

## **Reusing Sewage: Water Conservation Comes to South Florida**

Posted on April 14, 2011 by [Rosa Schechter](#)

Water as a limited resource here in Florida may seem ludicrous to many -- after all, the state is literally surrounded by water: there's the Atlantic Ocean; there's the Gulf of Mexico. And then, Florida is blessed with lots of internal waterways, too. Beautiful rivers like the Alafia.

There's no desert here. To consider that Floridians might face a problem of water scarcity seems irrational, right? Except it's true. The lack of good, clear, usable water is a growing concern for our state. It's a big deal.

### *Florida Legislature Already Promoting Conservation and Reuse of Water*

The Florida Legislature has passed laws that serve to protect and promote water throughout the state. [Florida Statute 403.064](#), for example, provides:

*(1) The encouragement and promotion of water conservation, and reuse of reclaimed water, as defined by the department, are state objectives and are considered to be in the public interest. The Legislature finds that the reuse of reclaimed water is a critical component of meeting the state's existing and future water supply needs while sustaining natural systems. The Legislature further finds that for those wastewater treatment plants permitted and operated under an approved reuse program by the department, the reclaimed water shall be considered environmentally acceptable and not a threat to public health and safety. The Legislature encourages the development of incentive-based programs for reuse implementation.*

### *The Problem of Reusing Water - Treated Sewage Water is Still Sewage*

In the Sun Sentinel this week, reporter Larry Barszewski covers the issues of water reuse in a story entitled, "[Water reuse is South Florida priority](#)." In particular, the article focuses upon efforts to increase the amount water reuse in South Florida - which is well behind other areas of the state in H2O conservation.

There are two main reasons for Florida to use treated sewage water for things like watering the local baseball fields: (1) conserving water available for us to drink, cook with, etc., and (2) protecting our waterways - particularly the Atlantic Ocean - from the impact of wastewater being dumped into their flow.

As the *Sun Sentinel* points out, lots of folk aren't too keen on sewage, no matter how clean it may be at the point of reuse.

Nevertheless, here in South Florida, the time has come for treated sewage water to be implemented into all our lives. While other parts of the state reuse up to 75% of their sewage water, Miami-Dade and Broward Counties are currently using almost zip of their available wastewater. That's going to change.

The [Florida Department of Environmental Protection is going to see to it](#). The Florida DEP has its own water reuse agency, dedicated to maximizing the reuse of sewage water throughout the state. Legal deadlines have already been established, with 2025 the absolute deadline, statewide.

The Water Reuse Program in Florida will be forcing land development as well as private citizens throughout South Florida into the reuse of treated sewage water. It is seen as being in the best interests of the state, and we must all work together toward that end.

For more on the Florida Water Reuse Program, check out [ProtectingOurWater.org](#).