplished because of the staff who have dedicated their careers and knowledge to this agency and the newer staff members who are bringing innovative ideas and fresh perspectives to the table. I look forward to sharing updates with you in the coming weeks about the incredible work performed by our staff.

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SAVE OUR LAKES ORGANIZATION, INC.

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EMAIL: save-our-lakes@comcast.net - **WEBPAGE:** www.saveourlakes.org

President: Vivian James — **Vice President:** Chandler Rozear — **Secretary/Treasurer:** Susan Welsh

Board Members: Webb Farber, Glenda Harper, Scott Slater, Dr. Pat Welsh

District Executive Director Michael A. Register, P.E. presentation continued:

I believe that people can succeed and do their best when we invest in them by giving them the tools and support they need. One of my goals has always been to foster a work environment that helps people reach their highest potential, which in turn benefits the agency, the public we serve and natural Florida.

As we work together, I am committed to listening to all sides. To staff and others who have already shared

insights with me, I say thank you. I look forward to hearing more from all of you.

I feel lucky and am enormously grateful that I get to work at the District in this new role and help make a positive difference each day. By giving a 31-year District employee the opportunity to lead this organization, the Governing Board has affirmed the value of the work performed by the District's staff on a daily basis.

SOLO President Vivian Katz James (red shirt) sent some "Interview Questions" to outgoing Water District Executive Director Dr. Ann B. Shortelle which she graciously answered for us.



What accomplishments are you most proud of during your time at SJRWMD?

There are long and growing lists of accomplishments throughout SJRWMD running the gambit from economic efficiencies, accountability, and transparency, to implementing projects and programs supporting all of our core missions. These efforts, large and small, are a tribute to the efforts of our amazing staff! The restoration and water resource improvement projects, whether District-led, like Black Creek Water Resource Development project, or stakeholder-led, like cost-share projects, are definitely my favorites! Who doesn't like to attend ribbon cuttings for environmental improvement projects?!

What are the biggest challenges you faced as you worked towards the District's mission?

As an organization with a diverse and important mission, it is not a surprise to find that getting the science and engineering "right" is often the easy part! Stakeholder engagement is key at all levels of our work. Communicating and interpreting complexities of data analyses and modeling results in a straight forward manner is essential for success, and requires skill, practice, and a lot of planning and work. Similarly, each effort (project, permit, program, etc.), taken by itself, is unlikely to be the single solution to the overall challenge. Rather, years of effort and improvements may be necessary. So stakeholder expectations and understanding of the efforts and time involved, must also be addressed. Skimping on engagement and education steps can derail an initiative or project in a heartbeat. We have learned this, sometimes the hard way, and are working to improve every day.

What is the one sentence that says how you would like to be remembered from your time at SJRWMD?

Have you ever known me to stop at one sentence? I would be honored and humbled to be remembered as a woman of integrity and a scientist, who worked hard every day to lead staff to accomplish the goals of our Governing Board, improve water policy and programs not only at the District, but statewide, and protect and restore our water resources. These are goals not accomplishments, but I am hopeful that the progress we have made together will be recognized and remembered.

So now what....what is in your future...travel, time with family, just relaxing.....?

Although I am confident that this is the right time for my retirement from public service, it's a challenge for me to imagine leaving water policy and science forever in the rear view mirror. So, I am planning to keep my skills honed, and am joining my husband Kevin's firm, Geo2030 Consulting, LLC. This will be a part time effort, as there is still the bucket list to work on, and Kevin and I are first time grandparents - twin girls! Throw in some volunteer work, and I am not expecting to be bored! I'll see you at the ribbon cutting for the Black Creek project, if not before.

Cheers and be well! Ann

BLACK CREEK WATER RESOURCE PROJECT SCHEDULE

July 2021 – Draft NPDES Permit issued by FDEP.
 July 2021 – Submit Draft ERP application to FDEP.
October 2021 – EPA Comments on Draft NPDES Permit.
October 2021 – Submit ERP application to FDEP.
 November 2021 – Pilot Study report.
 November 2021 – FDEP issue Notice of Intent (NOI) for NPDES Permit to District.
 November 2021 – District publish NOI for NPDES Permit (14-day petition period).
 December 2021 – NPDES Permit Issuance.
 December 2021 – ERP Permit Issuance.

January 2022 – USACE 404 Permit issuance.
 February 2022 – Construction Bid (Phase 1 – Pipeline).
 March 2022 – Award Construction Contract Phase 1 (GB).
 April 2022 – Begin Phase 1 Construction.
 May 2022 – Construction Bid (Phase 2 – Intake/Pump Station/Treatment/Recharge).
 June 2022 – Award Construction Contract Phase 2 (GB).
 June 2022 – Begin Phase 2 Construction.
 June 2024 – Completion of Construction.

NPDES = National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
 FDEP = Fla. Dept. of Environmental Protection
 ERP = Environmental Resource Permit
 EPA = Environmental Protection Agency (Federal)

NOI = Notice of Intent
 USACE = U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
 GB = Governing Board (SJRWMD)

SJRWMD GOVERNING BOARD Mtg. 9:00 AM Tues., 10/12/2021 City of Fernandina Beach
***Verify* on website: www.sjrwmd.com/governingboard/ (Live Streaming is available)**

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION and RENEWAL FORM

Cut, copy or send the whole page!

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PLEASE SEND THIS FORM ALONG WITH YOUR ANNUAL DUES CHECK FOR \$25.00
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SOLO WEBSITE www.saveourlakes.org

You can get information as well as communicate with us through our website: www.saveourlakes.org or our email: save-our-lakes@comcast.net. Our newsletter comes out once a month by email and US Mail (usually the first week of the month). ***Please feel free to check us out!***

Save Our Lakes Organization, Inc.
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Logo by: *Graham E. Kestner*

Our next meeting: 7PM, November 9 at the First Baptist Church. Updates on the Black Creek Project and More! Look for meeting signs around Keystone Heights. Get your shot. Live to see the lakes full again!

NEWSLETTER PRINTING BY FABCO-AIR. THANK YOU, FABCO-AIR!

FABCO-AIR
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By getting vaccinated you protect yourself and those who may not be able to be vaccinated. We are meeting again in November. With the Delta Variant now dominating our state, vaccinated or not we all need to wear a mask to protect ourselves, our friends and families. We look forward to seeing your smiling eyes again!

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