

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: Wetland construction will be complete in 2024.

Why: Beneficial use of reclaimed water to recharge the aquifer while creating a park for local community and a natural habitat for wildlife.

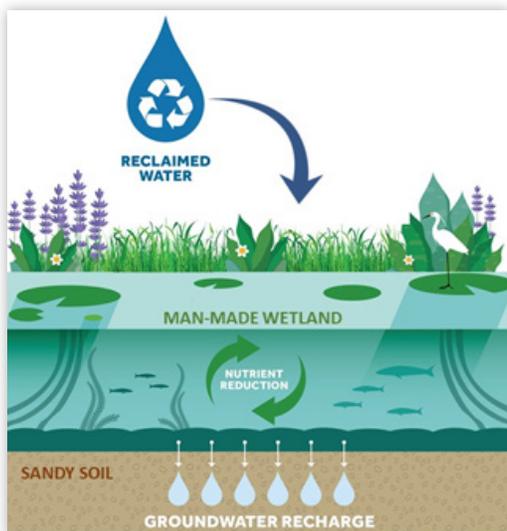
How: Multi-agency partnership spearheaded by GRU.



Photo by Wesley Hetrick

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 groundwater recharge wetland. 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 manmade wetlands constructed on sandy soils that allow water to gradually percolate through the soil and recharge the natural aquifer beneath Gainesville.

These systems are widely heralded 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 maintain positive flows at springs, rivers and other nearby water bodies. When completed, the manmade wetland will recharge the Floridan aquifer with up to 5 million gallons per day (MGD) of high-quality, low-nutrient water.

What will the wetland look like?

The planned wetland system will be designed as a beautiful park-like space for the public to enjoy. The property will have several wetland basins eventually totaling 20 to 45 acres. Each basin will be planted with native wetland plants, including many flowering species.

Reclaimed water from GRU's Kanapaha Water Reclamation Facility will continuously hydrate the wetland ecosystem and breathe life into a native landscape. Picture wildlife habitats, scenic views and meandering trails lined with beautiful shade trees. The wetland recharge park will be a popular 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 lines.

Do other wetlands like this exist?

Sweetwater Wetlands Park in Gainesville is an example of a manmade wetland. Also a multi-agency project led by GRU, Sweetwater's primary function is to improve water quality, but it offers many other benefits such as extraordinary wildlife habitats and 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 maintaining its own unique characteristics. This wetland system will be more intimate than Sweetwater Wetlands Park, which is located on Paynes Prairie, but the experience will be equally enjoyable.

When will the wetland be built?

Wetland construction will occur in phases, with the first phase expected to be complete in 2024. GRU and its state and regional partners are currently in the project's planning, permitting and land-acquisition phase. The multi-agency investment and cost-share funding from the SRWMD and FDEP will help pay for the property. During this initial phase, these partners are working with Alachua County and/or other local stakeholders to develop other partnerships for public access to allow hiking, wildlife viewing and other passive uses. Specific project details, including basin layout, trails and parking will be designed in the near future. The upcoming phase includes the detailed engineering and environmental design and construction of approximately 15 acres of wetlands.



Photo by Jennifer McElroy

How do I get involved?

GRU is partnering with community organizations during the development of this project.

For more information about the project, visit gru.com/rechargewetland. To become involved, please email Kristen Sealey at sealeykm@gru.com.