

MANATEE COUNTY

# Piney Point injection well set to begin Tuesday

Those in charge of the project say the entire process is safe.



Author: Chris Rogers

Published: 4:51 PM EDT April 3, 2023

Updated: 6:32 PM EDT April 3, 2023



MANATEE COUNTY, Fla. — Starting Tuesday, the [injection well at Piney Point](#) will start pumping water 3,300 feet into the ground.

Those in charge of the project say the water has been filtered and the entire process is safe, but with the rainy season around the corner, it's also a race against time.

It's been one of the biggest environmental blemishes in the history of the Tampa Bay area, now filtered wastewater will be pumped deep below the ground from the gypsum stack.

"I know that there is still some opposition to the deep well injection program," Herbert Donica, court appointed receiver for Piney Point, said. "I believe it's safe. We've got the best people working on it. It's highly engineered. It's a technology that's been around for over 70 years."

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It's the latest in what's been a leng'

"I think it was the worst thing +  
director of the Sarasota B  
liquid fertilizer 10 times as  
watershed."

There have been concerns that this  
area, but officials say there are safegua.

"The deep well injection program will send ti.  
aquifer of drinking water," Donica said. 'Also, they  
be continuously testing and reviewing different pres.

The state has given the project the green light, deeming i.  
experts agree this is the best course of action



"The water that's being injected, it is being treated," Tomasko said. "So it's not the same water  
that came out. They've been doing a lot of work to reduce the nutrient concentrations in that."

With wet weather expected in just a few months, it's an urgent undertaking.

"The evaporating technologies that we're currently using will get the water level down until  
rainy season. Then, we'll be overcome with rain." Donica said.

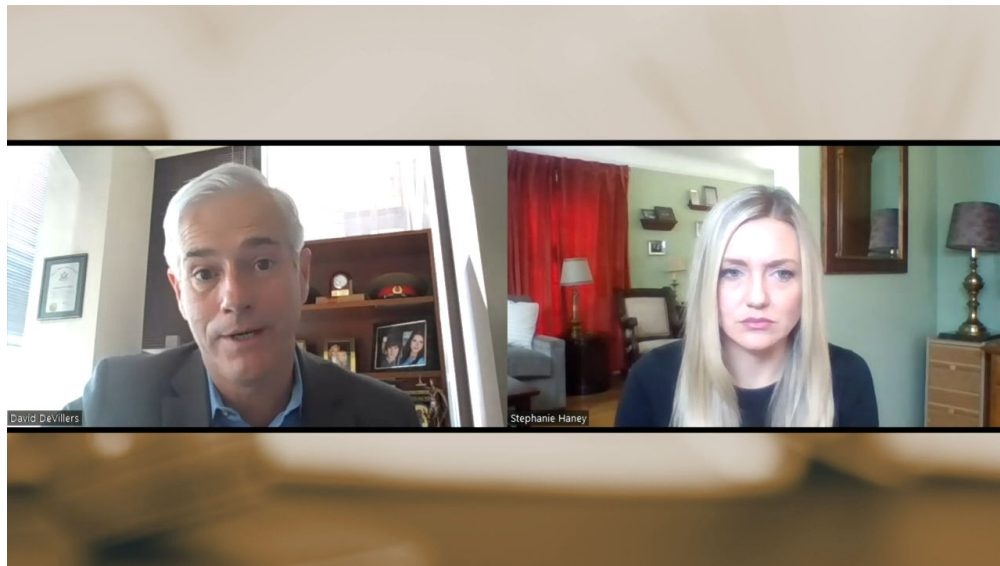
Donica said this whole process has been marred by numerous delays both large and small. He  
also said if anything were to go wrong during this portion of the site, closing the system is  
programmed to shut down immediately.

You can track the progress of the closing of Piney Point [here](#).

MANATEE COUNTY

# Faith leaders, Manatee County law enforcement discuss adult pre-arrest diversion program

Clergy leaders from the organization STREAM say they want minor traffic-related offenses included in the adult civil citation program.



Author: **Adaure Achumba**  
Published: **7:59 PM EDT April 3, 2023**  
Updated: **8:01 PM EDT April 3, 2023**



BRADENTON, Fla. — Law enforcement leaders in Manatee County are still looking into ways to implement a new adult pre-arrest diversion program.

This comes after calls from a clergy group and some success with a similar program in Sarasota County. Despite the efforts, there are still concerns from the county's sheriff that have limited the scope of who should be included in the program.

Clergy leaders from the organization STREAM met with Manatee County Sheriff Randy Wells Monday. They want traffic-related offenses included in the adult civil citation program.

"We want to avoid an arrest record for these people with non-violent misdemeanor offenses because once they have an arrest record, they are really branded for life and we are trying to avoid that," Rev. Glen Graczyk of St. Mary's Episcopal Church said. "Sometimes these people can't pay these fines and we are trying to avoid that."

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STREAM leaders want non-dangerous driving offenders to be eligible for the new adult pre-arrest diversion program recommended by the state attorney for the 12th Judicial District, Ed Brodsky.

Wells said, for now, he would not include that category because of various concerns including liability. He expressed concern that people who typically drive with a suspended license or an expired tag often don't have car insurance and are recklessly putting other motorists at risk.

"We're going to write traffic citations," Wells said. "We have a huge traffic problem in Tampa Bay counties with congestion and traffic. Most of them are in infractions already. I'm going to give them an opportunity to pay the fine and move on."

Wells said he would instead expand on other plans of giving grace to first-time non-violent offenders through civil citations.

Manatee County would now include in its adult civil citation program minor misdemeanors such as loitering, retail theft and some marijuana offenses for first-time offenders.

"I'll tell you right now, I will be glad to help somebody out that this is the first time they have ever broken the law. It doesn't happen very often," Wells said.

Leaders of STREAM said records show out of 8,000 misdemeanors for first-time offenses in 2019, more than 3,500 were driving offenses.

**Manatee County officials look to implement new adult pre-arrest diversion prog...**



"Many of them for not being able to pay a fine, losing your license and it goes on, and on," Pastor Joreatha Capers of Rogers Memorial United Methodist Church said. "We are pleased for progress and we are praying that there will be a change of heart."

Capers said this amounts to what the group calls a criminalization of poverty which for her is a real concern they say needs to end.

"The minority population is five times more likely to be in that 8,000 number and the numbers increase," she said.

STREAM applauded Manatee County for leading the way in pre-arrest diversion for minor juvenile cases with nearly 90% going to a civil citation. They said this helps prevent criminal records and a school-to-prison pipeline

"We could be a leader in this adult pre-arrest diversion program as well," Graczyk said.

Local municipalities will take the next 60 days to update their pre-arrest diversion program. Wells said those who don't qualify for pre-arrest diversion but are first-time offenders with driving-related infractions would have options to pay off their fines.

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