

Hillsborough River Minimum Flow, Recovery Strategy, and Funding Agreement

Minimum Flows for the Lower Hillsborough River

- Under state law, a minimum flow or level (MFL) is the limit at which further water withdrawals will cause significant harm to the water resources and related environment.
- The current minimum flow is 10 cubic feet per second (cfs).
- The Southwest Florida Water Management District (District) has developed proposed MFLs for the lower Hillsborough River that have been peer reviewed by an independent scientific panel.
- The proposed MFLs would be 24 cfs during April-June and 20 cfs the remainder of the year. The multiple flows were recommended by the peer review panel to meet the seasonal needs of the river.
- The City will double the amount of water going to the lower Hillsborough River.
- The City of Tampa and the District worked together on a plan to develop fresh water flows for a Recovery Strategy.

Recovery Strategy

- The District is required by state law to develop a Recovery Strategy whenever water bodies are not meeting their MFL.
- The District and the City of Tampa reached an agreement to ensure that the MFL is met.
- The Recovery Strategy identifies five potential projects:
 - Move water from Sulphur Springs to the base of the dam on the river. This is expected to provide on average 15 cfs.
 - Move water from Blue Sink to the river. This could provide up to 3 cfs.
 - Install transmission pipeline for Tampa Bay Water's existing transfers of water from the Tampa Bypass Canal to the river for the City of Tampa. This could save up to 3 cfs.
 - Pump water from the Morris Bridge Sink to the canal, then to the river. This may provide up to 6 cfs.
 - Move water from the Tampa Bypass Canal to the river. This project could provide up to 11 cfs.

All projects are subject to permitting and feasibility.

- The proposed MFL must be met by the City by 2017. However, the District through its own initiative will have the MFL met within three years.

Funding Agreement

- The District and the City have negotiated a \$44.5 million funding agreement for projects to help meet the MFL.
- The District and the City will each pay 50% of the Sulphur Springs, Blue Sink and transmission pipeline projects.
- The District will pay 100% of the Tampa Bypass Canal Diversion Project and the Morris Bridge Sink Project.
- Agreement allows for other projects to be identified.

Approvals Still Needed

The proposed MFL, Recovery Strategy and funding agreement will go before the District Governing Board for their consideration at its August 28 meeting.

