



# Northwest Florida Water Management District

---

81 Water Management Drive, Havana, Florida 32333-4712

*(U.S. Highway 90, 10 miles west of Tallahassee)*

Phone: (850) 539-5999 • Fax: (850) 539-2777

Jonathan P. Steverson  
*Executive Director*

July 10, 2013

Dear Concerned Citizen,

Re: Sturgeon AquaFarms, LLC Permit Application No. I07400

Thank you for contacting the Northwest Florida Water Management District about Sturgeon Aquafarms, LLC's pending Water Use Permit application. First, I would like to thank you for your interest and passion for protecting Florida's water resources. One of the District's core missions is to ensure a safe and reliable supply of water for both people and the environment. The District works daily to protect the surface and groundwater resources of Northwest Florida through a number of programs, including the legislatively created Consumptive Use Permitting program.

Florida law (Chapter 373, Florida Statutes) lays out the process the District must follow when it reviews all Consumptive Use Permitting (CUP) applications, including Sturgeon AquaFarms, LLC. Under this law, water users are entitled to a permit as long as the use: (1) is a reasonable-beneficial use; (2) will not interfere with any presently existing legal use of water; and (3) is consistent with the public interest.

The District reviews every application to determine if the proposed use will have a harmful impact on the state's water resources and other users. We also evaluate information such as current and predicted water use demand and water levels. The District is committed to using the best available science now and in the future. We work regularly with other water management districts, as well as state and federal agencies, to share data and expertise toward the protection of our valuable water resources. This case will be no exception.

The Northwest Florida Water Management District is committed to both providing excellent service to everyone and to following the laws that govern water resources in the State of Florida. As part of that commitment, we have dedicated ourselves to doing all that we can to provide greater transparency and understanding of our programs and processes.

The District is looking forward to participating in a community meeting in Jackson County, which will allow us to explain and answer questions regarding our entire permitting process. We hope this gathering will help provide some clarity regarding our statutory responsibilities and how those responsibilities may affect this case. We expect this meeting to take place in early August, and will work with the local media and community groups to provide more information about this meeting as we finalize plans.

GEORGE ROBERTS  
Chair  
Panama City

JERRY PATE  
Vice Chair  
Pensacola

JOHN ALTER  
Malone

GUS ANDREWS  
DeFuniak Springs

STEPHANIE BLOYD  
Panama City Beach

GARY CLARK  
Chipley

JON COSTELLO  
Tallahassee

NICK PATRONIS  
Panama City Beach

BO SPRING  
Port Saint Joe

Please be assured that your deadline for objecting to this permit or receiving more information about it is not July 15, 2013. We will continue to accept public comments and objections, and will be happy to provide additional information throughout the application and permitting process in the weeks and months to come. Please address any comments or objections, in writing, to: Bureau of Groundwater Regulation, Attn: Terri Peterson, 152 Water Management Drive, Havana, FL 32333. You may choose to email your comments or objections to: [water.use@nwfwmd.state.fl.us](mailto:water.use@nwfwmd.state.fl.us).

Further, after the District determines that the permit application is complete and then conducts its evaluation, we will notify you of any intent to act on the application by sending a Notice of Proposed Agency Action (NOPAA) informational packet. The NOPAA will contain a staff report that describes the evaluation of the complete application and the staff's recommendation to the District's Governing Board.

Final action on the Sturgeon Aquafarms, LLC CUP will be considered by our Governing Board at a hearing that is open to the public. The NOPAA informational packet will also include the procedures and deadlines for filing a formal petition against any staff recommendation of agency action, as well as the scheduled date and time of the Governing Board meeting.

Because you have taken the time to contact us and express your interest in this issue, we have placed you on a mailing list to receive the NOPAA informational packet regarding this application. I also urge you to frequently visit the District website at [www.nwfwmd.state.fl.us](http://www.nwfwmd.state.fl.us) for updates regarding the date, time and location of our community meeting in August.

Thank you again for your advocacy for water resources in Jackson County and Northwest Florida as a whole. If you have any other questions about this permit application or the District's permitting process, please do not hesitate to contact the District at (850) 539-5999.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael H. Edgar". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "M" and a distinct "E".

Michael H. Edgar  
Director of Resource Regulation