



**SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT (SFWMD)
WATER RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMISSION (WRAC)
WATER CONSERVATION WORK PLAN ISSUES WORKSHOP MEETING**

MONDAY, AUGUST 24, 2009, 10:00 AM

District Headquarters - B-1 Auditorium

3301 Gun Club Road

West Palm Beach, FL 33406

MEETING SUMMARY

Item 1. Welcome and Introductions: Deena Reppen, Deputy Executive Director, Government and Public Affairs, SFWMD, Issues Workshop Chair: Ms. Reppen welcomed everyone. Participants introduced themselves.

Purpose: Deena Reppen: Review the draft Water Conservation Work Plan. The SFWMD Governing Board requested moving forward with the Year-Round Landscape rule. Intent today is to develop a work plan and come to agreement on the tools needed to move forward with rule development.

Item 2. Review SFWMD Governing Board direction to develop a Water Conservation Work Plan in conjunction with the Proposed Year-Round Landscape Irrigation Rule - Terrie Bates, Assistant Deputy Executive Director, Water Resources, SFWMD: Will discuss and work through comments on the draft work plan. If consensus is reached, additional meetings will not likely be needed. Intent is to reach closure by October.

Discussion:

- Commissioner Patrick Hayes – Watershed needs important but not reflected. Include environmental needs. Indicators for each watershed are available. When in drought everyone should share the adversity. Watershed vitality should be a driver along with the utilities. The trigger for water use restrictions should be both.
- Terrie Bates – The water conservation year-round rule and the Statewide and Basin stormwater rules are separate rules with different purposes. Use of excess water for irrigation is addressed by the water conservation rules. Water shortage restrictions have different rules and geographical key indicators are used for those. After adoption of the year-round water conservation/irrigation rule, changes will be needed in the water shortage rules so that they are in synch.
- Paul Grosse – Was there a positive water use response when the water use restrictions were imposed?

- Mark Elsner – Evaluation of data from the utilities showed a decrease in demand over time; roughly a 30 % decrease in demand. It is utility specific depending on how much outdoor irrigation per utility.
- Terrie Bates – Most everyone agrees we need an outreach plan with the same messaging and understanding about how to use water more efficiently, including nurseries and water utilities.

Item 3. Discuss Proposed Work Plan Items: Jesus Rodriguez, Water Conservation Officer, SFWMD, updated the group about development of the Water Conservation Work Plan and outlined steps for completing it. When the work plan is agreed upon, implementation steps will be assigned to collaborators (leaders) who agree to help implement.

Review of Draft Work Plan –

Discussion:

Commissioner Hayes – These steps are utility driven, are we going to include environmentally driven steps?

Jacqui Weisblum – Environmental benefits drive this plan. Stakeholders will be responsible for implementing the plan.

Deena Reppen – This work plan is specifically for the Year-Round Landscape Irrigation rule. The comprehensive conservation program includes the environmental and demand management components and is the broader umbrella under which this work plan falls.

Bruce Adams – Those who have worked on this for the last 2 years agreed that to be successful the plan must be all inclusive. Senate Bills 2080 and 494 indicated the types of groups that need to be included and how they could participate.

Work Plan - Public Policy Section – Terrie Bates: Some Local Governments have included “Florida Friendly Landscaping” in their ordinances, adopting formal policies that support that program. The SFWMD will work on creating model ordinances by reviewing the landscaping and conservation ordinances and working up model ordinances.

Lisa Wilson-Davis - What model ordinances is SFWMD drafting for use by local governments? This section needs to be more specific.

Terri Bates – Primarily for the SFWMD year round landscaping irrigation rule. DEP is working on a state wide ordinance for Florida Friendly Landscaping and we will collaborate with them.

Commissioner Hayes – Try to blend with other items that are going to make an impact, like the environmental resource permitting in the Upper Kissimmee area. More storage and more retention eventually will move into other areas. Local governments are working with statutes that should include us and the rules you will propagate with drainage issues and environmental permitting.

Terrie Bates - Stormwater reuse and MFLs are statewide issues that are not reflected in this document. This work plan reflects what we are working on with our collaborators.

Bruce Adams – There is a requirement for writing a state-wide model Florida Friendly Landscaping code including Best Management Practices for fertilizer use. There is an opportunity with the model ordinances to include all issues related to water quality and water quantity.

Cynthia Plockelman – “Florida Friendly Landscaping” should include wildlife. Florida friendly for plants doesn’t necessary mean friendly for animals.

Debra Joneck – Understanding of the term “Florida Friendly Landscaping, as used in the Senate Bill means “right plant, right place”.

Jesus Rodriguez – The Florida Friendly Landscaping legislation includes wildlife friendly landscaping as well.

Paul Grosse – An educational component is critical.

Education and Outreach:

Discussion:

Deena Reppen – The next component deals with education and outreach.

Terrie Bates – Key provisions are education for the public and outreach work with Home Owners Associations (HOAs) and other groups.

Debra Joneck – We are looking forward to working to ensure a consistent message. The Senate Bill indicates that “Florida Friendly Landscaping” is not solely native species, it is not solely “xeriscape” and it is not specific to species. The Florida Nursery Growers and Landscape Association (FNGLA) has produced printed materials. Need to get the message out in a consistent manner.

Terrie Bates – SFWMD is working to create consistent messaging whether from the SFWMD, a water utility, or other entities; and will disseminate the information in different ways: TV stations, websites, utility bills, etc.

Albrey Arrington – The outcome should be consistent public relations materials across the board. There are many environmental facilities throughout the SFWMD. A traveling exhibit, building on existing information, could be created for display at these facilities.

Chad Kennedy – Take advantage of successful TV campaigns (e.g. Solid Waste Authority (SWA)). A combined campaign including SFWMD, utilities and SWA would be a successful campaign.

Deena Reppen – That is the idea about collaborating with others and sending out a uniform message. The concept is to provide the tools for implementation along with the message.

Albrey Arrington – 90-second video spots are great. All schools have TVs where these clips can be shown.

Deena Reppen – The performance benchmark will help identify those opportunities. SFWMD is working with St. Johns River and Southwest Florida WMDs to adapt existing campaign material so that the message is consistent throughout the State.

George Jones – Need to provide downloadable information (not copyrighted) so that it can be used as public information.

Lisa Wilson Davis – The target for this group is to reach the public. How do we accomplish this? To be successful, we need the right people at the table to agree with the concepts.

Todd Swingle – We agree with branding the message. However, when implementing any campaign, must remember the differences among the utilities. Many utilities have existing restrictions; including reuse. Need to make sure we are achieving the message and pointing people in the right direction. We opposed St. Johns River WMD TV spots because the restriction days did not match ours.

Terrie Bates – Shared boundaries are confusing so need to keep the message clear.

Commissioner Hayes – Like SWA we should have a message, may be link with their campaign and create a water conservation message. Need to meet with SWA.

Jacqui Weisblum – Education makes our jobs easier, working with other stakeholders is a great idea.

Bruce Adams – This group needs to establish the end game. Conservation efficiency while protecting the environment and being as efficient and knowledgeable regarding water resources.

Todd Swingle – Is it reasonable to think we can get to this point with so many different utilities? SFWMD has been very flexible in allowing the utilities to establish their own restrictions while St John's has sometimes opposed this. Flexibility to do things better is important. Effective use technology is the best way to optimize water use.

Terrie Bates – A combined approach is best.

Bruce Adams – The legislature has waived restrictions for high end irrigation systems. The incentive here is to encourage retrofit of existing irrigation systems so that they can be exempt from the restrictions.

Terrie Bates – Next item deals with targeting HOA and Property Managers, offering materials focused on water conservation and explaining the advantages of sophisticated irrigation systems.

Commissioner Hayes – Need to move toward soil moisture sensors on all automatic sprinkler systems.

Terrie Bates – All new irrigation systems must have rain sensors.

Bruce Adams – Licensed contractors now required to have these sensors in operation for any site they visit. Florida is the only state with this type of regulation.

Commissioner Hayes – It needs to be enforced.

Debra Joneck – “Florida Friendly Landscaping” is a campaign that needs to be pursued.

Mark Elsner – It needs to be automated and user friendly. Florida Power and Light is another group we should work with.

Todd Swingle – Need to include schools because children are great message carriers.

Albrey Arrington – Utilities and HOAs that are proactive should be rewarded some way

Mark Elsner – Communities should be challenged to do better.

Lisa Wilson Davis – Boca Raton's irrigation is 100% potable water and during the drought we had to monitor consumption because of saltwater intrusion. The west coast has self supplied wells that are not monitored. Question is how can these wells be monitored? Challenges between communities to improve water conservation could be built into the document.

Commissioner Hayes – Do we have data on consumptive use in self-supplied wells?

Terrie Bates – These wells are permitted by the Health Department. SFWMD does not issue permits for them and don't have a good feel for how many there are.

Commissioner Hayes – Would be good to know what percentage of use they represent.

Jesus Rodriguez – Need a turf grass study to identify the differences between South Florida and North Florida. Have not yet seen good information to use in helping set the parameters.

Terrie Bates – Why is there such a demand for water here compared to North Florida? Is it different types of turf grass?

Paul Grosse – We funded a study by UF/IFAS about how much irrigation is needed to keep turf grass healthy. An example of results of the study (we'd gladly share with everyone) include: Celebration Bermuda grass requires less irrigation and mowing but is under patent. Growers pay a royalty based on sales.

Jesus Rodriguez – This study will evaluate the water demands of the most common species used in South Florida landscapes, and the minimum water requirements to keep them healthy. It would also include case studies to measure existing residential lots, their turf choices, growth rates, and water needs.

Albrey Arrington – Diversity of soils needs to be considered and results must be applicable and balanced. Ecological regions and boundaries need to be emphasized.

Bruce Adams – The IFAS study was done on Floritam and St Augustine and concluded that those varieties needed 5 to 20 additional irrigations a year. It will be beneficial to evaluate all grass types and varieties of plants.

Stakeholder Feedback

Discussion

Terrie Bates – The Governing Board gave us the directive to come up with a better understanding of operational issues regarding utilities. The draft is the paper in front of you now

Randy Brown – Need to advocate the most efficient irrigation regardless of the number of days/week and base that on the most current scientific research. The fire hydrant flushing needs attention because of the need to keep the chlorine flow steady throughout the system.

Lisa Wilson Davis – Resizing the system to lower flows might be more realistic. Efficient irrigation and the actual cost of efficient irrigation compared to 1 or 2 day irrigation. What is going to be more cost efficient?

Maria Loucraft – Resizing the system might not be the answer because as our cities go up vertically we may need to up size again.

Jacqui Weisblum – Are soil moisture sensors exempt?

Terrie Bates – The exemption is for only one and it is very specific. We are looking for rule language with a broader range of other things we might exempt.

Lisa Wilson Davis – Efficient irrigation is the way to go versus forcing people to irrigate 2- 3 days/week.

Terrie Bates – The Governing Board was looking for an evaluation, there is no implementation step.

Lisa Wilson Davis – The goal is changing the culture and becoming irrigation efficient.

Commissioner Hayes – Is reducing stormwater discharge a District objective?

Terrie Bates – We need a place to put it because when it hits the flood triggers it must be dealt with.

Nat Nason – The proposed language in the draft asked the utilities to do a study evaluating 2 days or 3 days/week irrigation. We hope everyone will keep an open mind.

We like the addition of expected benefits on the conservation effort and the public outreach. The public is going to absorb the cost of the infrastructure and they should be aware of the benefits.

Terrie Bates – A key issue for the Governing Board is coming up with consensus language but ultimately the Governing Board will decide the final language.

Lisa Wilson Davis - This process is an evolution. To go back to the draft wording will mean additional expenses to the utilities. Modeling is not the answer; the money is better used getting moisture sensors and other changes.

Terrie Bates – The study is being done already by some utilities. Going from 7 days to 2 or 3 days irrigation is the type of evaluation that will cover these issues.

Nat Nason – We might do additional evaluations like checking our residuals but this is not like an engineering study on the difference between 7 day irrigation to 2 or 3 days. The study reads that the District is asking us to prove that this change will hurt operations. This would entitle an engineering study of our whole system.

Terrie Bates – The proposed language will be change from 7 day irrigation to efficient irrigation.

Kevin Cavioli - Educate the public through more regulation using available technology. Give guidance about allowable amounts for a certain landscape. Consumers should be able to irrigate within the amount allotted instead of restricting days/week. Establish an amount for residences and business. SFWMD and utilities need to help the consumer. Is staff looking at the FDEP Stormwater rule?

Todd Swingle – There is strong support for stormwater reuse. It still needs to be looked at as another component of the resource; don't want to see rule misapplied.

? - Better water conservation should be the purpose of this rule not going to two days/week.

Terrie Bates – The Governing Board wants better compliance and better understanding of operational concerns.

Bruce Adams – The science should address the horticultural differences so that we better understand the needs.

Terrie Bates – Initially we will need compliance enforcement and a type of partnership to enforce it. As the public gets educated we hope to see a decline in enforcement and citations.

Bruce Adams – Enforcement expenses (and effectiveness) should be evaluated as part of the work plan.

Terrie Bates – Can include in annual evaluation report to the Governing Board.

John Fumero – The District's annual report is a summary on Annual Conservation results and implementing the work plan. Need to add a research plan that identifies new technology. This would help meet a Governing Board priority that the process be science driven.

Terrie Bates – We just did a report to the Board about status of the water conservation plan; Board direction was to include benchmarks and milestones.

Lisa Wilson Davis – Good idea to incorporate specifics in the annual report. SB 2080 has a requirement for incentive programs. Need to explore the use of grants and incorporate in to this plan. Federal funding and/or grants may be available.

John Fumero – This is “Resource Conservation” of which “Water Conservation” is a subset.

Bruce Adams – “SIP” is a technology program that could infuse up to a million dollars into the water conservation program. Because it is a 50/50 program it would actually be more than a million dollars.

Terrie Bates – We will incorporate the comments and email to everyone. There doesn't seem to be a need for another meeting.

Albrey Arrington – What is the goal of the board, more efficient water conservation or reducing per capita consumption? Clarity is needed in the goals for the project? What are the metrics for success and how are you going to quantify those?

Terrie Bates – The Governing Board direction is to develop a more generic method as the first step.

John Fumero - Any discussion of beneficial impacts that would create incentives to utilities that are expanding?

Terrie Bates – No, not for this effort.

Bruce Adams – Thanks to the SFWMD for taking the time to create this rule and listening to the stakeholders.

Process for Documenting Collaborator Commitment:

Deena Reppen – A letter of commitment or memorandum of partnership have been suggested to document commitments. Need to hear comments about best type of instrument to use.

Terrie Bates – The Water Conservation Plan will go together with the Landscape Irrigation rule, but it will not be part of the rule. Need commitment from stakeholders to submit to the SFWMD Governing Board. Looking for different models, DEP, partnership agreement.

Randy Brown - How is it different from the conservation agreement?

Groups of stake holders

Terrie Bates – A resolution from the South Florida Utilities group for example, would be well received by the Governing Board. It would show who is onboard and level of commitment.

Lisa Wilson Davis – “One voice, one word” is the message that needs to get to all water utilities. Ask Todd Swingle if St. Cloud Utilities would sign such onto the concept?

Todd Swingle– Yes but depends on the language. Needs to be looked as a workable system that is District regulated

Nat Nason - If it's going to the SFWMD Governing Board in October, I need to bring it to Seacoast Utilities Board by the end of September.

Terrie Bates – We send out a draft that meets everyone's needs.

John Fumero – It needs to be short and conceptual

Bruce Adams – Could use as a template the “Resolution for April Water Conservation Month” and “Joint Statement of Commitment for Conserve Florida”.

Jacqui Weisblum – Are we reaching out to people, not present at this meeting, that will be affected after this is adopted?

Terrie Bates – I don't foresee it before this is done, but it can always be amended as we moved forward.

Bruce Adams – Are we presenting this to the WRAC?

Terrie Bates – Yes, on October 8, prior to Governing Board the following week.

Item 4. Action Items and Next Steps:

Terrie Bates:

- Update the Governing Board at the September meeting.
- Create a draft and present to WRAC on October 8 in West Palm Beach.
- Send revised language for a rule development workshop.

- Jacque Weisblum – In September will we see revised language before going to the Governing Board in October?
- Terrie Bates – We will send out the revised language for review and comment.

Item 5. Meeting adjourned at 2:05 p.m.