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SRWMD presents PILT check to Levy County Commission



Suwannee River Water Management (SRWMD) District Assistant Executive Director Darrell Smith explains about the Payment In Lieu of Taxes program.

Story and Photos

By Jeff M. Hardison © Aug. 23, 2017 at 7:47 p.m.

BRONSON -- Levy County Commission Chairman John Meeks accepted a check from Suwannee River Water Management (SRWMD) District Assistant Executive Director Darrell Smith on Tuesday morning (Aug. 21) to herald an annual event that previously has been said to be at risk, because it is dependant on the Florida Legislature to continue it.

The SRWMD pays counties for the ad valorem property taxes that are not derived from property that has become tax exempt as a consequence of the SRWMD obtaining it. These are Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILT).

On Tuesday in Bronson, the check to Levy County was for \$30,401.84.

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Levy County Commission Chairman John Meeks (left) accepts the check from Suwannee River Water Management (SRWMD) District Assistant Executive Director Darrell Smith.

If all holds true as it has for the past few years, then the SRWMD will pay or has paid the Gilchrist County Commission \$44,392.72.

Likewise, Lafayette County received or will receive \$76,959.21 in PILT from the SRWMD.

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The SRWMD is will make or has recently made a PILT check presentation to the Dixie County Commission, too.

The PILT program was created by the Florida Legislature to help reduce the fiscal impact to rural counties when the state or SRWMD acquires lands.

Since land owned by the SRWMD is tax-exempt, PILT funds offset the loss of tax revenue when the district purchases property for flood control, water quality, water supply and natural resource protection.

The district's PILT funding comes from the Florida Legislature. Only through legislative funding is the district able to provide PILT to its rural counties.

The District will pay PILT funds to counties until their populations reach 150,000. The figures so far this year, match identically with those shown from last year.

In 2016, the SRWMD paid \$342,908.93 to 11 counties for PILT. Following are totals that each county received last year:

- Bradford: \$15,093.45
- Columbia: \$38,902.02
- Dixie: \$21,647.39
- Gilchrist: \$44,392.72
- Hamilton: \$37,752.42
- Jefferson: \$9,163.41
- Lafayette: \$76,959.95
- Levy: \$30,401.84
- Madison: \$20,464.85
- Suwannee: \$30,429.59
- Taylor: \$17,701.29.

The current SRWMD Board members are Chairman Donald J. Quincey Jr.; Vice Chairman Alphonas Alexander; Secretary/Treasurer Virginia H. Johns; and Board Members Kevin W. Brown, Gary F. Jones, Virginia Sanchez, Richard Schwab, Bradley Williams and Charles Keith.