



South Florida Water Management District

WATER RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMISSION MONTHLY MEETING MINUTES

April 4, 2013

9:00 AM

John Boy Auditorium

Clewiston, FL 33440

Welcome, Opening Remarks and Introductions - Kevin Powers, WRAC Chairman and Phillip Roland, Mayor of Clewiston

DISCUSSION

The Mayor of Clewiston welcomed everyone to Clewiston. The mayor discussed the Lake and its importance to the community. He talked about water levels, water quality and vegetation management.

Attendee Name	Title	Status	Arrived
Douglas Yoder		Absent	
Samantha Whitcraft		Absent	
D. Albrey Arrington		Present	
Scott Benyon		Present	
Shelley Vana		Present	
Douglas Bournique		Present	
Bob Ulevich		Absent	
Chuck Collins		Absent	
Mike Tammaro		Absent	
Ray Scott		Present	
Jeff Scott		Absent	
Vincent Encomio		Absent	
Jim Reynolds		Present	
John Renfrow		Absent	
Bill Hammond		Present	
Michael Harford		Present	
Patrick Hayes		Present	

Larry Hilton		Present	
Mark Perry		Present	
James Humble		Present	
Tommy Perry		Present	
Kristin Jacobs		Absent	
George Jones		Absent	
William "Chad" Kennedy		Absent	
Thomas Kenny		Absent	
Kahlil Kettering		Present	
John Lamkin		Absent	
Joan Lawrence		Present	
Barbara Miedema		Present	
Linda McCarthy		Absent	
James Murley		Absent	
Kimberly Lawrence		Present	
Newton Cook		Present	
Don Fox		Absent	
Mary Martin		Present	
Isabel Cosio-Carballo		Absent	
Bevin Beaudet		Absent	
Matthew Raffenberg		Absent	
Joe Capra		Present	
Sommer Foster		Present	
H.M. Ridgely III		Absent	
Bud Howard		Absent	
Jim Watt		Absent	
Michael Collins		Present	
John Hayford		Absent	
Erica Villafuerte		Absent	
Medora Krome		Absent	
James Erskine		Present	
Dennis Duke		Absent	
John Lesman		Present	
Ashley Tripp		Present	
Cheryl Miller		Present	
Adrienne Carter		Absent	
Mitch Hutchcraft		Absent	
Maelo Reyes		Absent	
Rich Budell		Absent	
Wovoka Tommie		Absent	
Malcolm Wade		Present	
Don Donaldson		Absent	
Jennifer Hecker		Absent	
Greg Rawl		Present	
Jacqui Thurlow-		Present	

Lippisch			
Thomas Greco		Present	
Neale Montgomery		Present	
Harry Raucher		Present	
Pat Martin		Present	
Kevin Powers	Chair	Present	
Timothy Sargent	Vice-Chair	Present	

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment on this item

**WRAC Recreation Issues Workshop Report - Newton Cook, RIW
Chairman**

DISCUSSION

Joe Capra - I would like to hear about the python hunt.

Mary Ann Martin - Did they get a lot of snakes in that hunt?

James Humble - The total python take represented a small portion of the problem.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment on this item.

**Lake Okeechobee/Herbert Hoover Dike Update - Ingrid Bon, Project
Manager, Herbert Hoover Dike**

Project Manager and Jeremy Crossland, Biologist, Jacksonville District, U.S.
Army Corps of Engineers

DISCUSSION

Mark Perry - Twenty four miles of reach one has been completed. How many culverts in reach one?

Ingrid Bon - Approximately 10 in that reach have been completed, there are 7 more to complete.

Mark Perry - Is the funding still forthcoming?

Ingrid Bon - Yes it has been an annual allocation.

Ray Scott - Are the culverts being replaced at the same elevation as the original?

Ingrid Bon - Yes the inverse of the structures is at the same elevation. The replacements are in-kind and cannot be constructed to pass more water.

Scott Benyon - Could you discuss the risk associated with the culvert replacement?

Ingrid Bon - Their age and design make them the weakest link in the chain. Some of the metal is seriously compromised.

Patrick Hayes - Do we need a separate National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document for each reach?

Ingrid Bon - No, just for the dam safety modification study, but after that we will not need separate documents

Melissa Meeker - The pilot test for the new technology - is that a bigger footprint?

Ingrid Bon - Yes.

Melissa Meeker - Is the cost to the SFWMD for the land acquisition part of the cost assessment?

Ingrid Bon - Yes, all costs are captured for SFWMD, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), etc.

Shelley Vana - How is sea level rise factored in?

Ingrid Bon - I do not believe it is.

The next part of the presentation on aquatic plant management was provided by Jeremy Crossland - USACE biologist.

Mary Ann Martin - This is one of the biggest issues killing the Lake. One of the biggest improvement is the U.S. Sugar weir which was put into place which blocks much of the vegetation coming into the lake. Why is it not illegal to let water lettuce and water hyacinth flow into the lake?

Jeremy Crossland - Technically, it is illegal, but it is very difficult to prove intent. The weeds moving with the water does not mean the intent was to dump the weeds. Also the seeds can be viable for up to 100 years.

Mary Ann Martin - When these plants are sprayed they go to the bottom where the habitat is and slowly rot. We seldom dredge and burn and this cumulative impact is a major problem for the lake. I prefer selective spraying over broadcast spraying because the broadcast spraying kills so much of the desirable vegetation.

Jeremy Crossland - Water hyacinth is 95% water and as they die they return that water to the lake. However, a mature plant left untouched will shed a leaf every three days which also float to the bottom and add to the biomass.

James Humble - The plant was brought to Florida because it was thought to be so pretty - 100 years later it has become a major nuisance.

Jeremy Crossland - Yes, this is not a removal project - just a management project.

Bubba Wade - The weir is in the Clewiston canal and turned out to be a great solution. One of the major problems with agricultural operations is the material added to the canals in the vegetation management process. Each plant is killed but each plant contains phosphorus and biomaterial which adds to the muck problem in our canals and lakes.

Jeremy Crossland - And the biomass created by the native plants exacerbate that issue.

Joe Capra - What are the things that keep you from doing your job better?

Jeremy Crossland - Weather, especially wind and rain, and funding.

Mike Collins - As we approach the lake's Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), how much of the phosphorus load to the lake is plant material decomposing versus the fertilizers added by agricultural interests?

Jeremy Crossland - I am not sure that has ever been evaluated.
Newton Cook - Why not pay private contractors to target small patches of exotic vegetation before they become larger patches?
Jeremy Crossland - We do have "paid for performance" contracts.
Scott Benyon - What is the life expectancy of a water hyacinth?
Jeremy Crossland - A mature plant will only get so big, but it will reproduce both by seeds and with runners. Really cold weather seems to be nature's only deterrent.
James Erskine - We have used mechanical harvesting. Are folks making better machines and is there a use for the material harvested?
Jeremy Crossland - Yes, we use state of the art machines and they have been used for fertilizer. But to date not economically.
Bill Hammond - The plants are there because the nutrients are there - they don't create nutrients they cycle it.
Ashley Tripp - Jeremy, I think you do a great job. What is the measurement of success for the contractors?
Jeremy Crossland - We measure by time and materials and then do an effectiveness analysis of the work done. If the work is sub-par the contract allows us to pay less or terminate the contract.
Bubba Wade - I remember a previous presentation that showed lake coverage by acre and what happened when the funding for the program was cut and what was the result on the lake coverage.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment on this item.

Adaptive Protocols Update - Susan Gray, Chief Environmental Scientist, Water Resource Division, SFWMD and Cal Neidrauer, Chief Engineer, Operations, Maintenance and Construction Division, SFWMD

DISCUSSION

Ray Scott - Can you clarify the changes to the Adaptive Protocol Process authorized by the Governing Board last fall?
Cal Niedrauer - The board authorized relaxing the tributary conditions in April and May.
Mark Perry - Currently, 1,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) is moving south from the lake - is that for water supply
Cal Niedrauer - Yes.
Doug Bournique - The best thing that has happened to the Lake in terms of water quality resulted from the fires that were set by individuals without a permit.
Joe Capra - The area on the west side of that lake that becomes dry during the dry season or as the lake recedes - do we schedule either vegetation management or prescribed burns to take advantage of the situation?
Jeremy Crossland - If it gets too dry the water hyacinth will die out but the seed source persists.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Paul Gray - The lake is really in great shape. There has always been some question about the connections between the lake and the Caloosahatchee, but some of the historic information indicates that there was a connection, especially during high stage conditions.

Jed Schneck - The Caloosahatchee Estuary is looking good right now but we would hate to see the Caloosahatchee estuary get cut off from lake releases during the late spring prior to the onset of the wet season.

Central Everglades Planning Project Update - Kim Taplin, Chief Central Everglades Study Branch, USACE, Jacksonville District and Matt Morrison, Section Administrator, Office of Everglades Policy & Coordination, SFWMD

DISCUSSION

Melissa Meeker - Even though we all committed to move expeditiously, staff feels it was important that we do a good job and not be rushed.

Mike Collins - Has the USACE agreed to delay the Project Implementation Report (PIR)?

Lt. Col. Tom Greco - Yes, we will adjust the timeline to address the concerns of our partners.

Mike Collins - Will stakeholders have an opportunity to address the Governing Board (GB) prior to the PIR moving up the ladder?

Melissa Meeker - Yes, staff will go to the GB with an agency position.

Barbara Miedema - Do we have a current price on the Tentatively Selected Plan (TSP)? And are we assured that the first generation projects will be complete?

Greco - We will have a cost and we understand the issue of the first generation projects being complete.

Kahlil Kettering - We still need to make sure this project is in the hopper for any Water Resource Development Act (WRDA) funding that might become available.

Mike Collins - If you want this included in WRDA you better have all these issues worked out in advance or it won't make it into WRDA?

Shelley Vana - Is there time to do all we need to do before WRDA?

Ernie Barnett - Staff will make every effort possible, but we need a plan that is robust and complete and has good stakeholder support.

Lt. Col. Greco - The USACE is similarly committed to do the best job we have with as much stakeholder support as we can get.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment on this item.

Video Premiere: Ranches and Water in the Everglades Headwaters - Eric Draper, Executive Director, Audubon of Florida

DISCUSSION

Michael Harford - We are working to reduce phosphorus loads from our lakes in the north end of the system.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment on this item.

Land Assessment Update - Ray Palmer, Section Leader, Real Estate, SFWMD

DISCUSSION

Due to time constraints this item was moved to May WRAC meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

N/A

Open Discussion - WRAC Members

DISCUSSION

Mark Perry - The St. Lucie TMDL is coming out soon but it depends on the lake's meeting it's TMDL. The video reminds us that source control is the key to nutrient management. A lot of the water that flowed to the St. Lucie after Isaac was tributary releases so I encourage us to move forward on Ten Mile Creek, C-23 C-24 and finishing C-44.

Kahlil Kettering - April 7th is Everglades Day in recognition of Marjory Stoneman Douglas.

Ashley Tripp - Thank you all for coming out to Clewiston. Okeechobee means big water and is the heart of the Everglades.

Jacqui Thurlow Lippisch - Mother Nature knows no boundaries and I know you have heard from the huge seagrass losses gone from the northern and central Indian River Lagoon.

Bill Hammond - I would like to commend the District on starting the visioning process for the Caloosahatchee Estuary.

Joe Capra - Kudos to folks around the table for all the hard work on Lake Okeechobee.

Bubba Wade - Thanks for stopping in Clewiston.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no public comment on this item.

Adjourn

Joe Collins, Chairman
Governing Board
South Florida Water Management District

Brenda Low
Deputy District Clerk
South Florida Water Management District