

30 Years Service

Gary Ritter – Director Okeechobee Service Center Service Centers/Government and Public Affairs

Gary joined the District on November 20th, 1978 shortly after graduating from the University of Florida with a Bachelor of Science degree in Forest Resources and Conservation. He began his career as a water quality and laboratory technician in Okeechobee. As an environmental scientist and a supervising environmental scientist he conducted water quality research in support of the development of best management practices on land uses in the Lake Okeechobee watershed. Gary also helped implement both the first SWIM Plan for Lake Okeechobee and the first regulatory program dealing with non point source runoff in the watershed.

During the early 1990's, when the Okeechobee Service Center was first established, Gary helped coordinate and supervise the first full service regulatory and compliance efforts north of the Lake. As a Lead Environmental Scientist he was part of the interagency team that developed the first Lake Okeechobee Protection Plan and he assisted in the development of the Northern Everglades Technical Plan for Lake Okeechobee. Gary is currently the Okeechobee Service Center Director supporting District initiatives in the Okeechobee, Glades, and Highlands County communities.

Raising his family in Okeechobee he has been active with the school system and as a volunteer on community boards. An avid cyclist and involved in developing community recreation Gary has assisted in the planning, design and implementation of the Lake Okeechobee Scenic Trail. As the Vice President of the Okeechobee Battlefield Friends he's involved in the development of a local Historic State Park commemorating the Seminole Indian Wars near Lake Okeechobee.