



**Minutes**  
**WATER RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMISSION**  
**Monthly Meeting**

February 06, 2014, 9:00 AM  
 District Headquarters - B-1 Auditorium  
 3301 Gun Club Road  
 West Palm Beach, FL 33406

<b>Attendee Name</b>	<b>Status</b>
Timothy Sargent, Chairman	Present
Kevin Powers, Vice-Chairman	Present
Douglas Yoder	Present
Samantha Whitcraft	Absent
D. Albrey Arrington	Present
Jeff Ward	Absent
Shelley Vana	Present
Douglas Bournique	Present
Bob Ulevich	Present
Chuck Collins	Present
Harry Cronin	Absent
Ray Scott	Present
Vincent Encomio	Absent
Jim Reynolds	Present
John Renfrow	Absent
Kurt Harclerode	Absent
Michael Harford	Present
Mark Perry	Present
James Humble	Present
Kristin Jacobs	Absent
George L Jones	Present
William "Chad" Kennedy	Present
John T. Lamkin	Absent
Joan Lawrence	Present
Barbara Miedema	Present
Linda McCarthy	Present
Kimberly Lawrence	Absent
Newton Cook	Present
Don Fox	Absent
Mary Ann Martin	Present
Bevin Beaudet	Absent

Brian L. Wheeler	Present
Joe Capra	Present
Bud Howard	Absent
Michael Collins	Present
Medora Krome	Absent
James Erskine	Present
Dennis Duke	Absent
John Lesman	Present
Ashley Tripp	Absent
Maelo Reyes	Absent
Rich Budell	Absent
Malcolm Wade	Present
Jacqui Thurlow-Lippisch	Present
Neale Montgomery	Present
Harry Raucher	Present
Pat Martin	Present
Joshua Kellam	Present
Cherise Maples	Absent
Lance R. Bennett	Absent
Erin Deady	Absent
Adam Gelber	Present
Jane Graham	Present
Jason Liechty	Present
Tom Jones	Absent
Mike Sweeney	Present
Pam Keyes	Present
Jenny Conner Nelms	Present
Nancy Payton	Present
Deena Reppen	Absent
Karson Turner	Absent
Jeff Schmidt	Present
Wovoka Tommie	Absent

**1. Call to Order - Tim Sargent, WRAC Chairman**

Mr. Sargent called the meeting to order at 9:02 am.

**2. Staff Reports**

Dan DeLisi, Chief of Staff, introduced Marcia Kivett as new Director of Board and Executive Services. Dan also informed WRAC members that a Caloosahatchee Science Workshop draft report was produced by Florida Gulf Coast University and the results will be discussed today, as part of the discussion agenda.

Tom Teets and Everglades Policy staff provided a draft Project Summary Table to be used in WRAC's Project Prioritization process. Mr. Teets explained each column and some of the nomenclature in the table. WRAC members offered extensive input and

will have the next few weeks to send in any additional suggestions on the development of the Summary Table in order to begin prioritization.

### **3. WRAC Member Issues**

WRAC Recreation Issues Chair, Newton Cook shared some pictures of recent recreational activities occurring on District lands, including; a successful Wounded Warrior's Duck Hunt and Youth Hunt. Mr. Cook said that getting the wounded veterans and the youth out into nature is a great thing to do and is good publicity for the District. He thanked the District, the FWC and the United Waterfowlers for working together to help make the event a success. Mr. Sargent thanked Mr. Cook for his contribution to the recreational opportunities on District lands.

Jenny Conner Nelms said that a long-awaited Farm Bill will be signed by the President tomorrow, February 7th. She acknowledged everyone's hard work in Washington.

Mike Collins, Florida Keys Fishing Guides Association/ Florida Bay Initiative, questioned the project prioritization process. He stated that the process should specifically identify the priorities shared by all stakeholders. He stated that planning for projects that could be twenty or more years out should be balanced with incremental changes in operational planning or implementation of smaller projects that can reduce some pressure on the system in a shorter time frame. Mr. Collins requested that WRAC members have debate among themselves on the days when the agenda is light to find points in which they agree. He said that the debate would center around projects or ideas that members have that are not scheduled on any upcoming agenda.

Brian Wheeler, Lake Toho Water Authority, stated that he just returned from the winter meeting of the National Association of Clean Water conference in Sante Fe New Mexico which is currently in the midst of a ten-year drought which adds perspective to the discussions WRAC is having. Mr. Wheeler also mentioned that he was pleased to see the passage of a Farm Bill because it provides for a pilot program for partnerships between utilities and agricultural interests in nutrient removal.

Chuck Collins, Fish and Wildlife Commission, said that we are dealing with adaptive management now, and Mike Collins made a good point when he stated that more debate needed to be made to find points of agreement. Mr. Collins stated that he, Commissioner Ron Bergeron and Shannon Estenoz along with representatives from the USACE met on February 5 to discuss high water issues in the Water Conservation Areas.

W. Ray Scott, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS), stated that the legislature has assigned FDACS new responsibilities in water supply planning, specifically directing the agency to include future agricultural demand in water supply plans. Mr. Scott met with District staff and discussed a path forward to meet legislative directives.

Barbara Miedema, Sugar Cane Growers Cooperative of Florida, asked the USACE for an after action items understood that the USACE held meeting last week regarding after action items.

Albrey Arrington, Loxahatchee River District, stated that Mr. Collins' remarks regarding WRAC member discussion was interesting and he finds that member discussion is the most interesting part of the meeting. Mr. Arrington said two things that are interesting and that are going on right now in the Loxahatchee are work that needs to be done to repair Masten Dam and that District staff is currently planning for and how to turn the newly acquired Mecca property into something that will provide functionality through supplemental flows.

Joshua Kellam, The ESG Companies, agreed with Mr. Collins that open discussion would be useful between WRAC members, especially when the agenda is light, to provide insight to lingering issues or find some way to communicate better between the stakeholders.

Adam Gelber, Atkins North America, Inc. stated that more debate amongst WRAC members would be useful due to the expanse of knowledge held by the stakeholders in the group.

Joan Lawrence, US Department of Interior (DOI), announced that a joint meeting of the Working Group and Science Coordination Group to be held on April 2<sup>nd</sup> at District headquarters. She also announced that in response to WRAC member request a joint Task Force / WRAC meeting is being planned for May.

James Erskine, Miccosukee Tribe of Indians, said that having more discussions amongst WRAC members to identify areas of agreement in order to push for those items to be moved forward is good. Mr. Erskine stated that there needs to be an emphasis on finding ways to move more water south and out of Water Conservation Area 3 (WCA3) as wildlife is being severely impacted. He said that he knows that Commissioner Bergeron is working on solutions for emergency events, but on a yearly basis there can be too much water accumulating in the WCA and there needs to be a more permanent solution.

Jane Graham, Audubon Florida, acknowledged Ms. Nelm's announcement of the Farm Bill and stated that she is looking forward to Mr. Pelizza's presentation on the Headwaters Refuge and thought that WRAC should investigate ways to push the federal government on issues like these. Ms. Graham said that the 2014 legislative session was starting and requested a legislative update from District staff. Ms. Graham agreed with Mr. Collins about having more WRAC discussion, specifically regarding priorities and said that WRAC should review the District's budget.

Jeff Schmidt, Natural Resources Conservation Service, United States Department of Agriculture, stated that he could not provide additional information about the Farm Bill until it is signed, but referred members to the national news to find additional details. Mr. Schmidt stated that the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP) will continue to exist and stated that NRCS has about \$500M committed to easements and security of easements and construction to rehydrate acres of wetlands. He stated that WRP will be rolled into all easement programs within USDA which includes the Farmer Ranchland Protection Program. Mr. Schmidt stated that the USDA budget for the state is at about \$13M for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQUIP) with about \$4M of that being dedicated solely to the Everglades initiative and another \$4M for south Florida. Mr.

Schmidt said that the money would begin to be obligated in March and applications submitted within the last 12 months would be checked for eligibility for funding allocation depending on the outcome of the Farm Bill.

Nancy Payton, Florida Wildlife Federation, said that a Caloosahatchee Science Workshop was recently held at Florida Gulf Coast University and it was well attended. Ms. Payton also stated that she went to a C-43 Update and appreciated that staff took time to address public comment that had been submitted prior to the meeting. Ms. Payton asked if the Caloosahatchee Community Forums that are planned as the next steps in the visioning process had been scheduled. Ms. Payton agreed with Mr. Collins regarding more interaction between WRAC members and stated that open dialogue and constructive discussion would be good to bring forth ideas and recommendations. Ms. Payton said that it would be good if WRAC members could be more involved in developing their own agenda. Ms. Payton asked for a status on Contract 8 as it a critical component to Everglades Restoration progress.

Joe Capra, CAPTEC Engineering, Inc., said that his morning paper contained at least six articles related to discharges coming from Lake Okeechobee (Lake). He stated that the works of the WRAC and of the District may not be being properly described in the media. Mr. Capra stated that everyone in the room had input into the LORS schedule but the media seems to be focused on criticizing the USACE or the District because they do not understand the level of involvement that resulted in the LORS document. Mr. Capra asked if there was some kind of outreach plan that could better educate the public on Lake Okeechobee discharges. Mr. Capra said that plans that are already in place need to be followed and modified where needed, so that construction can begin and projects can get completed. Mr. Capra said that funding is what is needed to move projects forward.

Shelley Vana, Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners, said sunshine law is restrictive to constructive communication in that there is too little time in meetings to really have meaningful conversations.

Mary Ann Martin, Roland Martin Marina, announced an FLW event being hosted at Roland Martin Marina. Ms. Martin expressed concern about the daily chemical vegetation spraying being done on Lake Okeechobee. Ms. Martin stated that the original mission was to remove vegetation to ensure waterways are navigable which has turned into a mission to destroy all invasive vegetation on the Lake. She said that she is concerned about the health of the Lake and would like to know why the intent changed from navigation channel maintenance to a whole vegetation eradication program for invasive plants. Ms. Martin asked what happens to the vegetation that dies and goes to the bottom of the Lake and accumulates year after year. She also stated concern over the number of airboats that are operating on the Lake. Mr. Sargent reminded WRAC members that an invasive species presentation was given by the USACE and the District recently in Okeechobee that addressed the vegetation management program and related invasive species issues and stated that costs are greatly increases if invasive species are not managed up front.

Malcolm "Bubba" Wade, US Sugar Corporation, discussed the project prioritization process as a tool to help educate WRAC members and the public about the large

number of projects and the limited available funds and other constraints that restrict the ability to build these projects.

Lieutenant Colonel Tom Greco, United States Army Corps of Engineers, stated that a After Action Review meeting for the past wet season was held on January 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> by way of the Periodic Scientist Call (PSC). Discussion consisted of the actual operations of the year, the initial actions earlier since releases within the schedule were not maximized until late June and subsequent discussion about “up to” maximum allowable amounts and drawdown activities in October. LTC Greco said that as a result of the USACE realized the PSC is an important tool in the decision making process and with this realization there will be changes in how the PSC is conducted, timing of the call to allow more participation, clear focus on science and the decision making process. LTC Greco said that when PSC’s occur, a premium is placed on the scientists although there is public participation. LTC Greco addressed an erroneous email regarding planned releases that was sent the day before and assured the group that a decision had not been made.

Mark Perry, Florida Oceanographic Society, stated that when looking at the guidance for releases on Schedule D which cover releases to the estuaries, Part C of the release criteria should be considered for releases to Water Conservation Areas (WCAs). Mr. Perry stated that during the 2013 wet season 472 billion gallons were released from the lake and 92% went east and west with less than 4% going south partially due to the amount of stormwater that was being held in the WCAs, so there must be a more collaborative effort between the USACE and the District in determining how some of this water can be more evenly distributed in order to decrease damaging flows.

Doug Bournique, Indian River Citrus League, said that he’s been meeting with the Governor, state legislators and legislative staff and continues to be about the status of water farming. Mr. Bournique stated that once District leadership is ready to move forward he stands ready to participate.

Chad Kennedy, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, informed the group of a ribbon cutting attended by Secretary Vinyard at the A-1 Flow Equalization Basin. Mr. Kennedy stated that the District’s plate is full with the implementation of Restoration Strategies which contains large projects on strict timelines and asked WRAC members to keep that in mind when considering project prioritization or introducing new projects.

Doug Yoder, Alternate to John Renfrow, Miami-Dade Water and Sewer, commented that the Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners recently passed a resolution requesting that the legislature abide by the Sunshine Law as all other qualifying bodies must.

Blake Guillory, Executive Director, South Florida Water Management District, stated that the agency is exploring more options in regards to water farming and dispersed water management. He stated that he recently provided a presentation to the House Agriculture and Natural Resources Subcommittee on the subject. Mr. Guillory also informed the WRAC of a meeting he had with Secretary Vinyard on a number of subjects including water farming and dispersed water management. Mr. Guillory provided that the project prioritization spreadsheet was much larger but staff has narrowed it down to information that is used to determine proper ranking of projects. Mr. Guillory stated that the District’s intent was to provide a draft of all of the projects

that are currently being worked on and segment them into high, medium and low priority and at that point seek WRAC member input on staff's placement of listed projects in the high, medium or low ranking category and not get lost in whether a project ranked number 13 should be ranked number 11. Mr. Guillory commented that WRAC should also seek to identify any projects that have not been included on the table and should be.

Mitch Hutchcraft, Governing Board Member, South Florida Water Management District, commended the group on its input and stated the importance of carrying information back to the communities to ensure the public is educated.

Kevin Powers, WRAC Vice-Chair, stated the challenge is often in the trade-offs when going through the prioritization process. Mr. Powers said project completion is not solely reliant on funding.

Jim Humble, Miami-Dade Agricultural Practices Advisory Board, stated that farmers in Miami-Dade are opposed to water moving south unless the amount of water moving south is equal to the outflows. Mr. Humble stated that he did not think there would be complaints if the Modified Water Delivery to Everglades National Park project is complete. Mr. Humble stated that the Sunshine Law has added great cost to the decision making process. Mr. Humble said that a number of articles have appeared in the local paper regarding the Aerojet/C-11 canal and he read from one of the articles which references the original purpose of the facility. Mr. Humble said the article is completely false and that the C-11 canal was not built to transport rockets, but built as part of the Central and Southern Flood Control Project (C&SF). He stated that the drawbridge was the only feature that was added to assist in equipment transfer. Mr. Humble stated that agencies should be responsible for presenting proper facts to the public especially when public funds will be used and to ensure that policy decisions are based on real facts.

Mike Collins stated that there should be a WRAC discussion regarding continuing to focus on costly projects based on programs that depend upon completion of a series of program specific components and bureaucratic processes that must be proven beneficial and will take twenty years or more to be implemented or if the focus should shift to designing and building operational type projects that will provide both flexibility of operations in the current system and tangible results in a relatively short time period. Mr. Collins stated there needs to be a priority that states Mod Waters is 90% done and although completion of Contract 8 would be good, let's look at the current operational flexibility that may exist in the area – can the temporary pumps be replaced or could a curtain wall be installed to help resolve the issue – these are the type of discussions that WRAC members should have.

Kimberly Lawrence, Alternate for Michael Harford, Osceola County, discussed the importance of defining what restoration is, where restoration takes place and the goals of WRAC relative to the District and its restoration goals. Ms. Lawrence agreed with Mr. Collins that the group should have more discussion on defining its goals and looking at the prioritization list and determining which projects will go towards achieving those goals. Ms. Lawrence asked that the Kissimmee Basin be divided into Upper and Lower basins to provide a better picture of what is occurring in that region.

Barbara Miedema stated that the priority list should include mission critical projects in addition to the restoration projects already listed. Ms. Miedema stated that flood protection and water supply are part of the funding consideration, therefore should be included on the prioritization list.

**4. Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area - Charlie Pelizza, Project Leader, Pelican Island National Wildlife Refuge Complex, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

Charlie Pelizza, Project Leader, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service provided a presentation on Everglades Headwaters National Wildlife Refuge and Conservation Area.

WRAC Member Comment

Mike Collins commented that he's always been a big believer in conservation easements and the reason there has not been any controversy is because as the plan was fleshed out it became apparent that an easement was what was being accomplished here. Mr. Collins stated that the state is committed under TMDL legislation to reduce loadings to Lake Okeechobee and it does not appear that we are going to meet those goals. Mr. Collins asked if anyone has done a review of the possible impacts in the Kissimmee of what may be mandated if a lawsuit occurs and a federal judge rules that projects must be built. He also asked if anyone has looked at where those projects would have to be built. Mr. Collins stated that the Fish and Wildlife Service along with the District and the state need to start looking at that because there could be a massive impact on the vision that FWS has. Len Lindahl, Assistant Executive Director, Business and Regulatory, responded that the Water Management District, Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACs), and the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) are working to make sure that the BMP program as well as the BMAP program which serve as the pathway to meeting the TMDL is lined up and complementary to that these groups are looking at what types of projects such as Dispersed Water Management for Interim, Dispersed Water Management for Long-term as well as complementary storage and water quality north of the Lake could be done to support the Northern Everglades.

Jenny Connor Nelms noted that she is proud to see so much progress as a result of working together. Ms. Nelms reported that many key elements came together including the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with FWC, the Northern Everglades Alliance. Ms. Nelms stated that there are up to 150,000 acres authorized in the conservation area and the majority funding mechanism is through the Land and Water Conservation fund which is a federal fund comprised of off-shore royalties and not tax money but will run out of funding if not reauthorized. Ms. Nelms is hoping that the President's budget will include funding at \$900M. Currently there is \$5M coming in now as reflected in the presentation. Ms. Nelms stated that alternative sources of funding be considered in the future.

Nancy Payton stated that the Florida Wildlife Federation is supportive of the efforts of the FWS and asked for an update on the status of Fisheating Creek and the Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge as they all form one conservation network. Mr. Pelizza provided a brief update of the projects.

Newton Cook congratulated Mr. Pelizza and stated that area sports groups had a hard time dealing with the federal government due to barriers to public access in the Big Cypress Basin area. Mr. Cook stated that because Mr. Pelizza and others were able to work public access into this process the sports groups, who have formed a recreational user's Trust, were then able to come to an agreement and support the project. Mr. Cook also stated that if federal properties would not be accessible to recreational groups, then the project would lose the support of the Trust.

Joan Lawrence remarked that this is high priority project for the Department of the Interior and congratulated Mr. Pelizza, the recreational Trust, Florida Fish and Wildlife and the agricultural partners. Ms. Lawrence stated that the refuge was complementary to programs already being run by state and federal partners such as the Wetland Reserve program, the Grasslands Reserve program and the Dispersed Water Management program. Ms. Lawrence stated that the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) has invested about \$370M in projects. Ms. Lawrence added that the projects that Mr. Collins mentioned that might have to be built based on mandatory TMDL requirements would be complementary to the Headwaters Refuge and encouraged WRAC members to meet with Mr. Pelizza and involve him on these types of conversations or concerns.

Bubba Wade commented that the Northern Everglades Planning Process began years ago and the results were that 800,000 to 1M acre feet of water were needed for storage and treatment north of the Lake in order to treat and store water before being emptied into the Lake. Mr. Wade stated that the Northern Everglades Plan is the elephant in the room that no one has really been addressing. Mr. Wade said that a lot of projects can be built but the problem will remain that dirty water is entering into the Lake. Mr. Wade added that when people discuss conservation lands they often forget that there are still lots of activities taking place on these lands that end up in the discharge of dirty water into the Lake, so acquiring conservation lands does not solve the problem. Mr. Wade stated that the Northern Everglades should be a high priority item especially in light of 4M acres of untreated water going into a 700,000 acre Lake. Mr. Wade stated that his opinion is that a land-based solution is not possible for the amount of water being delivered to the small Lake and chemical solutions should be explored.

Mike Collins stated that something should be learned from the Settlement Agreement especially the one-size-fits-all manner in which the phosphorus level limits are applied to the entire system. Mr. Collins said there are numerous features in the Everglades that may not have survived if 10ppb was always the standard. Mr. Collins said that the fundamental question related to the Lake is "why are the concentrations so high, why are those loads so high?" Mr. Collins stated that he suspects that the man-made system, when created, released phosphorus that had been encapsulated in the land and when the engineers channelized the system, that legacy phosphorus was released and possibly cannot be reversed. Mr. Collins suggested that more scientific research be done in this area.

Chad Kennedy asked for clarification regarding the specifics involved in a conservation easement. Mr. Pelizza explained that when a conservation easement is agreed upon, the lands within that easement are documented for their current function and habitat types and that function or habitat type cannot be changed for the life of the agreement.

Mr. Pelizza pointed out that property could be bought, and the function or habitat could be changed if the property was being restored to its natural state.

Brian Wheeler commented that if 150,000 acres was removed from the equation and tied up in conservation easements, water supply would be effected and

#### Public Comment

None

#### **5. C-43 West Basin Storage Reservoir Reservation - Beth Lewis, Office Chief, State Policy and Coordination, Everglades Restoration and Capital Projects Bureau, Everglades Policy and Coordination Division, SFWMD**

Beth Lewis, Office Chief, Everglades Restoration and Capital Projects Bureau, SFWMD provided a presentation regarding the C-43 West Basin Storage Reservoir Reservation.

#### WRAC Member Comment

Joan Lawrence commented that DOI supports this reservation as proposed and believes that it is important the District be able to move into a PPA once the project gets authorized in an upcoming WRRDA. Ms. Lawrence noted that this project will provide multiple environmental benefits

Mike Collins agreed that DOI's support of this project has propelled it to its current position.

#### Public Comment

None

#### **6. Central Florida Water Initiative Update - Len Lindahl, Assistant Executive Director, Business and Regulatory, SFWMD**

Len Lindahl, Assistant Executive Director, Business and Regulatory, SFWMD provided an update on the Central Florida Water Initiative.

#### WRAC Member Comment

Joan Lawrence noted that she has been watching the Central Florida Water Initiative (CFWI) and its progress and expressed concern for any impact that the surface water projects could have on Kissimmee River Restoration as well as timing for the CFWI as it may coincide with the Kissimmee River Water Reservation and what has happened with KBMOS. Ms. Lawrence mentioned that she approached Mr. Lindahl before the meeting and requested a presentation on the surface water projects currently included in the CFWI and their possible impacts to Kissimmee River Restoration.

Chad Kennedy asked about the boundaries and how the three Water Management Districts will interact to implement the CFWI. Mr. Elsner replied that parties are aware

that some of the water resources cross District boundaries and the SFWMD is working closely with the Southwest Florida Water Management District and the St. Johns Water Management District. Mr. Elsner asserted that the same group that is working together on CFWI are also working on the Lower Kissimmee Plan so there is coordination, consistency, and careful consideration being given in regard to any possible impacts.

Brian Wheeler stated that the Water Supply Plan covers all of Seminole, Orange, Osceola, South Lake and Polk counties so the graphic that was presented represents the South Florida Water Management portion but does not represent the entire area. Mr. Wheeler applauded the SFWMD for adopting the CFWI plan as the Water Supply Plan for the Upper Kissimmee region as opposed to undertaking a separate planning effort as other WMDs are attempting. Mr. Wheeler said that groundwater, specifically the aquifer, does not follow jurisdictional boundaries like surface water and with an urbanized area like central Florida, water supply and the solution for water supply is going to cross jurisdictional boundaries and so the regional approach being taken by the SFWMD is commendable. Mr. Wheeler encouraged everyone to continue to support the partnership effort between the three WMDs and discouraged disagreement in regards to jurisdictional issues and continue to work together to find a reasonable solution to the issue of water supply in the central Florida region.

#### Public Comment

Bob Ulevich, Indian River Citrus League, stated that he will continue to be persistent and consistent regarding the importance of the resurrection of the 54 Flood Control Act and the reconnection of the two Water Management Districts as a viable alternative or solution to the water supply components both in the upper east coast and both connected to the needs CFWI. Mr. Ulevich referred to a 2005 document that he stated was a study co-funded by the District regarding determined volume. Mr. Ulevich stated that the study concluded that 204,661 acre-ft ranging up to 364,541 acre-ft which has the potential to move both north and south to be stored. Mr. Ulevich proposed that when looking at alternative water supplies that everyone recall the work that was done 60 years ago and encouraged WRAC members to become educated on the Reconnect project proposal and the possible solution it offers in resolving the problem.

### **7. General Public Comment**

Robert Bernstein, University of Miami Law Student and Audubon Florida Intern, commented on invasive species specifically large exotic snakes that are found in or around SFWMD levees. Mr. Bernstein stated that the District should give more attention to controlling the invasive snake population due to the dramatic decrease in native mammals including raccoon, opossum, bobcat, cotton-mouth, wood rat, and wood stork. Mr. Bernstein said that WRAC should discuss how the District could better partner with other environmental agencies and find additional resources to help combat the issue of invasive snakes.

#### Final WRAC Member Comment

Mike Collins responded to Mr. Bernstein that the District staff in the past had permission to go down to L-67 and harvest those snakes. Mr. Collins stated that to his

understanding the lead enforcement officer in Everglades National Park decided that this type of control was no longer acceptable and so now no one is controlling the issue from the population's source, which is Everglades National Park. Mr. Collins suggested that Mr. Bernstein talk to enforcement officers in Everglades National Park to review their policy and the effort to controlling this species can be increased to prior levels.

## **8. Adjourn**

Mr. Sargent announced that the next WRAC meeting would be held on Thursday, March 6<sup>th</sup> at District headquarters.