



## End of Year Update

2016 has been another successful year for Florida Water Star (FWS). The program continues to expand and is considered a valued certification for any sustainable project or development in Florida. FWS saw increases in the number of residential, commercial and community certifications and the program now has more than 2,500 homes certified. Beyond residential homes, an additional 13 FWS communities were certified, contributing to a total of 4,100 residences. The Florida Green Building Coalition saw an increase of over 200% for homes seeking FWS criteria credit, rising from 79 homes seeking the credit in 2015 to 283 homes in 2016.



The Reed in Tampa received FWS Community Certification in 2016

## Criteria Changes in 2017

The FWS technical advisory committee met in November and agreed to three changes to the program criteria:

- Inside — quarter-turn valves will no longer be required in any tier.
- Outdoors — pressure-regulation can occur either at the sprinkler head or at the valve for each irrigation zone.
- Landscapes that have turf grass located directly adjacent to structures will be permitted to locate the sprinkler head 18 inches from the structure.

## New Funding Sources for Florida Water Star

During the past year FWS has been able to offer additional funding incentives to builders who construct FWS-certified homes. Citrus County is offering \$1,000 irrigation offset rebates to the first 10 builders who construct FWS-certified homes. Additionally, Polk County secured funding to offer \$700 irrigation offset rebate for 500 FWS homes. In 2017, Alachua County will offer a similar rebate of \$700 for 150 homes that become FWS certified.

## **Training Success**

FWS accredited professional training (APs) and certifier training was offered throughout 2016. The six FWS AP classes had 147 eager landscape and irrigation professionals in attendance. Existing certifiers were encouraged to attend an AP class or a new certifier class to learn about FWS program updates. FWS's partnership with FNGLA continues to contribute to successful trainings throughout the state. In addition, trainings are already scheduled for Miami in January and St. Petersburg in March 2017.



New Certifiers learning to evaluate landscapes in Gainesville.

## **Performance Analysis**

During 2016 the first performance evaluation of FWS was conducted. The Toho Water Authority (TWA) worked with the University of Florida's Program for Resource Efficient Communities (PREC) and FWS to analyze how FWS homes perform compared to similar non-FWS homes in the TWA service area. The most significant result was in homes where the landscapes are homeowner maintained, which found savings of 43% for outdoor water use over a two-year period. Indoor savings averaged about 6.6% compared to similar new homes. Outdoor water use in master-maintained landscapes did not show savings. Therefore, the TWA is continuing to work with landscape maintenance companies to maximize the potential savings of FWS communities in their service area.

## **Program Promotion**

*Water 2070*, a collaborative study by the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, 1000 Friends of Florida and the University of Florida's GeoPlan Center cites the FWS program as an initiative that can "promote significant reductions in water demand in Florida." The study also recommends that the FWS program is "expanded to promote greater water conservation in new and existing developments."

2017 promises to be another successful year for FWS and the program administrators are here to help you. Please let us know if we can be of any assistance.

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