

January 1999

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Recommended Citation

Hadden, John K., "Three Rivers Regional Library System" (1999). *Florida Library History Project*. 65.
https://digitalcommons.usf.edu/fl_library_history/65

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Florida Library History Project

Three Rivers Regional Library System

From August 1960 until September 1995, the Dixie, Gilchrist and Lafayette County Public Libraries were members of the Suwannee River Regional Library System (SRRLS). In July 1994 a Task Force made up of a representative of each of the six counties of the SRRLS and their Library Director Danny Hales, began meeting to explore the advantages of dividing the six-county system into two three-county systems. In the first meetings of the Task Force, it became obvious that the benefits of dividing the region far outweighed the negatives. Plans were made to formally split into two separate systems at the conclusion of the 1994-95 fiscal year.

In June 1995, John Hadden became the Library Director for the new library system. The next four months were spent meeting State Aid requirements, and establishing a regional library office in Mayo, the county seat of Lafayette County. A contest was also held to choose a name for the new library system, and "Three Rivers Regional Library System" (TRRLS), was selected from more than seventy-five entries. Three Rivers stands for the names of the rivers that border the three counties: the Santa Fe, Steinhatchee and Suwannee. TRRLS officially began service to the citizens of Dixie, Gilchrist and Lafayette Counties on October 1, 1995.

The Mission of the Three Rivers Regional Library System is to give the people of Dixie, Gilchrist and Lafayette Counties access to materials for their informational, recreational, and life-long learning needs. TRRLS strives to reach this mission through the Dixie County Public Library, Gilchrist County Public Library and the Lafayette County Pubic Library and an administrative office that coordinates services. A popular Books-by-Mail program and deposit paperback book collections throughout the region also support this mission.

The Three Rivers Regional Library System has a seven member governing board appointed by the three counties. Each member county is included in the Interlocal Agreement that specifies the governance of the regional library system. The role of the regional library is to support the member libraries in all aspects of public

library service. This includes acquisition of materials, cataloging and technical processing, continuing education and training, library programming, computer and networking applications, and outreach services.

Currently beginning its fourth year of operations, the Three Rivers Regional Library System aggressively strives to provide quality library service to Dixie, Gilchrist and Lafayette Counties, while meeting the challenges of three rural counties ranked within the top ten Florida counties for projected growth during the next decade.

John K. Hadden, Director January 1999