

GROUNDWATER RECHARGE WETLAND FACT SHEET

AT A GLANCE:

What: Groundwater recharge wetland to replenish the Floridan aquifer and benefit our water resources

Where: Parker Road, near Diamond Sports Park in SW Gainesville

When: Construction expected to be complete in 2026

Why: Beneficial use of reclaimed water to recharge the aquifer while simultaneously creating wetland habitat and a park for the community

How: Multi-agency partnership spearheaded by GRU



Artistic rendering of visitors at wetland park

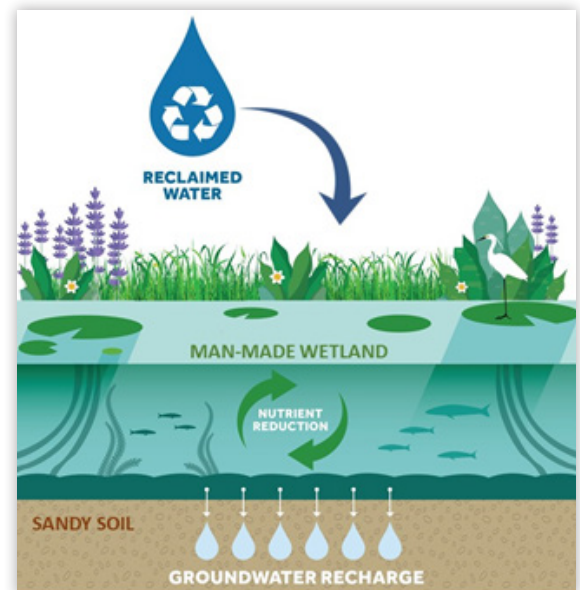
Groundwater Recharge Wetland Project

Gainesville Regional Utilities (GRU), in partnership with the Suwannee River Water Management District (SRWMD) and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), is constructing a wetland park. The project will help replenish, or recharge, the Floridan aquifer, which will benefit the Santa Fe River, its springs and our community.

What is a groundwater recharge wetland?

Groundwater recharge wetlands are man-made wetlands constructed on sandy soils that allow water to gradually percolate through the soil and recharge the aquifer.

These systems are widely acclaimed in the scientific community as a means to provide groundwater recharge with high-quality, low-nutrient reclaimed water. The process helps boost groundwater supplies, raise aquifer levels and support flows at springs, rivers and other nearby water bodies. When completed, this phase of the wetland will recharge the Floridan aquifer with three million gallons per day (MGD) of high-quality, low-nutrient water.



Groundwater recharge wetland schematic

What will the wetland look like?

The wetland park will be designed as a beautiful space for the public to enjoy. The property will have several wetland basins totaling 20 to 45 acres. Each basin will be planted with native wetland plants, including many flowering species that will provide pollinator habitat in addition to enhancing the aesthetics of the park.

Reclaimed water from GRU's Kanapaha Water Reclamation Facility will hydrate the wetland plants and maintain a new and diverse ecosystem with wildlife habitats, scenic views and meandering trails lined with beautiful shade trees. The wetland recharge park will be a thriving location for flora, fauna and the community.

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Where will the wetland be located?

The project site encompasses approximately 75 acres near Diamond Sports Park, along Parker Road in southwest Gainesville. This area was selected because of its sandy, well-drained soils, which are integral to aquifer recharge and because of the proximity to GRU's existing reclaimed water system.

Do other wetlands like this exist?

Sweetwater Wetlands Park in Gainesville is an example of a man-made wetland. Also a multi-agency project led by GRU, Sweetwater Wetland Park's primary function is to improve water quality, but it offers many other benefits such as abundant wildlife habitats as well as recreational and educational opportunities.

Other similar wetlands can be found throughout Florida, including as close as Ocala. Each wetland is treasured for creating an abundance of green space and for having its own unique characteristics. This wetland system will be smaller than Sweetwater Wetlands Park, but the experience will be equally enjoyable.

When will the wetland be built?

Wetland construction will occur in phases. The first phase is expected to be complete in 2026. GRU and its state and regional partners are currently in the project's planning, permitting and design phase. The multi-agency investment and cost-share funding from the SRWMD and FDEP will help pay for the project. Alachua County plans to manage public access and allow hiking, wildlife viewing and other passive uses. Specific project details, including basin layout, trails and parking will be designed in collaboration with GRU partners, stakeholders and neighbors.



Groundwater recharge wetland project site



Little blue heron at an existing GRU wetland site

How do I get involved?

For more information about the project or to become involved, visit gru.com/rechargewetland or email rechargewetland@gru.com