

COVER PAGE

CS/CS/HB 7013: "Special Districts", was unanimously approved by the Florida Legislature and signed into law by Governor DeSantis in late April 2024. Among other requirements of this bill is a provision requiring all special districts to adopt goals and objectives, as well as performance measures and standards to determine if those goals and objectives are being achieved. In particular, concerns were raised by the Legislature that Mosquito Control Districts needed better planning of expenditures implemented into a comprehensive strategic plan with budgeted items and timelines for completion. Prior to this bill, Lee County District Control District (LCHCD) was using a "SWOT" (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis as a strategic plan to drive district planning. While adequate in identifying the needs and weaknesses of LCHCD's operations, our SWOT analysis lacked goals, objectives, timelines, and correlating budgets for those specific goals. The strategic plan that follows addresses these shortcomings and enables LCHCD to identify important annually reportable objectives to achieve the goals of the strategic plan and assigns each one a timeline, progress log, and cost.

With assistance from LCMCD, LCHCD has built departmental goals with 5 reporting criteria in mind to fulfill the intent of HB 7013; our goal and objective criteria are SMART:

Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Reportable, Timely

These goals and SMART planning will be presented to the Board at our August board meeting for commissioner review and discussion. A vote to adapt the plan will be presented at the August board meeting. Per HB7013, the plan must be posted on the district website by September 30th.

Lee County Hyacinth Control District Strategic Plan 2024-2028

Mission Statement

The Lee County Hyacinth Control District strives to promote sound aquatic plant management through operations, research and outreach education emphasizing integrated plant management techniques.

Vision Statement

The Lee County Hyacinth Control District looks to provide the opportunity of creative educational venues and explore innovative techniques in the pursuit of environmentally sustainable aquatic plant management.

Background

The Lee County Hyacinth Control District was formed by an act of the Florida Legislature and has been controlling aquatic vegetation impeding navigation of county waters and the Caloosahatchee River up to the west bank of Lake Okeechobee since its inception in 1961. Our hyacinth control services make boating activities possible for all our citizens and many visitors by providing aquatic plant management to our local public waterways.

Lee County has ranked among the fastest growing counties in Florida over the last four decades and is among the fastest growing nationally, ranked at #9 last year.¹ The population has risen from about 50,000 in 1958 to approximately 800,000 in 2022, a 16-fold increase.

Our ever-increasing population requires sufficient planning, growth, and investment to continue providing reliable and effective aquatic weed control in terms of proper staffing and adequate equipment and materials while keeping costs minimized and providing a good value to the citizens of Lee County. To achieve these outcomes, we are engaged with multiple partners including District and County Commissioners, City planners, the Port Authority, Fish & Wildlife, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Environmental Protection, politicians, and many others.

This Strategic Plan is designed to accomplish the following:

1. Coordinate our operational and growth needs with our LCHCD Board of Commissioners to develop sound budgeting and policymaking
2. Fulfill the future needs of aquatic weed control in Lee County in a timely manner with sufficient staff and resources and within budget
3. Meet the goals of this Plan within five years.

¹ <https://www.fox4now.com/news/local-news/lee-county/lee-county-leading-the-way-nationally-in-population-growth>

LCHCD Strategic Plan 2024-2028 Goals & Objectives by Department

I. Operations (OPS) Goal

Continuously improve operational efficiency while maximizing the effectiveness of aquatic weed control in public waterways of Lee County.

Objectives:

- OPS 1: **April 2025:** Remodel old mix-load building to UAS Drone office and storage
- OPS 2: **December 2025:** Expand and improve existing vehicle/equipment parking area provided when the completion of LCMCD vehicle storage building for large vehicles adjacent to Fleet building is completed
- OPS 3: **December 2027:** Reassess Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) spray application drone to be replaced by a larger volume capacity drone to reduce flight time and limit chemical exposure due to more frequent chemical reloading of smaller drones
- OPS 4: **December 2027:** Reassess biannual biological inspections on private stormwater ponds to consolidate work force reduction
- OPS 5: **October 2028:** Replace 3 work trucks

II. Pond Watch program and Water Quality Laboratory (PWP/WQL) Goal

Pond Watch is a citizen volunteer monitoring program established by the Lee County Hyacinth Control District to educate citizens about pond management in stormwater ponds. The focus of the program is to identify problems in communities with stormwater ponds and advise residents on the implementation of best management practices.

Objectives:

- PWP/WQL 1: **October 2026:** Update field instruments for water quality monitoring
- PWP/WQL 2: **October 2026:** Upgrade/replace technical equipment for the discrete analyzer (AQ2) Seal Analytical
- PWP/WQL 3: **October 2028:** Add supplemental supporting equipment for the bathymetry data collection system

Annual Implementation Plan. The AIP will set departmental goals at the beginning of budget season beginning in July to be completed in September. Timelines will be established on any project budgeted for that upcoming fiscal year. Goals will be tracked and reported to the board semiannually.