

Santa Fe Soil and Water Conservation District Performance Review

Prepared for:
The Florida Legislature's
Office of Program Policy Analysis
and Government Accountability
(OPPAGA)

August 19, 2024



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Key Takeaways

- Santa Fe Soil and Water Conservation District’s Board of Supervisors currently consists of three members, as two of the members were deemed inactive due to health issues.
- Santa Fe Soil and Water Conservation District has not offered or participated in any programs or activities during the review period (October 1, 2020, through April 30, 2024).
- Santa Fe Soil and Water Conservation District does not have any staff members and did not receive any revenues in FY21 and FY22. Information for FY 23 and FY 24 was not provided.
- Santa Fe Soil and Water Conservation District does not have a strategic plan, goals or objectives, or performance measures due to the lack of programs and activities.
- During M&J’s interview with a District Supervisor, the District Supervisor asserted that since 2021, the District has reduced its level of services and participation in programs and activities. As such, the District Supervisor expressed an interest in voluntary dissolution.

I. Background

Pursuant to s. [189.0695\(3\)\(b\)](#), *Florida Statutes*, Mauldin & Jenkins (“M&J”) was engaged by the Florida Legislature’s Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability to conduct performance reviews of the State’s 49 independent soil and water conservation districts. This report details the results of M&J’s performance review of Santa Fe Soil and Water Conservation District (“Santa Fe SWCD” or “District”), conducted with a review period of October 1, 2020, through April 30, 2024.

I.A: District Description

Purpose

Chapter [582](#) of the *Florida Statutes* concerns soil and water conservation within the State of Florida. The chapter establishes the processes for creation, dissolution, and change of boundaries of districts; the qualifications, election, tenure, and mandatory meetings of District Supervisors; the oversight powers and duties of the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (“FDACS”); and the powers and purpose of the districts. The District’s statutory purpose, per s. [582.02](#), *Florida Statutes*, is “to provide assistance, guidance, and education to landowners, land occupiers, the agricultural industry, and the general public in implementing land and water resource protection practices. The Legislature intends for soil and water conservation districts to work in conjunction with federal, state, and local agencies in all matters that implement the provisions of ch. [582](#), *Florida Statutes*.”

The District identifies a mission statement on its website, which reads “The mission of the Santa Fe Soil and Water Conservation District is to provide the administration of programs to conserve soil and improve water quality and quantity on private lands in Columbia County.”

Service Area

When the District was established in 1942, the service area included Columbia County. The current borders and territory are identical to those of Columbia County. The District’s service area includes unincorporated Columbia County and the County’s one city and one town,¹ and part or all of the following Federal and State conservation lands:

- Bay Creek Conservation
- Benton Conservation
- Chinquapin Farm Conservation
- Cypress Creek Conservation
- Deep Creek Conservation
- Ichetucknee Spring State Park
- Ichetucknee Trace
- McKeithen Site
- O’leno State Park

¹ Lake City and Fort White, respectively.

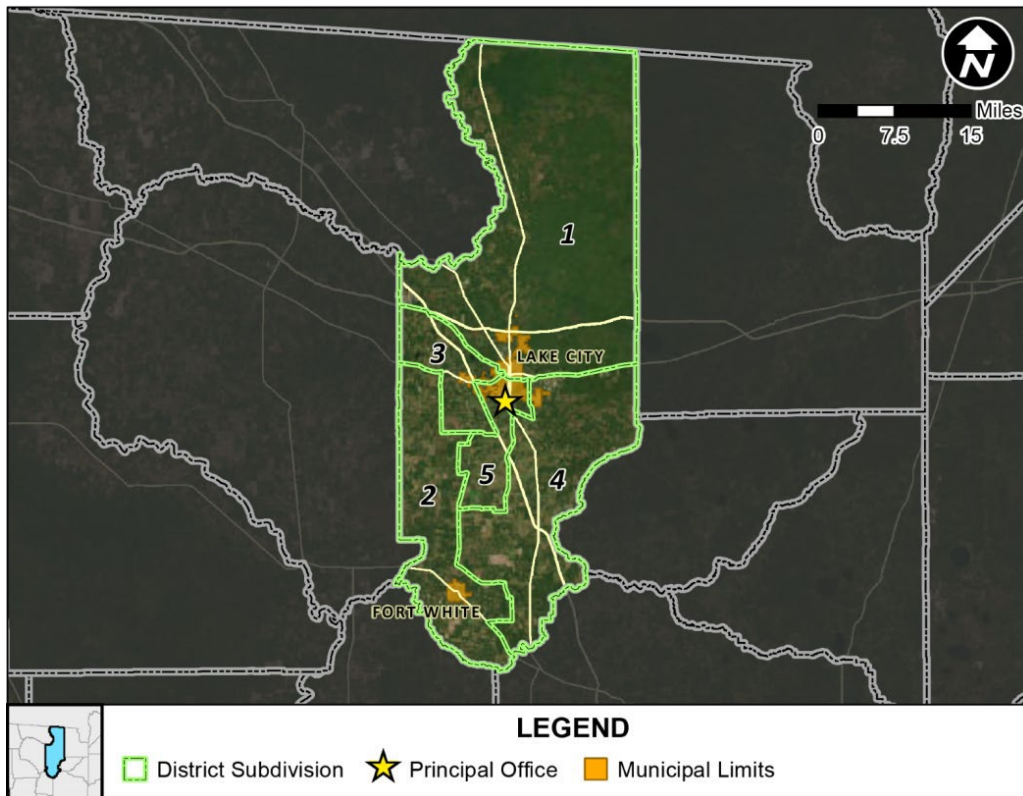
- Olustee Creek Conservation
- Osceola National Forest
- Pinhook Swamp/Espenship Conservation
- River Rise Preserve State Park
- Santa Fe Springs Conservation

The District is bounded on the north by the state of Georgia, east by Baker County, southeast by Union County, southwest by Gilchrist County, south by Alachua County, and west by Suwannee and Hamilton counties. The total area within the District is 802 of square miles, with 798 square miles of land and 4 square miles of water.

Based on an interview with a District Supervisor, the District does not maintain a primary office or a meeting space.

Figure 1 is a map of the District’s service area, based on the map incorporated by reference in Rule 5M-20.002(3)(a)40., *Florida Administrative Code*, showing the District’s boundaries, electoral subdivisions, major municipalities within the service area, and the District’s registered address (currently inactive). The map does not show the meeting location used by Supervisors for monthly meetings, as a District Supervisor asserted that its monthly meeting is conducted at a privately owned restaurant.

Figure 1: Map of Santa Fe Soil and Water Conservation District



(Source: Columbia County GIS, Florida Commerce Special District Profile)

Population

Based on the Florida Office of Economic and Demographic Research population estimates, the population within the District's service area was 72,191 as of April 1, 2023.

District Characteristics

Santa Fe SWCD is located in the northern part of Florida. The economy of the service area is diversified, and is supported by health care, social assistance, and retail trade. Southern parts of the District are urban, while northern parts of the District are rural. According to the 2022 Census of Agriculture, the District contained approximately 89,621 acres of farmland. Popular crops grown and produced by the District include grains, hay, poultry, and eggs. The District's topography is relatively flat, with an average elevation of 36 meters. Due to the District's flat topography, the District may be threatened by flooding in the event of heavy storms and the ponding of water.²

The District includes many springs, which are known as a window into the District's primary water source, the Floridian Aquifer ("Aquifer"). Different types of land uses can introduce potentially harmful soluble materials such as pesticides and nitrates into the Aquifer.³ Once in the Aquifer, potentially harmful soluble materials can flow with groundwater and find their way into drinking water, springs, rivers, and the Gulf of Mexico. Proper land management of land use activities is essential to preventing water pollution within the District's water supply.³ Furthermore, the Florida Springs Institute estimated a high Aquifer Nitrogen Footprint for the District, which indicates that a high amount of nitrogen will be present in bodies of water within the District due to human activities. As a result, the District's topography presents the need for services geared towards improving water quality and quantity.

I.B: Creation and Governance

Santa Fe SWCD was chartered on December 14, 1942, as the Santa Fe Soil Conservation District, following a successful referendum of local landowners and subsequent petition to the Florida State Soil Conservation Board.⁴ The District was created under the authority of the State Soil Conservation Districts Act (herein referred to as "ch. [582, Florida Statutes](#)").⁵ The Florida Legislature amended ch. [582, Florida Statutes](#), in 1965, to expand the scope of all soil conservation districts to include water conservation, and rename the District to the Santa Fe Soil and Water Conservation District.⁶

The District is governed by a Board of Supervisors. Supervisors are unpaid, nonpartisan public officials elected by the voters within the service district. M&J analyzed the Supervisors' elections, appointments, and qualifications within the in-scope period pursuant to applicable *Florida Statutes*.⁷

² Columbia County, Florida. N.d. "Flood Information." Accessed June 4, 2024.

<https://www.columbiacountyfla.com/FloodInformation.asp>.

³ Suwanee River Water Management District. N.d. "Protecting our Springs." Accessed June 4, 2024.

<https://www.mysuwanneeriver.com/270/Protecting-Our-Springs>.

⁴ McMullen, K. S., and A. P. Spencer. 1948. *Biennial Report of the State Soil Conservation Board: January 1, 1947 - December 31, 1948*. Biennial Report, Tallahassee: Florida State Soil Conservation Board.

⁵ s. [582, Florida Statutes](#) (1939), available online as ch. [19473, Laws of Florida](#)

⁶ Ch. [65-334, Laws of Florida](#)

⁷ Including s. [582.15, Florida Statutes](#), s. [582.18, Florida Statutes](#), s. [582.19, Florida Statutes](#), Rule [5M-20.002, Florida Administrative Code](#), and ch. [2022-191, Laws of Florida](#).

Based on an interview with a District Supervisor, the Supervisor asserted that the District has three active Supervisors. Two Supervisors who were elected in November 2022 are no longer active due to health reasons. M&J denoted inactive Supervisors, using asterisks, in Figure 2. Section [582.19\(1\)](#), *Florida Statutes*, requires Supervisors to sign an affirmation that they met the residency and qualification requirements. M&J requested the affirmations as part of a public records request to the Columbia County Supervisor of Elections and received affirmations for the three current Supervisors in addition to the two Supervisors who are no longer active. As such, M&J confirms that the Supervisors elected to these seats in the 2022 General Election meet statutory requirements. Additional assessment of the District’s electoral patterns is detailed in section II.D (Organization and Governance) of this report.

Figure 2: Supervisor Terms

Seat	FY21				FY22				FY23				FY24		
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3
1	Donald B. Spradley														
2											Lamar Moseley				
3	Don Stevens*														
4											Richard Crusaw				
5	Jeff Willis*														

Legend:

(*) Inactive Supervisors (Seats 3 and 5)

(Source: Columbia County Supervisor of Elections Information)

M&J requested but did not receive information needed to determine the number of times the District Supervisors met during the review period or if the District met the mandatory meeting requirement of s. [582.195](#), *Florida Statutes*, to meet at least once per calendar year with all five Supervisors for both 2022 and 2023. M&J does not have sufficient information to determine whether the District properly noticed each meeting and workshop. Additional assessment of the District’s pattern of providing meeting notices and adherence to relevant statutes is detailed in section II.D (Organization and Governance) of this report.

Neither Columbia County nor the in-district municipalities have adopted any local regulations for the District.

I.C: Programs and Activities

Based on an interview with a District Supervisor, the District Supervisor asserted that the District has not participated in or hosted any programs or activities during the review period. It is important to note that the District Supervisor asserted that the District was more active and had more active Supervisors in calendar year 2021. M&J requested but was not provided with any evidence or documentation of increased District activity in calendar year 2021.

I.D: Intergovernmental Interactions

Based on an interview with a District Supervisor, the District Supervisor asserted that the District does not have interactions with any federal agencies, State agencies, and public entities.

I.E: Resources for Fiscal Year 2022 – 2023

The following figures quantify and describe the District’s resources for Fiscal Year 2022 – 2023 (October 1, 2022, through September 30, 2023, herein referred to as “FY23”). M&J requested but was not provided with the District’s FY23 revenues and expenditures. Therefore M&J could not analyze and provide feedback regarding the District’s FY23 revenues and expenditures. Figure 3 shows the number of paid full-time and part-time staff, contracted staff, and volunteers by employer. Figure 4 shows the number and type of vehicles, number and type of major equipment, and number and type of facilities owned, leased, and used by the District.

Figure 3: FY23 Program Staffing

	Full-time Staff	Part-time Staff	Contracted Staff	Volunteers
District-employed Staff	0	0	0	0
Board of County Commissioners-employed staff	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	0

(Source: Interview notes with a District Supervisor)

Figure 4: FY23 Equipment and Facilities

	Number	Ownership Status	Type(s)
Vehicles	0	N/A	N/A
Major Equipment	0	N/A	N/A
Facilities	0	N/A	N/A

(Source: Interview notes with a District Supervisor)

II. Findings

The Findings sections summarize the analyses performed, and the associated conclusions derived from M&J's analysis. The analysis and findings are divided into the following four subject categories:

- Service Delivery
- Resource Management
- Performance Management
- Organization and Governance

II.A: Service Delivery

Overview of Services

As stated in the I.C (Programs and Activities) section, the District does not provide or participate in any services, programs, or activities.

Analysis of Service Delivery

M&J is unable to analyze and make findings related to the District's services as the District does not provide or participate in any services, programs, or activities. The District Supervisor asserted their concern for long-term viability as the District only has three Supervisors and expressed an interest in voluntary dissolution. If the District is able to find additional Supervisors and desires to remain active and participate in programs and activities, the District should consider identifying additional revenue sources.

Recommendation: If the District wishes to remain active, the District should consider identifying opportunities within its service area to address the unique soil and water conservation needs of the service area. The District should consider proactively communicating with program coordinators for outreach events, educational activities, or other conservation programs to offer assistance or support. If the District identifies a lack of programming to address a specific community conservation need, the District should consider establishing, either independently or with partners, programming to address the identified need. The District should ensure programs it sponsors, assists, or organizes align with its statutory purpose and authorities. The District could consider continuing to participate in outreach events, such as National Association of Conservation District/Association of Florida Conservation Districts-sponsored events and Envirothon and identify additional opportunities within its service area to expand the District's community presence.

Comparison to Similar Services/Potential Consolidations

M&J is unable to compare the District's services to other local public entities as the District does not provide or participate in any services, programs, or activities.

II.B: Resource Management

Program Staffing

Based on an interview with a District Supervisor, the District Supervisor asserted that the District has not employed any staff during the review period.

Equipment and Facilities

Based on an interview with a District Supervisor, the District Supervisor asserted that the District did not own or lease any major equipment or vehicles during the review period. Also, the District Supervisor asserted that the District does not utilize any principal office or meeting space.

During the review period, the District Supervisor asserted the Board of Supervisors monthly meeting is held at a privately-owned restaurant, not at a publicly-owned facility. During the review period, the District held Board of Supervisors (“Board”) meetings at the privately-owned restaurant. Chapter [286](#), *Florida Statutes* requires that meetings be held at facilities that would not unreasonably restrict public access to the facility. Holding meetings at a private facility may have a chilling effect on the public. For example, the Attorney General has found that public boards or commissions should avoid the use of luncheon meetings at a restaurant to conduct board or commission business. These meetings may have a “chilling” effect upon the public’s willingness or desire to attend. People who would otherwise attend such a meeting may be unwilling or reluctant to enter a public dining room without purchasing a meal and maybe financially or personally unwilling to do so.⁸ Failure to provide appropriate accommodation in accordance with ch. [286](#), *Florida Statutes* may have a “chilling effect” upon the public and, therefore, deny the public an opportunity to attend meetings and participate in District business. Violation of the appropriate meeting space may subject District Supervisors and staff to penalties, including fines, fees, and misdemeanor charges.⁹

Recommendation: The District should consider reviewing where and when it holds its public meetings to ensure it is not having a chilling effect on the public. The District should not hold luncheon or breakfast public meetings. To the extent that a public facility is available within the jurisdiction of the District for use by the District, it is recommended that such facility be considered for use during public meetings of the District.

Current and Historic Revenues and Expenditures

M&J could not report the District’s revenues and expenditures for the entire review period as the District did not provide M&J with requested financial documentation. As a result, M&J utilized the District’s Annual Financial Reports submitted to the Florida Department of Financial Services for FY21 and FY22 to report revenues and expenditures. Due to the lack of financial documentation, M&J could not validate reported revenues and expenditures in the District’s Annual Financial Reports.

The District did not receive any revenues in FY21 or FY22.

⁸ Inf. Op. to Campbell, February 8, 1999; and Inf. Op. to Nelson, May 19, 1980. Cf. *City of Miami Beach v. Berns*, 245 So. 2d 38, 41 (Fla. 1971), in which the Florida Supreme Court observed: “A secret meeting occurs when public officials meet at a time and place to avoid being seen or heard by the public.”

⁹ As outlined in s. [286.011](#), *Florida Statutes*. Further, and the Uniform Special District Accountability Act in s. 189.015(3), *Florida Statutes*, states: “[m]eetings of the governing body of the special district shall be held in a public building when available within the district, in a county courthouse of a county in which the district is located, or in a building the county accessible to the public.”

The District incurred expenditures related to operating expenditures in FY21. The District incurred \$42 of expenditures in FY21. The District did not incur any expenditures in FY22. M&J was not provided with sufficient information to determine the source of expenditures. Figure 5 shows the District’s expenditures reported in its publicly available Annual Financial Reports.

Figure 5: Total Expenditures

Program or Activity	Total Expenditures			
	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24 (through 12/31/2023)
Operating Expenses	\$42	\$0	Not Provided	Not Provided
Total	\$42	\$0	Not Provided	Not Provided

(Source: FY21 and FY22 Annual Financial Reports)

Trends and Sustainability

From FY21 to FY22, there was no change in District revenues. From FY21 to FY22, District expenditures decreased by \$42. M&J cannot determine the reason for the decrease due to a lack of sufficient financial information to validate expenditures reported in the FY21 and FY22 Annual Financial Reports.

The District did not hold long-term debt in FY21 or FY22.

The District Supervisor asserted their concern for long-term viability as the District has three Supervisors and expressed an interest in voluntary dissolution. If the District is able to find additional Supervisors and desires to remain active and participate in programs and activities, the District should consider identifying additional revenue sources.

Recommendation: If the District wishes to remain active, the District could consider identifying new revenue sources and developing an annual budget that meets the requirements of s. [189.016\(3\)](#), *Florida Statutes*, in order to determine the level of programs and activities the District can fund with future revenue sources.

II.C: Performance Management

Strategic and Other Future Plans

Based on an interview with a District Supervisor, the District Supervisor asserted that the District does not have a strategic plan. The District Supervisor asserted their concern for long-term viability as the District has three Supervisors and expressed an interest in voluntary dissolution. If the District is able to find additional Supervisors and desires to remain active and participate in programs and activities, the District should consider adopting a strategic plan.

Recommendation: If the District wishes to remain active, the District should consider developing and then adopting a strategic plan that builds on the District’s purpose and vision. The strategic plan should not simply describe the District’s future programs or contracts, but rather reflect the District’s long-term and short-term priorities based on the needs of the community and in response to changing land use patterns within the District’s service area.

Goals and Objectives

Based on an interview with a District Supervisor, the District Supervisor asserted that the District does not have goals or objectives.

Recommendation: If the District wishes to remain active, the District should consider writing and then adopting a set of goals and objectives that align with the District’s statutory purpose, as defined in s. [582.02\(4\)](#), *Florida Statutes*, and the Board’s vision and priorities as established in the District’s strategic plan. The goals and objectives should contemplate measurable progress, capturing the results of the District’s efforts and ensuring a consistent direction forward for the District’s future prioritization of programs and activities.

Performance Measures and Standards

Based on an interview with a District Supervisor, the District Supervisor asserted that the District does not have performance measures or standards.

Recommendation: If the District desires to remain active, the District should consider identifying performance measures and standards as part of the development of a strategic plan.

Analysis of Goals, Objectives, and Performance Measures and Standards

Due to the lack of a strategic plan, goals and objectives, and performance measures and standards, M&J is unable to analyze the District’s goals and objectives and performance measures.

Annual Financial Reports and Audits

The District is required per s. [218.32](#), *Florida Statutes*, to submit an annual financial report to the Florida Department of Financial Services within nine months of the end of the District’s fiscal year. It must be noted that the District follows a fiscal year end date of December 31 according to the Florida Department of Financial Services and therefore must submit an annual financial report by September 30. As such, the District’s fiscal year does not follow that of the local fiscal year. According to Annual Financial Reports sourced from the Florida Department of Financial Services’ online database, the District submitted the FY21 Annual Financial Report almost one week past the deadline on October 5, 2022. The FY22 Annual Financial Report was submitted before the deadline. The District has until September 30, 2024, and until September 30, 2025, to submit the FY23 and FY24 Annual Financial Reports, respectively.

The District is not required to submit an annual financial audit report as its revenues or combined expenses and expenditures did not exceed \$100,000 during the review period, as per s. [218.39](#), *Florida Statutes*.

Recommendation: The District should consider refining its timeline for preparing and submitting the Annual Financial Report to the Florida Department of Financial Services to ensure that the District is meeting the requirements of s. [218.32\(1\)\(a\)](#), *Florida Statutes*.

Performance Reviews and District Performance Feedback

M&J does not have sufficient information to determine whether the District solicits feedback on its performance from appropriate stakeholders.

II.D: Organization and Governance

Election and Appointment of Supervisors

Supervisors are required by s. [582.19\(1\)\(b\)](#), *Florida Statutes*, to sign an affirmation that they meet certain residency and agricultural experience requirements. These signed affirmations are required of both elected and appointed Supervisors. Furthermore, beginning with the November 2022 Supervisor elections, Chapter [2022-191](#), *Laws of Florida*, amended s. [582.19\(1\)](#), *Florida Statutes* required that candidates for election to a Supervisor seat had to live in the district and have agricultural experience, as defined by the Florida Legislature. Per ch. [2022-191](#), *Laws of Florida*, all five of the District's Supervisor seats were up for election in November 2022.

The District's current Supervisors were elected unopposed in November 2022. Candidates in the November 2022 election were required by s. [582.19\(1\)\(b\)](#), *Florida Statutes*, to sign an affirmation that they met the residency and qualification requirements. M&J requested affirmations from the Columbia County Supervisor of Elections as part of a public records request and was provided with affirmations for all District Supervisors elected in November 2022. As a result, M&J concludes that the District's current Supervisors meet the residency and qualification requirements.

Four Supervisor seats are up for election in November 2024.

Notices of Public Meetings

Section [189.015](#), *Florida Statutes*, requires that all Board meetings be publicly noticed in accordance with the procedures listed in ch. [50](#), *Florida Statutes*. This chapter has been amended twice during the review period, and M&J reviewed for compliance with the governing statute in effect at the time of each meeting date and applicable notice period.

M&J does not have sufficient information to determine the District's current meeting notice procedures. M&J reviewed the *Florida Administrative Register* for meeting notices and found that zero meeting notices existed during the review period. As such, M&J is uncertain whether Board meetings for the review period were noticed in accordance with procedures listed in ch. [50](#), *Florida Statutes*. M&J does not have sufficient information to determine the District's current meeting notice procedures. M&J cannot conclude whether the District meets the requirements of the version of ch. [50](#), *Florida Statutes*, in effect at the time of each meeting date and applicable notice period. Prior to January 2023, ch. [50](#), *Florida Statutes*, required any board located in a county with a county-wide newspaper to publish meeting notices in that newspaper M&J does not have sufficient information to determine whether the District met this requirement for meetings held in 2021 and 2022. Since January 2023, ch. [50](#), *Florida Statutes*, has permitted publication of meeting notices on a publicly accessible website (such as the Florida Administrative Register) as long as the board publishes a notice once a year in the local newspaper identifying the location of meeting notices and stating that any resident who wishes to receive notices by mail or e-mail may contact the board with that request. M&J does not have sufficient information to determine whether the District met this requirement for meetings held in 2023 and 2024.

Failure to provide appropriate notice may deny the public an opportunity to attend meetings and participate in District business. Violation of ch. [50](#), *Florida Statutes*, may subject District Supervisors and staff to penalties, including fees, fines, and misdemeanor charges, as outlined in s. [286.011](#), *Florida Statutes*. Additionally, business conducted at such meetings may be invalidated.

Recommendation: The District should consider ensuring that it is meeting notice procedures to be in compliance with s. [189.015](#) and ch. [50](#), *Florida Statutes*. The District should retain records that document its compliance with the applicable statutes.

Retention of Records and Public Access to Documents

The District's website includes the appropriate link to the District's Annual Financial Reports on its website. The District failed to respond to initial information requests and failed to provide M&J with documentation related to operations. The District did not provide sufficient information needed to make findings and perform analysis related to the performance review. Furthermore, the District's website does not provide Board meeting dates, agendas, or minutes. As such, the District did not comply with records retention requirements in accordance with s. [119.021](#), *Florida Statutes*. Failure to retain records may limit transparency into District activities, negatively impact Supervisor and staff transitions, and violate the requirement to provide access to public records for personal inspection and copying by any person, as required by s. [119.07](#), *Florida Statutes*. Violation of these sections may subject District Supervisors and staff to penalties, including fines, suspension and removal or impeachment, and misdemeanor charges, as outlined in s. [119.10](#), *Florida Statutes*.

Recommendation: The District should consider improving record retention procedures and access to public records in accordance with ch. [119](#), *Florida Statutes*, to enhance transparency and avoid loss of institutional knowledge. The District could consider duplicating records to be stored in separate locations to mitigate the loss of records due to technology failures, accidental disposition of records, or natural disasters. The District could further consider designing or acquiring an electronic recordkeeping system, either independently or through a partnership with a local government, another soil and water conservation district, or another public entity.

III. Recommendations

The following table presents M&J’s recommendations based on the analyses and conclusions in the Findings sections, along with considerations for each recommendation.

Recommendation Text	Associated Considerations
<p>If the District wishes to remain active, the District should consider identifying opportunities within its service area to address the unique soil and water conservation needs of the service area. The District should consider proactively communicating with program coordinators for outreach events, educational activities, or other conservation programs to offer assistance or support. If the District identifies a lack of programming to address a specific community conservation need, the District should consider establishing, either independently or with partners, programming to address the identified need. The District should ensure programs it sponsors, assists, or organizes align with its statutory purpose and authorities. The District could consider continuing to participate in outreach events, such as National Association of Conservation District/Association of Florida Conservation Districts-sponsored events and Envirothon and identify additional opportunities within its service area to expand the District’s community presence.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential Benefit: Benefits of the change include making efforts to increase the District’s footprint and programs offered. • Potential Adverse Consequences: Adverse consequences of the recommendation include the increased time and effort to identify additional outreach opportunities for the District to participate in. • Costs: M&J has not identified any additional funding needed to implement this recommendation. • Statutory Considerations: M&J has not identified any legal, operational, or other issues that may arise from the proposed change.

Recommendation Text	Associated Considerations
<p>If the District wishes to remain active, the District should consider reviewing where and when it holds its public meetings to ensure it is not having a chilling effect on the public. The District should not hold luncheon or breakfast public meetings. To the extent that a public facility is available within the jurisdiction of the District for use by the District, it is recommended that such facility be considered for use during public meetings of the District.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Potential Benefit: Holding events in a publicly owned facility that does not discriminate on the basis of sex, age, race, creed, color, origin, or economic status or which operates in such a manner as to unreasonably restrict public access to the facility ● Potential Adverse Consequences: None ● Costs: Minimal or none if the meetings are held at a municipal, county, or other governmentally-owned facility ● Statutory Considerations: None
<p>If the District wishes to remain active, the District should consider developing a plan to increase revenue sources in an effort to diversify the types of revenue relied on by the District. The District could consider proposing an agreement with the Columbia County Board of County Commissioners to allow for the District to present an annual budget request, which would be subject to approval by the Board of County Commissioners. Furthermore, the District could consider identifying grant opportunities from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the National Association of Conservation Districts, or another public or private conservation-related entity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Potential Benefit: Benefits include receiving revenues to help expand the operations and footprint of the District. ● Potential Adverse Consequences: Adverse consequences of the recommendation include the increased time and effort to search/apply for different funding sources. ● Costs: M&J has not identified any additional funding needed to implement this recommendation. ● Statutory Considerations: M&J has not identified any legal, operational, or other issues that may arise from the proposed change.

Recommendation Text	Associated Considerations
<p>If the District wishes to remain active, the District should consider developing and then adopting a strategic plan that builds on the District’s purpose and vision. The strategic plan should not simply describe the District’s future programs or contracts, but rather reflect the District’s long-term and short-term priorities based on the needs of the community and in response to changing land use patterns within the District’s service area.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential Benefit: Benefits of the change include planning the expansion of the District and the District’s programs to ensure success. • Potential Adverse Consequences: Adverse consequences of the recommendation include the increased time and effort to develop a strategic plan. • Costs: M&J has not identified any additional funding needed to implement this recommendation. • Statutory Considerations: M&J has not identified any legal, operational, or other issues that may arise from the proposed change.
<p>If the District wishes to remain active, the District should consider writing and then adopting a set of goals and objectives that align with the District’s statutory purpose, as defined in s. 582.02(4), Florida Statutes, and the Board’s vision and priorities as established in the District’s strategic plan. The goals and objectives should contemplate measurable progress, capturing the results of the District’s efforts and ensuring a consistent direction forward for the District’s future prioritization of programs and activities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential Benefit: Benefits of the change include providing direction for the District’s future operations and activities. • Potential Adverse Consequences: Adverse consequences of the recommendation include the increased time and effort to develop goals. • Costs: M&J has not identified any additional funding needed to implement this recommendation. • Statutory Considerations: M&J has not identified any legal, operational, or other issues that may arise from the proposed change.
<p>If the District desires to remain active, the District should consider identifying performance measures and standards as part of the development of a strategic plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential Benefit: Benefits include the implementation of a method for the District to measure progress towards goals and performance to ensure accountability. • Potential Adverse Consequences: Adverse consequences of the recommendation include the increased time and effort to develop performance measures. • Costs: M&J has not identified any additional funding needed to implement this recommendation. • Statutory Considerations: M&J has not identified any legal, operational, or other issues that may arise from the proposed change.

Recommendation Text	Associated Considerations
<p>If the District wishes to remain active, the District should consider refining its timeline for preparing and submitting the Annual Financial Report to the Florida Department of Financial Services to ensure that the District is meeting the requirements of s. 218.32(1)(a), <i>Florida Statutes</i>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential Benefit: Benefits of the change include compliance with s. 218.32(1)(a), <i>Florida Statutes</i>. • Potential Adverse Consequences: Adverse consequences of the recommendation include the increased time and effort to develop performance measures. • Costs: M&J has not identified any additional funding needed to implement this recommendation. • Statutory Considerations: M&J has not identified any legal, operational, or other issues that may arise from the proposed change.
<p>If the District wishes to remain active, the District should consider ensuring that its meeting notice procedures are in compliance with s. 189.015 and ch. 50, <i>Florida Statutes</i>. The District should retain records that document its compliance with the applicable statutes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential Benefit: Benefits of the change include compliance with s. 189.015 and ch. 50, <i>Florida Statutes</i>. • Potential Adverse Consequences: M&J has not identified any adverse consequences. • Costs: M&J has not identified any additional funding needed to implement this recommendation. • Statutory Considerations: M&J has not identified any legal, operational, or other issues that may arise from the proposed change.
<p>If the District wishes to remain active, the District should consider improving record retention procedures and access to public records in accordance with ch. 119, <i>Florida Statutes</i>, to enhance transparency and avoid loss of institutional knowledge. The District could consider duplicating records to be stored in separate locations to mitigate the loss of records due to technology failures, accidental disposition of records, or natural disasters. The District could further consider designing or acquiring an electronic recordkeeping system, either independently or through a partnership with a local government, another soil and water conservation district, or another public entity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential Benefit: Benefits of the change include compliance with ch. 119, <i>Florida Statutes</i> and increased transparency. • Potential Adverse Consequences: M&J has not identified any adverse consequences as a result of the recommendation. • Costs: M&J has not identified any adverse consequences, fiscal changes as a result of the recommendation. • Statutory Considerations: M&J has not identified any legal, operational, or other issues that may arise as a result of the recommendation.

IV. District Response

Each soil and water conservation district under review by M&J was provided the opportunity to submit a response letter for inclusion in the final published report. Santa Fe SWCD did not provide M&J with a response letter for inclusion in the final report.