

RIVER RAMBLINGS

The newsletter of the
Indian River Citrus League

JUNE 2014

A Successful Season despite challenges



Even though the industry faced challenges in 2013-2014 season there were some major accomplishments impacting our Indian River growing region that were achieved, and several of the successes impacted the citrus industry as a whole.

The major highlight was the approval of the state legislative appropriations request of \$3.5 million for HLB research. This all came about with a visit from Governor Scott in May of 2012 to the Indian River citrus growing region for one of his work days. Many groups and individuals helped to make this a reality including Senator Joe Negron, House members Steve Crisafulli and Ben Albritton, Commissioner Adam Putnam and Mike Sparks of Florida Citrus Mutual. The money will be available for research on July 1.

In November, in an effort to help its grower members and the industry with building grapefruit juice inventories, the League pursued a red grapefruit juice purchase by the USDA. On January 31, 2014, it was announced that the USDA plans to purchase bottled grapefruit juice for its domestic food nutrition assistance programs. This purchase of \$9.5 million should ease grapefruit juice inventories and provide relief to the growers. This is the largest grapefruit juice purchase in history.

Going on behind the scenes in the research arena, the League was successful in obtaining a three-year study headed up by Dr. Tim Gottwald of USDA/ARS. This \$860,040 TASC grant through USDA/FAS is entirely focused on the assessment of the Viability of Black Spot-blemished citrus fruit as a pathway for disease dispersal via domestic and international trade, and an assessment of methods to mitigate any risk of disease spread on harvested fruit. The project has just entered into its third year of funding. The League and Florida Citrus Packers

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Looking for a way to reach our readers? Why not try our newsletter that reaches our grower members, packinghouses, associate members and affiliated businesses that make up the Indian River citrus growing district. Our publication schedule is September through June and is distributed electronically. Also, the newsletter is posted on our website of www.ircitrusleague.org. If interested, please give Karen a call at the League office at 772/562-2728 or email at info@ircitrusleague.org for more details.

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- Do not use artificial font formatting; all formatting (bold, italics, etc.) must be done using stylized fonts.

Logos

- When submitting logos, convert all fonts to outlines.
- Preferred format: vector eps

Color

- We print in 4-color CMYK process.
- All pantone colors must be converted to CMYK.
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Resolution

- Resolution should be a minimum of 300 dpi at actual size.
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File Format

- PDF files and InDesign files are preferred (collected output to include layout, linked pictures, embedded pictures, color profiles, screen fonts and printer fonts).
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eps (Adobe Illustrator)
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have also applied for a TASC grant for the Assessment of the Efficacy of decontamination of Surface Microbial Contaminates on citrus fruit during packinghouse processing. This request is for \$297,969 over a two-year period.

To ensure that growers have options for their unused land, the League has pursued water farming as a possible alternative for growers. This past year focused on necessary legislation that sets the tax rate on land utilized for water farming and legislation that urges DEP to expand its scope to include water farming (SB 536 and HB 7091). These two legislative bills pave the way for all ag land owners in the state to protect a valuable resource.

2014 Florida Citrus Show held in January in Ft. Pierce at the Fenn Center was another successful event. Produce marketing tips and insect and disease management strategies were the focus of the show. Kicking off the show was the Indian River Citrus League Golf Tournament and Banquet held at The Club at Pointe in Vero Beach. The banquet has grown to include sponsorships and the attendance continues to grow. The event allows growers and members to network and features a guest speaker as well as honoring a Legend of the River.

The new and improved River Ramblings continues to incorporate more advertisers and an updated look. It continues to feature articles impacting the industry and has been well received by the readers.

Knowing of the tough economic times that River growers are facing, the League is working hard to reduce its operating expenses and increase the value of the growers' investment in the League.

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Vero Beach Citrus Grove
1023 Acres


- Pineapples Oranges • Valencia Oranges • Navel Oranges • Red Grapefruit • White Grapefruit



Lagoon's NEP due for "extreme makeover"

Guest contributors: **Henry Dean**, fmr. executive director of St. Johns River WMD (17-years) and South Florida WMD (4-years) and **Maurice Sterling**, fmr. principal project manager for SJRWMD's Upper St. Johns River Basin Project (30+years) and recently appointed interim director of the Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program.

Building on the early successes of the Upper St. Johns River Basin Project—a \$300M flood control and wetland restoration project by the US Army Corps of Engineers and the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD)—and the adoption in 1987 of the state's Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) program that designated the Indian River Lagoon one of six impaired water bodies statewide in need of special attention—it was a logical decision for the SJRWMD to be the local sponsor for the US Environmental Protection Agency's (USEPA) Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program (IRLNEP) that began in 1991.



Since that time important restoration efforts and essential outreach to the public have been accomplished. Much of that success was achieved through the attentive efforts of IRLNEP's technical advisory committee (TAC), citizen action committee (CAC), and the IRLNEP review board assisting and advising program administrators housed within SJRWMD offices. Yet many of the lagoon's vexing problems persist and much more work remains to be done.

As IRLNEP matured has come a growing awareness that local leadership could, and should, provide more helpful insight in directing results-oriented projects to make sure our limited resources are best deployed to improve and protect the natural, commercial and recreational treasure that is the Indian River Lagoon—a waterway uniquely distinctive as the most biologically diverse estuary in North America, and, conspicuously, the very namesake for our industry brand—Indian River fruit!

Today, a thoughtful discussion led by the NEP advisory board and officials with USEPA, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and SJRWMD is underway. Talks are focused on how best to renovate IRLNEP into a more effective entity with an eye toward the newly-minted NEP as the recognized leader of "all things lagoon."

In its' recent meetings, the IRLNEP advisory board endorsed a plan to move forward with a program "makeover." Many are calling for that "new look" to consist of a broadened partnership comprised of federal, state, regional and local sponsors, believing such an entity would be better poised to offer greater local input, enhance public participation and garner funding support for lagoon activities.

We invite growers within the IRCL to join in these discussions and make their voice heard as the state leads the transition to include more local leadership in its efforts to manage the Indian River Lagoon.

Questions and comments may be directed to **Maurice Sterling**, interim director, Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program at 386.329.4320 or by email to: msterling@sjrwmd.com

The future “roll of water” within Indian River County, and the State of Florida?

by Lex Kromhout

Our Executive Vice President of the Indian River Citrus League, Doug Bournique as a member of St. Johns River Water Management District Governing Board of Directors is helping to shape the water issue affecting the State, the Indian River Citrus District, and the Indian River Lagoon regions. Additionally, through recent committee appointments and chairing the Governing Board committees, he is now better positioned to influence the future of water in the Indian River region.

Primary examples of his work over the recent years are: 1) the reconnection of the South Florida Water Management District Basin and the St. Johns River WMD basin waters in western St. Lucie and Indian River County, 2) Promoting “Water Farming” as an option and a practical reality for land owners, and , 3) more recently, promoting the idea to get the Indian River Lagoon region placed into its own management district in order to secure badly needed funding for improvement projects beneficial to the lagoon.

At a recent meeting of the Indian River County Board of Commissioners, Commissioner Solari proposed an above ground reservoir be built in north IR County to better manage storm water discharges from the Sebastian River Improvement District. The plan calls for excess water to be captured and stored as an alternative supply of fresh water for the Indian River County Water Utilities Department north well field so as to allow a potential reduction and less dependency on the Florida aquifer system and better protect regional well systems.

During the discussion, Commissioner Davis proposed the idea be expanded and studied to include the entire County as practical. He called upon Doug and others to further outline an over view of how such a plan could be made to work by better managing the surface water resources of the County to benefit all concerned. Commissioner Davis then made a request for the Indian River County Commission to consider developing a County-wide surface water management plan to better manage and secure the County’s jurisdictional surface waters.

Commissioner David’s proposal expands Commissioner Solari’s plan and extend it to all special water districts within the County. Commissioner Davis and Doug indicated grant funds may be available for counties with plans ready for such studies. The Indian River County Commission approved Commissioner Solari’s original proposal with additional endorsement of Commissioner Davis’s plan. This County Wide Surface Water plan is proposed to consider the following for inclusion:

- 1) Where practical, connect hydraulically the various Water Control and Improvement Districts within the county.
- 2) Establish a system of inter-basic connecting canals to route storm water to above ground storage reservoirs within, and in between Water Control and Improvement District, or to the Indian River Lagoon, or to the western county’s St. Johns River Valley basin to allow water to flow both north and south in the region for potential purchase by other utilities.

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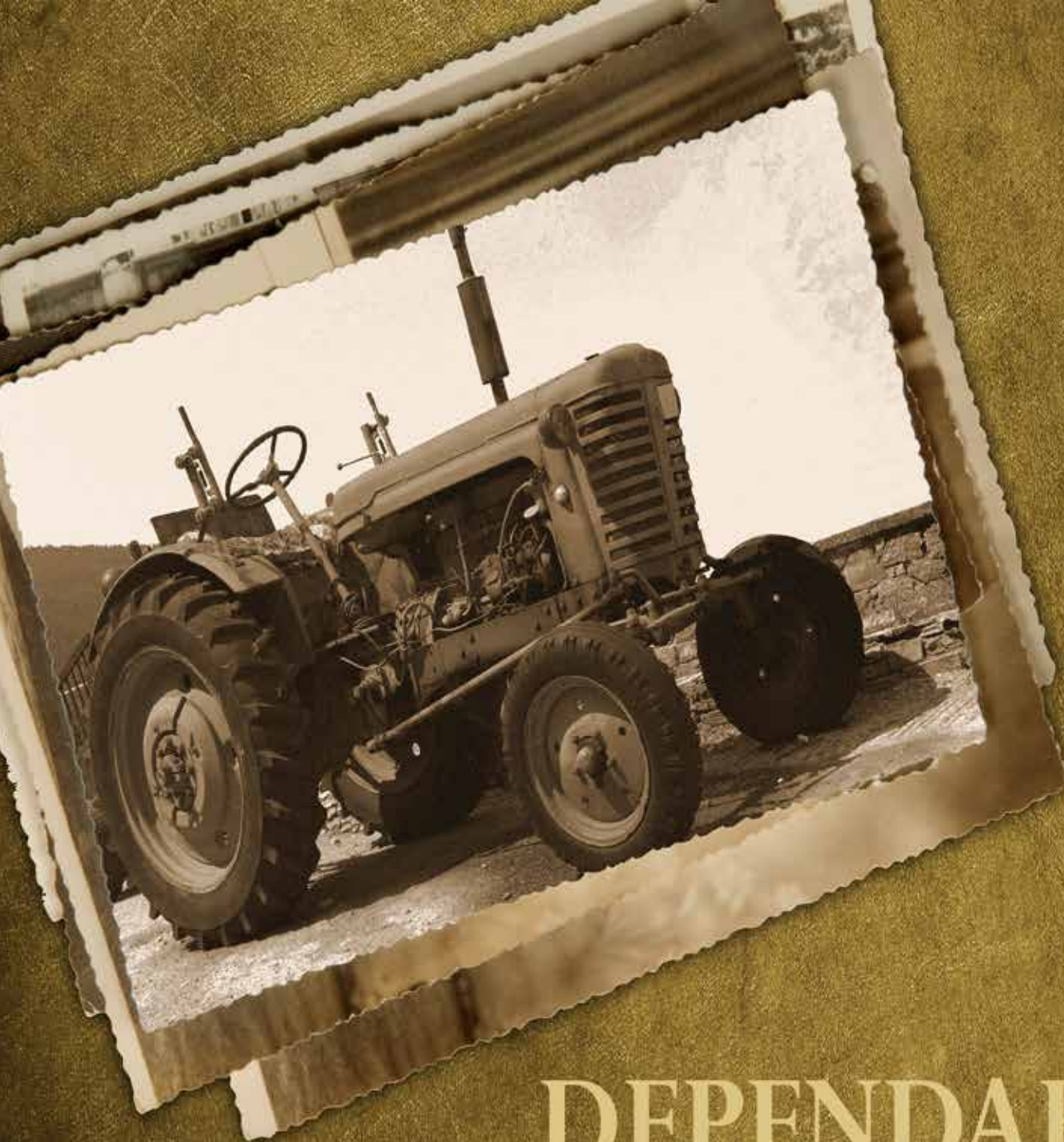
- 3) Locate and consider possible sites on which to place a system of above ground fresh water storage reservoirs within the County.
- 4) Study and consider additional options for dispersed water management (water farming) on both County owned land and privately owned lands where practical to expand the storage capacity of fresh water within the County through these alternative water supply components.
- 5) Study options and present plans, which addresses both current and future water use in the County.
- 6) Study ways to best move fresh water east-west and north-south within the County, and how it can be moved out of the County to other areas where it may be needed safely.

To better understand the future, often times it is important to appreciate the past actions in that regard. In 1910, the State of Florida's legislature authorized the creation of drainage districts within the state. That legislation help create the Fellsmere Drainage District formed in 1910, and the Indian River Farms Drainage District formed in 1912. While both Districts were formed in those early years, it took many years to complete each massive canal systems designed to drain off wetlands and provide for land use. Drainage was enabled by channeling the excess waters off the land via canals, and then discharged into the Indian River Lagoon. In later years other drainage districts were also formed to provide for even more drainage of even more lands within Indian River County.

Of all of these Water Control and Improvement Districts, three of them have the capacity to discharge water westward to the Upper St. Johns River basin area where these excess waters could flow north or south. The remaining Water Control or Improvement Districts, east of I-95, drain water only to the Indian River Lagoon. In consideration of those historic water routes, it now may be the time to consider changes to the old way of managing the fresh water resources of these areas.

Indian River County is situated strategically in the central eastern seaboard of Florida to enable the movement of fresh water both to the north and south should an inter basin connection occur between the South Florida Water Management District and the St. Johns River Water Management District. With 50 to 60 inches of rain falling in Indian River County it is a net exporter of fresh water. Its location, topography, and soil structures are also conducive to collecting, storing, and moving water. Because of these aspects an almost unlimited degree of flexibility can be implemented governing surface water management within the Treasure and Space Coast. Instead of dumping excess fresh water from Lake Okeechobee and from points north via the Kissimmee River Valley basin, flows coming from Orlando's Chain of Lakes regions could now be better managed and through this improved surface water management, improve ground water re-charge may also result.

To do all this is beyond the scope of any one county to fund, and hence this is the reason for Indian River County Commission to seek funds from the State and Federal level to help fund a feasibility study to see if all this is practical for all concerned to consider. All we have to do is look at what happened this past winter in California and their dealing with an extended drought. All existing and alternative water supplies are depleted there, and now everyone and thing using water in California is being rationed. To resort to desalination and salt water reverse osmosis is not an option as it is very costly. The only cheap fresh water sources left is to first manage the water resources we already have by developing a plan as proposed before resorting to such costly measures. Between capturing and retaining fresh water and redirecting it to areas where it is needed these fresh water resources can provide for the future needs of fresh water for years to come and for all concerned (environmental, agricultural, and urban needs), and hence allows Indian River County and State of Florida to continue to grow and prosper.



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