

ALACHUA COUNTY'S TURF SWAP LANDSCAPING RETROFIT PROGRAM

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Public supply is the largest use of water in Alachua County, with landscape irrigation representing much of the residential water budget. While Alachua County recently adopted a Landscape Irrigation Design Code which applies design standards, approval fees, and inspection requirements to all new landscape irrigation systems in Alachua County, there are over 14,000 existing landscape irrigation systems in the County. The Alachua County Environmental Protection Department (ACEPD) designed and pilot tested the Turf SWAP (Save Water, Add Plants) program in 2013-2015 to help property owners replace irrigated turf with Florida Friendly Landscaping™. The greatest barriers for homeowner participation included costs and lack of time. To overcome such, staff secured \$300,000 in cost share funding from the St. Johns River Water Management District in 2016 to offer a 50% cash rebate to participating property owners.

This presentation will explore the lessons learned from the implementation of this successful program through which 135 people removed over 1,900 irrigation heads. This discussion will focus on program development and promotion, demographics of participants, and initial estimates of water savings using a water consumption and conservation program visualization tool created for Gainesville Regional Utilities by the UF Program for Resource Efficient Communities.

PRESENTER BIO: Stacie Greco currently serves as the Water Resources Program Manager with the Alachua County Environmental Protection Department (ACEPD), where she has worked to protect our water since 2003. Hollie Greer is a Senior Environmental Specialist with ACEPD and has specialized in environmental public outreach in the community for 15 years.