

## History of Pinellas County's Water System



The Pinellas County Water System was created by a special act of the Florida Legislature in 1935 to provide water to county beach communities. Service was provided to the first customers in 1937. The statute required that the utility should operate as a proprietary facility, supported by its own revenue and other income.

The entire financial operation is funded by fees and other revenues generated for services. The Water System portion of Pinellas County Utilities does not receive funds to operate from any form of taxes.

The first water supply system, using the Walsingham Reservoir, began operating in 1937 and served less than 200 customers with 1-1/2 million gallons of water per day. In 1951,

wells were developed in the Coachman area for additional supply. In 1956, the Eldridge-Wilde Wellfield went into service, to supply Pinellas County wholesale and retail customers with 15 million gallons of water per day. In 1974, the East Lake Road Wellfield was placed into operation. This wellfield was dismantled by the County in 1995.

In 1976, Pinellas County and the City of St. Petersburg jointly developed and constructed the Cypress Creek Wellfield in Central Pasco County. Included were water transmission lines with 66-inch and 84-inch diameters. Operation of this facility was soon transferred to the newly-formed West Coast Regional Water Supply Authority. In 1975, Pinellas County purchased the Cross Bar Ranch for a future wellfield. Through a joint agreement with the regional Authority, the first water was produced in April 1980.

In 1995, Pinellas County's Water System, Sewer System, and Solid Waste Management consolidated to become today's Pinellas County Utilities. In 1998, Tampa Bay Water, a special district, was created by interlocal agreement to supply wholesale water to its six member governments: Hillsborough County, Pasco County, Pinellas County, St. Petersburg, New Port Richey, and Tampa.

The [Southwest Florida Water Management District](#) (SWFWMD) is one of five regional agencies directed by state law to protect and preserve water resources within its boundaries, and have expanded its duties to include managing water supply and protecting water quality and natural systems.

SWFWMD encompasses all or part of [sixteen west-central counties](#), including Pinellas County. It is governed by a 13-member board that is appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate with a primary funding source of ad valorem taxes.

The Southwest Florida Water Management District is divided into eight basins, seven of which have separate Basin Boards. Members of the Basin Boards are also appointed by the Governor, confirmed by the Senate. These Boards identify water-related issues in their basins, and provide programs and budgets to address these issues. The [Pinellas-Anclote River Basin Board](#) serves Pinellas County.