

surface area. Area growers were included in the water allocation planning by the district (SFWMD) as the fall vegetable planting and cane harvest season approached. It was agreed that water from the lake would be supplied as needed for the fall season, with the understanding that a wetter-than-normal winter season would have to occur to provide adequate water for spring plantings. This was a decision based on economics of agricultural production with full understanding of local conditions.

Late winter and spring rainfall (1981-82) over most of Florida exceeded long-term averages. Surface water supplies and shallow aquifers recovered from the drought and water use restrictions were lifted.

-Determining User Needs-

All five WMD's have carried on programs to identify and understand the water resource, water use and water needs, methods to gain public cooperation, and strategies to deal with growing water use and water management crises, such as floods and droughts. Water quality problems and growing public concern over environmental impacts have led to the establishment of well staffed environmental-biological units in some of the districts. The importance of public information to successful water resource management has been recognized by the districts.

Agricultural water use is important in all the districts, and determination of the quantities involved has been particularly critical for planning and permitting. Unlike most other uses, agricultural water is not usually metered. Because irrigation practices vary widely in Florida and even within a single water management district, it has been necessary to work with many individual growers in order to ascertain the water being used by different irrigation systems with different crops and soils. Several of the districts have attempted to establish water needs based on theoretical determination of evapotranspiration. As data on actual water use accumulated it became evident that other factors, such as irrigation system efficiency, influence the quantities of water needed to provide proper soil-water conditions for crop production. The districts have acknowledged this, and have increased their communications with agricultural researchers, the Extension Service, and growers.

Summary and Comment

Water resource management in Florida has evolved in response to economic, political, and social changes in the growing state. Flood control and drainage were the objectives of most early efforts, followed by better