



Local Administration, Federal Affairs & Special Districts Subcommittee

**November 15, 2023
3:00 PM – 4:30 PM
Morris Hall (17 HOB)**

Meeting Packet

Committee Meeting Notice

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Local Administration, Federal Affairs & Special Districts Subcommittee

Start Date and Time: Wednesday, November 15, 2023 03:00 pm

End Date and Time: Wednesday, November 15, 2023 04:30 pm

Location: Morris Hall (17 HOB)

Duration: 1.50 hrs

Presentation on Performance Reviews of the Independent Mosquito Control Districts

To submit an electronic appearance form, and for information about attending or testifying at a committee meeting, please see the "Visiting the House" tab at www.myfloridahouse.gov.

NOTICE FINALIZED on 11/08/2023 2:32PM by Lacher.Tamara

**Mosquito Control Districts
Presentation**

Performance Reviews of Florida's Independent Mosquito Control Districts

Presentation to the Florida House of
Representatives' Local Administration,
Federal Affairs & Special Districts
Subcommittee

November 15, 2023

Presented by Laila Racevskis, Ph.D.
Senior Consultant



Presentation Outline

- Introduction & Statutory Charge
- Methodology
- Overview of Mosquito Control & District Characteristics
- Mosquito Control District (MCD) Governance
- MCD Resources
- MCD Performance Measurement
- Findings & Recommendations

Introduction & Statutory Charge

- Section 189.0695, *F.S.*, requires performance reviews of the state's 15 Independent Mosquito Control Districts (MCDs)
- OPPAGA selected The Balmoral Group (TBG) to conduct the reviews, including review of MCD programs, activities, and functions



Source: TBG work product.



Methodology



Methodology

Data & Information Requests

Site Visits

Subject Matter Expert Consultation

Document & Data Review

MCD Staff & Stakeholder Interviews

Qualitative & Quantitative Analyses

Review of MCD Performance Measures & Standards

Methodology: Site Visits

Anastasia MCD

Buckhead Ridge MCD

Florida Keys MCD

Ft Myers Beach MCD

Lee County MCD

Manatee MCD

South Walton County MCD

Overview of Mosquito Control & District Characteristics



Overview of Mosquito Control

Integrated Pest Management Service	Examples
Mosquito Surveillance	Ground and aerial surveillance using trap collection and analysis
Source Reduction	Elimination of larval mosquito habitats such as tires, pools, tarps, etc.
Larviciding	Application of larvicides from the ground and using helicopters, including spraying in times of emergency
Adulticiding	Delivery of nighttime ultra-low volume insecticide spraying via spray trucks and helicopters, including spraying in times of emergency
Biological & Alternative Control	Use of Sterile Insect Technique; distribution of gambusia mosquito fish
Disease Surveillance	Regular blood sample collection from sentinel chickens and submittal of samples to the state laboratory in Tampa
Mosquito Control Research	Identifying new methods and technologies to improve treatment efficiency
Outreach & Education	Public education and outreach materials, events, and training to educate people on mosquito control activities

District Characteristics

- Populations of the districts vary from 1,710 people in Moore Haven MCD to 754,351 people in Lee County MCD (2020)
- Service area ranges from 1.06 square miles in Moore Haven MCD to 1,187 square miles in Lee County MCD
- Most MCDs include densely developed communities and growing populations surrounded by extensive natural areas that require mosquito control to allow areas to be habitable
 - Island districts
 - County-wide districts
 - Small inland community districts
- Heavy rainfall events characterize most MCDs and drive the need for mosquito control services



Mosquito Control District (MCD) Governance



MCD History & Governance

- MCDs were established by the Legislature starting in the early 1900s
- Indian River MCD is the oldest, established in 1925; Buckhead Ridge MCD is most recently established in 1977
- Several MCDs were reauthorized through local ordinances and/or chapter law
- Governed by a Board of Commissioners, ranges from 3 to 7 commissioners; most MCDs have 3
- Generally funded by ad valorem taxes, millage rates range from 0.1123 to 1.0; one district does not levy taxes



MCD History & Governance, cont'd.

MCDs are subject to:

Chapter
189, F.S.

- Given status as independent special districts

Chapter
388, F.S.

- Requirements for creating and operating MCDs in Florida

Chapter 5E-
13, F.A.C.

- Rules adopted by Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACCS) for mosquito control program administration

MCD Resources



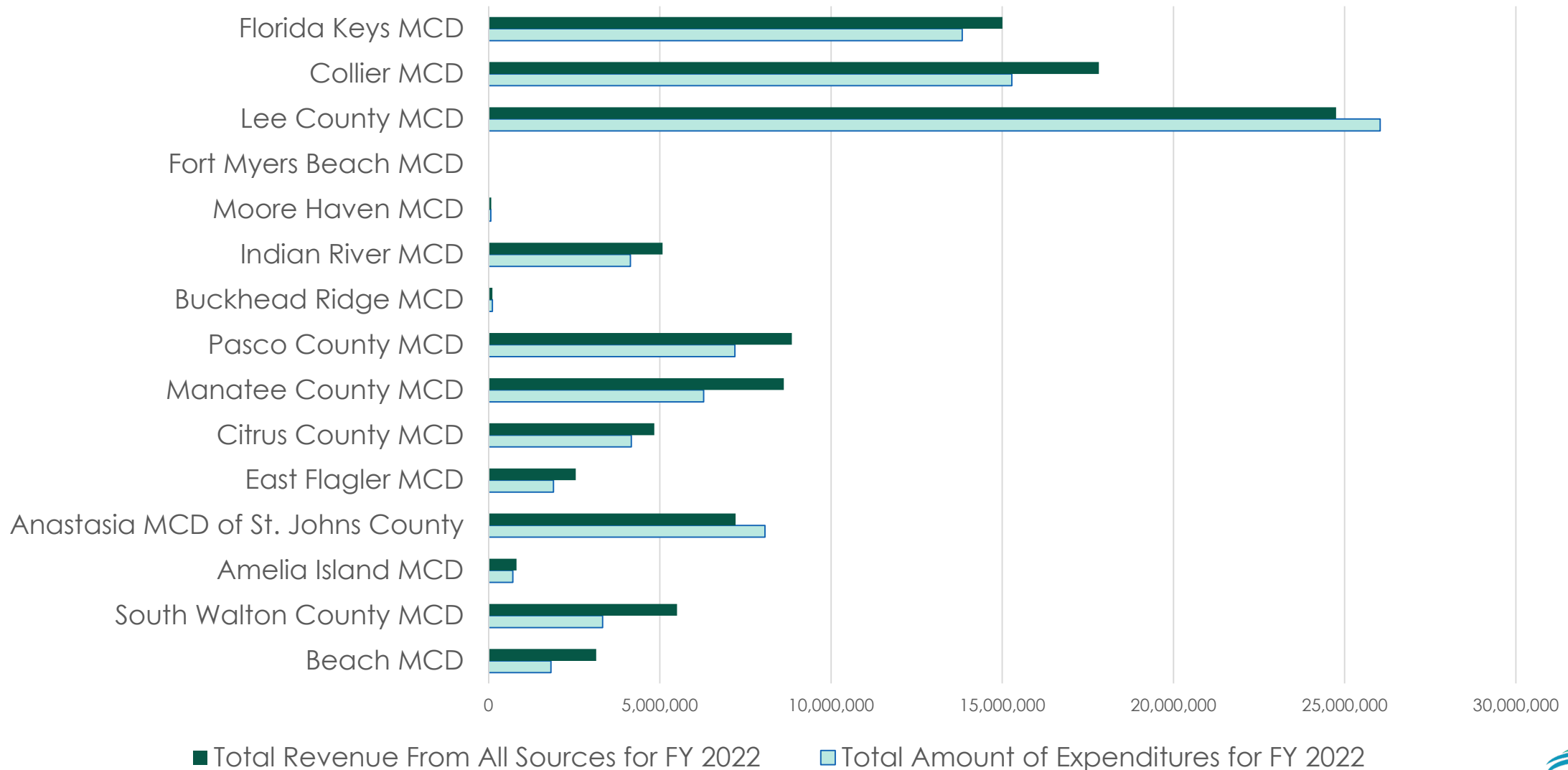
MCD Fiscal Year 2021-22 Revenues

MCD	Real Property Parcels Subject to Millage	Taxable Value of Parcels (\$Mil.)	Revenue from Millage (\$Mil.)	Revenue from Other Sources (\$Mil.)
Amelia Island	17,904	\$4,295	\$0.81	\$0.00
Anastasia	147,342	\$33,493	\$6.7	\$0.51
Beach	46,507	\$10,849	\$3.11	\$0.03
Buckhead Ridge	1,434	\$81	\$0.09	\$0.02
Citrus County	147,139	\$9,060	\$4.65	\$0.19
Collier	237,392	\$100,701	\$16.06	\$1.76
East Flagler	71,305	\$9,811	\$2.51	\$0.04
Florida Keys	89,849	\$31,045	\$14.24	\$0.76
Fort Myers Beach	11,324	\$4,443	\$0.50	Not Received
Indian River	92,450	\$19,821	\$5.04	\$0.04
Lee County	545,235	\$95,993	\$23.80	\$0.94
Manatee County	202,556	\$41,669	\$8.53	\$0.09
Moore Haven	N/A	N/A	N/A	\$0.07
Pasco County	303,948	\$32,837	\$8.67	\$0.19
South Walton County	45,459	\$22,947	\$5.21	\$0.29

MCD Fiscal Year 2021-22 Expenditures

MCD	Administrative Costs (\$Mil.)	Direct Costs (\$Mil.)	Other Expenditures (\$Mil.)	Total Expenditure(\$Mil.)
Amelia Island	\$0.36	\$0.35	\$0.00	\$0.71
Anastasia	\$1.30	\$6.22	\$0.55	\$8.07
Beach	\$0.57	\$1.25	\$0.00	\$1.82
Buckhead Ridge	\$0.01	\$0.10	\$0.00	\$0.11
Citrus County	\$1.25	\$3.60	\$0.00	\$4.85
Collier	\$1.20	\$14.05	\$0.03	\$15.28
East Flagler	\$0.37	\$1.52	\$0.00	\$1.89
Florida Keys	\$2.43	\$10.50	\$0.89	\$13.83
Fort Myers Beach	Not Received	Not Received	Not Received	Not Received
Indian River	\$0.64	\$3.50	\$0.00	\$4.14
Lee County	\$2.39	\$18.27	\$5.37	\$26.04
Manatee County	\$1.21	\$3.62	\$1.45	\$6.28
Moore Haven	Not Received	Not Received	Not Received	\$0.06
Pasco County	\$1.87	\$5.32	\$0.00	\$7.19
South Walton County	\$0.82	\$2.51	\$0.00	\$3.33

Revenue & Expenditure Comparison

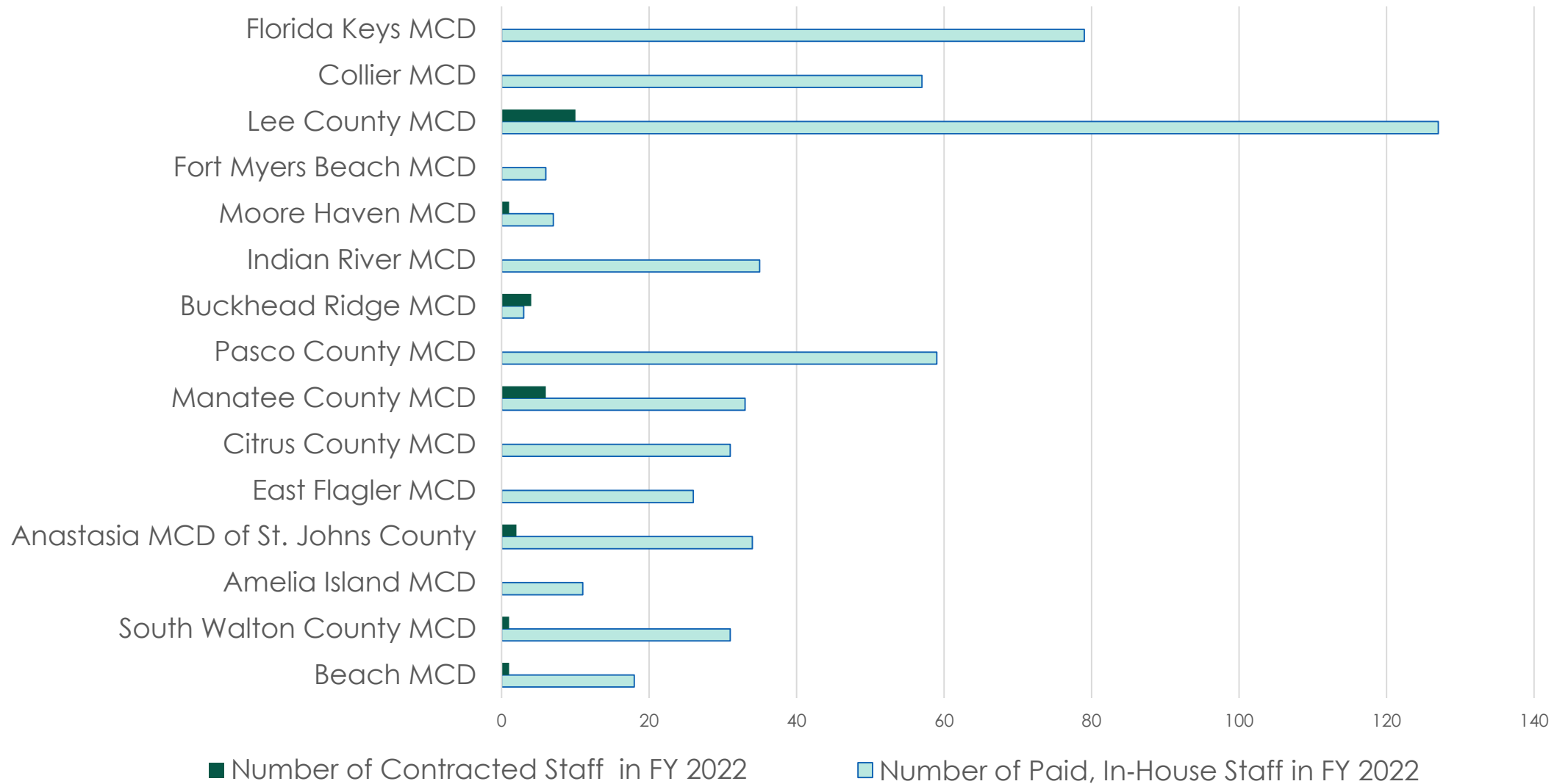


MCD Fiscal Year 2021-22 Staff Sizes

MCD	Commissioners	Paid, In-House Staff	Contracted Staff	Volunteers	Vacancies
Amelia Island	3	8	0	0	0
Anastasia	5	34	2	14	1
Beach	3	13	1	0	3
Buckhead Ridge	3	4	0	0	0
Citrus County	3	28	0	0	3
Collier	5	57	0	0	4
East Flagler	3	21	0	Unknown	2
Florida Keys	5	74	0	0	11
Fort Myers Beach	3	3	0	0	0
Indian River	3	32	0	0	2
Lee County	7	90	4	0	8%
Manatee County	3	30	6	0	5
Moore Haven	3	4	1	0	0
Pasco County	3	56	0	0	0
South Walton County	3	28	1	0	2



Staff Size Comparison



District Groupings

- The 15 Districts that were analyzed during this project are listed below in groupings based on budgetary and staffing size.

Very Small

- Buckhead Ridge MCD
- Moore Haven
- Fort Myers Beach MCD

Small

- Beach MCD
- South Walton MCD
- Amelia Island MCD
- East Flagler MCD
- Citrus MCD
- Indian River MCD

Medium

- Anastasia MCD
- Manatee MCD
- Pasco MCD

Large

- Lee MCD
- Collier MCD
- Keys MCD

MCD Typical Equipment & Vehicles (min to max)

Boats
(0 to 4)

Trucks & Vans
(1 to 117)

ATVs & Utility
Vehicles
(0 to 15)

Field Equipment
(e.g., sprayers)
(2 to 437)

Lab Equipment
(e.g.,
microscopes)
(0 to 68)

Office Equipment
(1 to 201)

Mosquito Traps
(8 to 167)

Sentinel Chickens
& Chicken Coops
(0 to 600)

Helicopters
(0 to 6)

Fixed-Wing
Aircraft
(0 to 6)

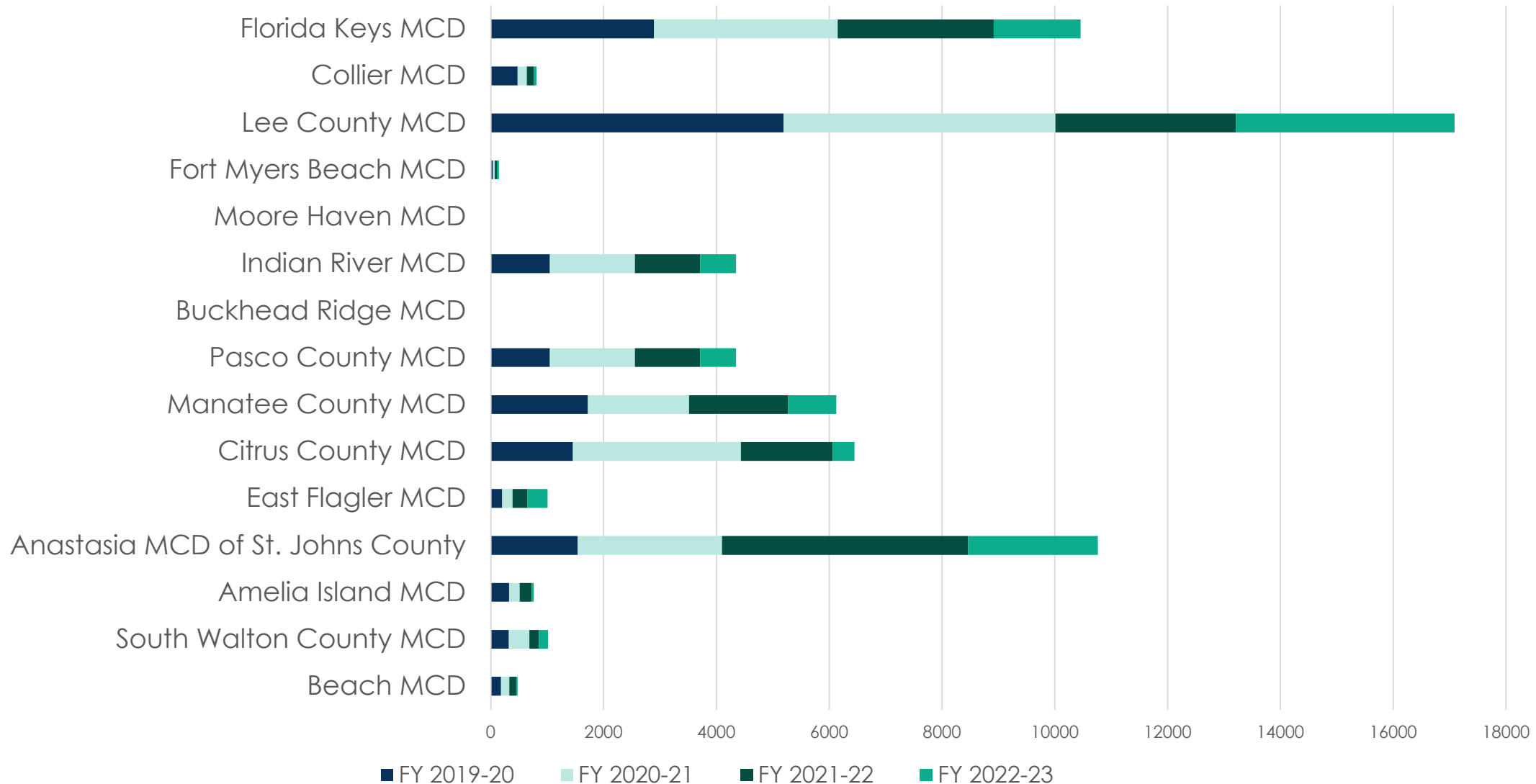
MCD Performance Measurement



District Performance

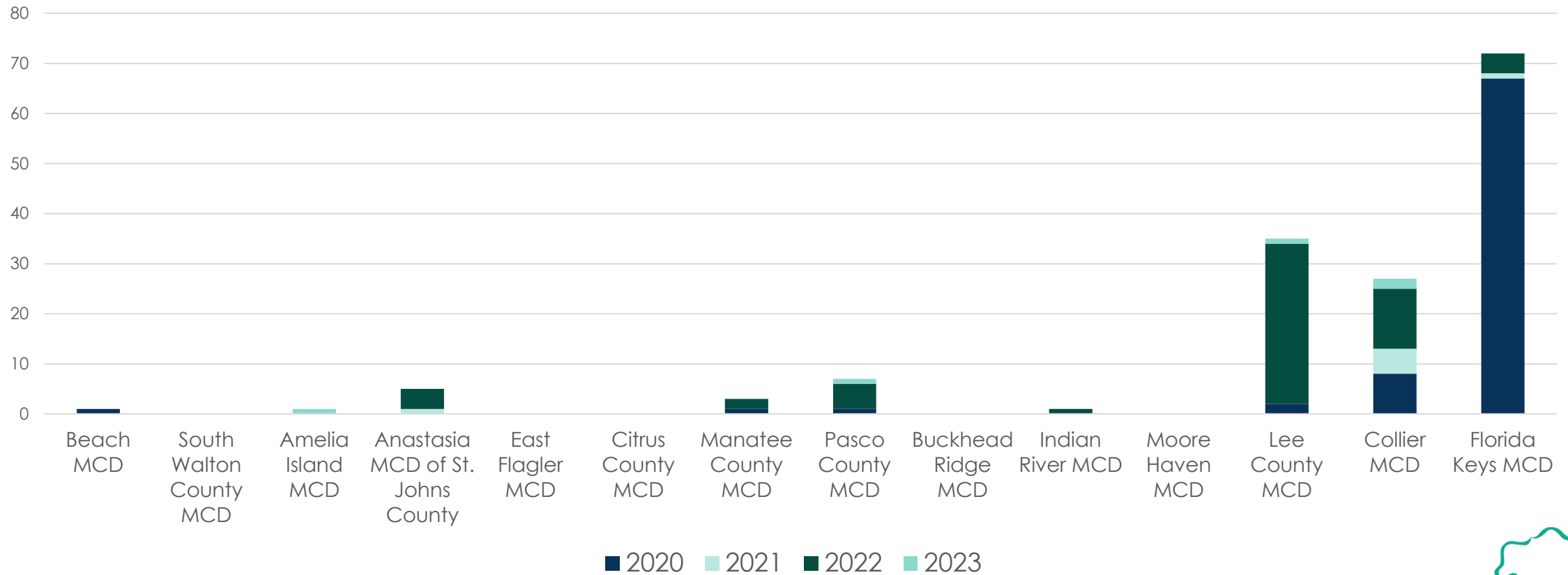
- All MCDs provide services consistent with their statutory directives
- Most districts measure their performance through the number of service requests they receive, and arbovirus cases/deaths in their district
- TBG reported data on district responses to service calls and arbovirus counts
 - Most districts reported that they responded to every service request in the current and past three fiscal years
 - Arbovirus counts were generally low with a considerable number districts reporting zero; exceptions included
 - Florida Keys
 - Anastasia
 - Manatee
 - Pasco
 - Indian River
 - Lee County
 - Collier
 - All districts reported zero deaths related to arbovirus cases in the last four years

Service Calls Summary



District Arbovirus Count Summary

Arbovirus Cases



Findings & Recommendations



Legislative Recommendations Overview

- Performance Measurement
- Waste Tires
- Lee and Ft Myers Beach MCDs Consolidation
- Florida Keys Emergency Assistance
- Florida Keys Housing

Findings: Performance Measurement

All MCDs could be assisted by the development of model goals, objectives, and performance measures and standards.

MCDs range from several that have no formal goals, objectives, performance measures or standards to several that have formally defined goals and objectives but need additional standards and measures to connect to all established goals and objectives.

LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATION:

The Legislature could consider amending s. 388.46, F.S., to direct the Florida Coordinating Council on Mosquito Control to form a subcommittee consisting of mosquito control professionals and researchers from around the state to develop model goals, objectives, and performance measures and standards to assist MCDs with performance monitoring.

Findings: Waste Tires

MCDs collect improperly disposed waste tires because the tires retain water and are ideal habitats for mosquito larva; this activity is costly.

Anastasia

Beach

East Flagler

Florida Keys

Lee County

Pasco County

LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATION:

The Legislature could consider amending s. 403.709(1), F.S., to require a portion of the funds currently administered by DEP for solid waste activities to be allocated to waste tire abatement activities by MCDs.

Findings: Ft Myers Beach MCD & Lee County MCD

Hurricane Ian destroyed Ft Myers Beach MCD's facility and most of its equipment and records. The MCD has estimated the cost to rebuild to be \$600,000 to over \$2 million; Lee County MCD could absorb operations at a nominal cost and merger of the two districts could provide Ft Myers Beach MCD with additional resources, equipment, funding, economies of scale, and the well-established operations of the Lee County MCD; this could help improve service delivery within the Ft Myers Beach area.

LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATION:

The Legislature could consider merging Lee County MCD and Ft Myers Beach MCD by special act, as provided in s. 189.073, F.S., or Ft Myers Beach MCD and Lee County MCD could jointly consider merging into a single independent special district, as provided in s. 189.074, F.S.

Findings: Florida Keys MCD

The Florida Keys MCD incurred over \$1 million in unbudgeted treatment costs when almost 70 human cases of dengue occurred in the district in 2020.

Local governments may access federal disaster assistance through FEMA, but MCDs are not automatically eligible for funding assistance when certain CDC thresholds for mosquito-borne disease outbreaks are met. Providing adequate mosquito control services during an outbreak is costly and essential to preventing the spread of the disease.

LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATION:

Section 388.261, F.S., addresses state aid provided for counties and districts for arthropod control. The Legislature could consider amending this statute to direct DACS to allocate a portion of the funding for emergency mosquito-borne disease outbreaks that do not occur as part of a state of emergency.

Findings: Florida Keys MCD

Housing costs are a significant barrier to MCD staff remaining in the Florida Keys, given the skyrocketing rents and home prices in recent years.

To improve affordable housing availability and access, the Legislature created s. 420.50871, F.S., in 2023 to allocate funding to developers for affordable housing projects that will address the needs of the elderly, young adults who age out of foster care, persons in areas of rural opportunity, and others.

LEGISLATIVE RECOMMENDATION:

The Legislature could consider amending s. 420.50871, F.S., to include affordable housing projects for Florida Keys MCD workers among the projects eligible for state development funding to assist the district with the retention of staff.

Other MCD Recommendations Overview

Performance
Measurement

Lee and Ft
Myers Beach
MCDs Boundary
Determination

Beach MCD

Buckhead
Ridge MCD

Collier MCD

East Flagler
MCD

Ft Myers & Lee
County MCDs

Manatee MCD

Moore Haven
MCD

South Walton
County MCD

Findings: Performance Measurement

Some MCDs do not have a strategic plan, goals, objectives, or formal performance measures and standards.

Amelia

Beach

Buckhead Ridge

Citrus County

Ft Myers Beach

Moore Haven

Pasco

South Walton County

RECOMMENDATION:

These MCDs could adopt goals, objectives, and performance measures and standards through a strategic planning process to consistently monitor and maintain performance information over time; the MCDs could seek guidance from other MCDs that have conducted strategic planning processes.

Findings: Performance Measurement

Some MCDs have established goals and objectives and some performance measures and standards but measures/standards do not address all district goals and objectives.

Anastasia

Collier

East Flagler

Florida Keys

Indian River

Lee County

Manatee County

RECOMMENDATION:

These MCDs could develop new, or expand existing, performance measures and standards to allow the MCDs to monitor and track progress toward all district goals and objectives.

Findings: Beach MCD

The MCD has reported staffing vacancies since Fiscal Year 2019-20; as of Fiscal Year 2022-23, the vacancies included an assistant entomologist, a mosquito control technician (MCT), and a seasonal MCT. Previous MCD audits have found insufficient staff to allow for the proper segregation of duties and sufficient internal controls. The MCD's board oversees the district's financial activities because the district believes that it is not cost efficient to hire additional accounting or administrative staff.

RECOMMENDATION:

The MCD could hire an assistant entomologist and two seasonal MCTs. In response to prior financial audit findings, the MCD could hire additional administrative staff to strengthen system internal controls and oversight of its financial activities.

Findings: Buckhead Ridge MCD

The MCD added a larviciding treatment program in 2021. Larviciding mitigates the MCD's need to use of adulticides, the cost of which has been steadily rising and is straining limited district revenues.

RECOMMENDATION:

The MCD could continue to expand the use of larvicide treatments in the district.

Findings: Buckhead Ridge MCD

The primary purposes of the MCD are to keep canals free of submerged vegetation and navigable and mosquito populations controlled. The MCD does not own all the canals in the district; some canals are privately owned. The lack of district ownership prevents the MCD from being eligible for grant funding from DEP for canal management.

RECOMMENDATION:

The MCD could pursue full ownership of canals and pursue additional grant funding for canal maintenance.

Findings: Buckhead Ridge MCD

The MCD will likely need additional future revenues to maintain operations given rising costs and the trend of district expenditures having exceeded revenues during two of the last three full fiscal years. Millage for the MCD is currently set at 1 mill; this rate cannot be increased because the local referendum creating the district in 1997 established a cap of 1 mill.

RECOMMENDATION:

Glades County and district voters could consider removing the 1 mill rate cap for the MCD.

Findings: Collier MCD

MCD seeks to expand boundaries to include developing areas and Ave Maria; expansion would allow stable revenues and provide efficiencies in operations but has been met with some opposition from environmental groups concerned about impacts of treatment in sensitive areas. MCD has worked closely with stakeholders to reach agreement on how best to handle state and federal lands. In August 2022, local voters approved expansion, which must also be approved by the Legislature. Legislation to obtain approval was filed in 2023 but died in committee.

RECOMMENDATION:

The MCD could continue outreach to environmental groups and other stakeholders. Collaborative decision-making is necessary to include perspectives of different stakeholder groups to identify expansion strategies that minimize impacts of expanding the MCD's boundaries into environmentally sensitive areas.

Findings: East Flagler MCD

The MCD's boundaries will be expanded in October 2023. This expansion along with a population projected to grow quickly in the future will result in increased demand for district services. Filling vacancies, hiring a second pilot, increasing equipment inventory, and acquiring a replacement helicopter are some suggestions to ensure the MCD continues to deliver mosquito control services in an efficient and cost-effective manner in the future.

RECOMMENDATION:

The MCD could revisit equipment and staff needs in 2024.

Findings: East Flagler MCD

Florida mosquito control programs that wish to maintain state-approved status with or without state aid are required to submit specific documentation to the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACS) to be eligible for state funding. The MCD has not held state-approved status since Fiscal Year 2019-20 and did not explain why this is the case; it has not provided annual budgets, monthly updates, or chemical usage reports to DACS and cannot currently receive DACS funding.

RECOMMENDATION:

The MCD could rebuild its connections with DACS and return as a state-approved MCD.

Findings: Ft Myers Beach MCD & Lee County MCD

The boundaries of the district map provided by the Fort Myers Beach MCD, as obtained from the Lee County Property Appraiser, conflict with the boundaries of the district map provided by neighboring Lee County MCD, as obtained from the Lee County Supervisor of Elections Office.

RECOMMENDATION:

To determine the correct boundaries for the districts, the MCDs could work with a professional licensed surveyor or take other action as appropriate.

Findings: Manatee County MCD

Improvements to the MCD's infrastructure could be made. Specifically, current hangars are too small for staff to efficiently and safely secure district helicopters; inadequate storage space exists to securely protect district property and to store chemicals, some of which require refrigeration; and some staff positions have been left vacant due to limited space.

RECOMMENDATION:

- The MCD could consider investing in:**
- a larger storage hangar for its helicopters
 - additional space to secure property
 - a larger chemical storage facility with sufficient refrigeration capability
 - additional lab and dedicated desk space for staff

Findings: Moore Haven MCD

MCD is audited triennially. The FY 2019-20 audit found issues with financial reporting process and material audit adjustments, including issues with inventory processes, QuickBooks logging and recording of financial information, and reporting procedures. Findings were also specified in the prior FY 2016-17 and FY 2013-14 audits and remain unresolved. MCD staff have stated it is infeasible to implement the auditor's recommendations to address the findings due to insufficient staff.

RECOMMENDATION:

The MCD could address the unresolved audit findings, which would establish internal controls to ensure the fair presentation of financial statements and related disclosures in conformity with the U.S. generally accepted accounting principles.

Findings: South Walton County MCD

MCD has experienced issues with facility flooding and sufficient workspace. A structure built at a higher elevation could better preserve and protect district assets.

Additional workspace would accommodate new positions to address increased district development. Relocating a satellite office closer to eastern service areas would address inefficiencies occurring with field inspections in certain areas. MCD staff reported that the district is under contract and scheduled to break ground for construction of the new facility in November 2023.

RECOMMENDATION:

The district could consider constructing its new facility at a substantially higher elevation and could move forward with plans for a satellite office closer to the eastern service areas; this recommendation appears to be in progress.

Findings: South Walton County MCD

Stormwater exfiltration systems include inspection ports in state-funded projects, but private development does not. A requirement for private developers to include inspection ports would ensure sufficient access for MCDs to conduct larviciding and future maintenance. The Florida Mosquito Control Association (FMCA) is a not-for-profit association in the state that addresses issues related to the policy and practice of mosquito control in the state and has made legislative and policy recommendations in the past.

RECOMMENDATION:

The FMCA could work with the South Walton MCD and other MCDs to research and vet how to establish a statewide requirement for accessible inspection ports in new stormwater exfiltration systems in private sector developments. The FMCA could then present recommendations for such requirement to the appropriate authority.

Contact

Laila Racevskis, Ph.D., Senior Consultant

lracevskis@balmoralgroup.us

Valerie Seidel, President

vseidel@balmoralgroup.us

