



**Minutes**

**WATER RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMISSION**

**Recreational Issues Workshop**

June 17, 2013, 5:00 PM

District Headquarters - B-1 Auditorium

3301 Gun Club Road

West Palm Beach, FL 33406

**FINAL**

1. Welcome, Opening Remarks, and Purpose of Workshop - Mark Dombroski, Chairman

Mark Dombroski, welcomed members, introduced himself and started attendee introductions.

2. SFWMD Agency Recognition by Youth Hunting Program of Florida - Scott Somers, Florida Sportsmen Conservation Association

Scott Somers, FSCA, and Kenny Barker, FWC recognized the District with a plaque for the agency's contributions to the State's Youth Hunting Program of Florida.

3. Recreation Discussion, Updates, and Future Meeting Topics

Future presentations requested by interested attendees included; STA access and weekday waterfowl hunts, overview of the Corbett levee design and how it will affect public access, and an update on research projects that have been conducted in WCA2.

The District and meeting participants were invited to attend the Florida Airboat Association banquet on July 13, 2013 and the Hungryland Wildlife and Environmental Area monument dedication on June 29, 2013 in recognition of Johnny and Mariana Jones.

The Kissimmee River Valley Sportsman Association announced that they had removed 1.35 tons of garbage from the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes area during their annual lake clean-up.

Comment was made for FWC and the District to provide hunting opportunities for youths with disabilities. Staff will assist FWC in addressing this request.

Stakeholders requested the District help facilitate and provide dumpsters for volunteers to clean-up research equipment that is no longer being utilized within WCA 2. Staff will follow-up with stakeholders and FWC on the coordination of this clean-up effort.

A request was made for a shelter to be installed to replace the dilapidated "Cowboy Camp" structure that had been removed from District property within the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes. Staff are supportive of the concept and have previously constructed two similar shelters within the Chain of Lakes but recognize that agency budgetary constraints may make funding this project difficult.

Stakeholders asked if construction had been initiated on the Rolling Meadows restoration project and if construction was delayed if the area could be re-opened for hunting and other public during the fall season. Staff will follow-up with the project manager on the status of the project.

The District was recognized and thanked for working with the Florida Trail Association to move the Florida National Scenic Trail from the west side of the Kissimmee River to the east side of the Kissimmee River.

4. South Florida's Night Skies and Amateur Astronomy Activities - Diana Umpierre, South Florida Amateur Astronomers Association and International Dark-Sky Association

Diana Umpierre, South Florida Amateur Astronomers Association and International Dark-Sky Association provided a presentation that identified District properties as having some of the darkest skies in south Florida. The organization also thanked the District for creating a web page dedicated to stargazing.

The first Dark Sky Festival was held in Palm Beach County and attracted over 1,000 participants.

Astronomy challenges identified in the presentation included light pollution, air conditioning, and nighttime access to public lands. Staff invited the group to apply for a District Event Authorization so the District could facilitate group holding scheduled events on District lands.

5. Lands Assessment Update - Richard Bassell, Section Administrator, Real Estate Management, SFWMD

Richard Bassell, Section Administrator, Real Estate Section, SFWMD provided a presentation on the current status of the District's Land Assessment process and identified properties in the Kissimmee / Okeechobee Region that were preliminarily approved for surplus or exchange by the Governing Board.

Staff responded to questions regarding the development potential of the Tiger Lake parcel advising that it may be possible to construct a house on the property and clarified that the acquisition of properties within the Water Conservation Areas was not a priority for this process.

Staff recognized that approximately 150 acres of the Mecca property would be provided to FWC in exchange for the property required to build a new levee within the Corbett Wildlife Management Area.

6. Public Use Updates - Jerry Krenz, Senior Planner, Land Stewardship Section, SFWMD

Jerry Krenz, Senior Planner, Land Stewardship Section, SFWMD provided an update on the establishment of the C23/24 and Rocky Glades Public Small Game Hunting Areas and informed attendees of the June Governing Board approval of a hunt related item that will allow staff to coordinate with FWC on future requests for administering hunts through the Youth Hunting Program of Florida and providing managed hunts for injured service members.

7. Public Use Rule 40E-7 Rule Development - Dan Cotter, Section Leader, Land Stewardship, SFWMD

District staff provided an overview of the District's Public Access and Use Rule 40E-7, including the rule development process, a summary of the proposed changes to the Rule, and public comments received by the District.

Workshop attendee comments:

- Add the existing statutory language to 40E-7.526(2) as it relates to negative equestrian Coggins testing. Staff concurred to add the appropriate language to the proposed Rule changes.
- Change language in 40E-7.526(4) (horse carts) to be consistent with 40E-7.526(1) (equestrian activities). Staff concurred to add the appropriate language to the proposed Rule changes.
- Add *cleaning items in water troughs* to the General Prohibition list under 40E-7.537. Staff concurred to add the appropriate language to the proposed Rule changes.
- Include the word *astronomy* in the 40E-7.521(16) Definition list. Staff concurred to add the appropriate language to the proposed Rule changes.
- Add *intrusive lighting* to the prohibition list under the camping rules. Staff discussed further with the group and it was agreed that providing education and interpretive materials at sites relating to this subject would be the best approach to address this issue.
- Questions were asked related to language about free running dogs in FWC hunt brochures. FWC staff stated that this question did not relate to this process and should be brought up directly with FWC staff.

- Questions were asked related to the closure language and proposed changes under 40E-7.523. Staff explained the internal closure process which included approval from the Executive Director.
- Remarks were made relating to how clubs and organizations would be informed about closures. Staff explained that necessary closures would be advertised on the web and e-mailed to the WRAC Recreation Workshop members list.
- Question was asked relating to how a Management Unit is defined and determined under Rule 40E-7.521(18). Staff would follow-up with the individual to clarify and respond to this question.

At the end of the Rule discussion, the Chair asked and received concurrence from the meeting participants for staff to move forward with the proposed Rule as presented and with the agreed upon modifications .

8. Adjourn - 8:00 PM