



South Florida Water Management District

WATER RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMISSION ISSUES WORKSHOP MINUTES

June 18, 2012

5:00 PM

District Headquarters - Storch Room
3301 Gun Club Road, West Palm Beach, FL 33406

1. Welcome, Opening Remarks, and Purpose of Workshop - Newton Cook, Chairman

Chairman Cook opening the meeting and called for introductions around the table.

2. Recreation Discussion, Updates, and Future Meeting Topics

Discussion:

WRAC Recreation Chairman Newton Cook asked if anyone had any announcements or future topics they would like to see discussed.

Updates were requested on the following items:

- * Boat Ramps.
- * The Zipper Property.
- * Broward County's perspective on the on the Central Everglades Planning Process (CEEP) and potential impact on Holiday Park.
- * A discussion of the relationship between South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) and Florida Fis and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) on the management of some of these properties.
- * A request was made for the District to provide some additional funding for land management activities on Torry Island.
- * Concern was expressed regarding the level of law enforcement support being provided on the former Culpepper property acquired by the District and Martin County and incorporated into the Hungryland WEA.
- * From the Chair - We hope to have recreational bicyclists for an upcoming presentation.

Announcements were made on the following items:

- * A youth alligator hunt coming on STA 2 first week in August.
- * A request was made to pass on appreciation to the South Florida Water Management District (District) Governing Board (GB) and thank them for purchasing and making accessible 1000's of acres for recreational lands, despite what the Palm Beach Post

says. The State is far better off due to the commitment that the people of South Florida made to preservation and recreation. The District does a good job but doesn't toot its own horn enough. Additionally, the GB really needs to adequately fund and manage these resources. It is important that folks speak out to support the purchase and management of public lands. The budget hearings are a good place to have your voice heard. The Legislature is under the impression that the State owns too much property and has put the Water Management Districts (WMDs) under pressure to surplus lands unnecessary for restoration.

* The SFWMD is updating folks about our firearm modifications to make sure our rule comply with the new state statute.

3. Central Everglades Planning Project Update - Matt Morrison,
Principal Scientist, Everglades Policy & Coordination, SFWMD

Discussion:

* Concern was expressed that the Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP) will be complete before the results of the Decentralization (DECOMP) physical model are in which will indicate if the canals need to be plugged or totally backfilled.

- Staff indicated that in order to restore the ecosystem - we will have to do some degree of backfilling. We are in the planning stage. We do not have to complete the physical model in order to gain information from it. By the time this is approved by Congress we will have all of the physical model information in our hands.

* A question was raised about the flow equalization basin (FEB) which was originally going to be the A-1 reservoir with additional recreational benefit. A question was raised whether boats be allowed in the redesigned FEB.

- Staff indicated that the A-1 reservoir was very expensive and offered no water quality treatment ...these FEB facilities are shallow and offer pre-treatment and will have specific habitat value and potential recreational access, but probably not motorized boats.

* The Chair expressed concern that with 90 parts per billion (ppb) phosphorus in the water coming into the FEB, the vegetation in the FEB will be all cattails and will have little recreational value.

- Staff indicated that it may result in 28,000 acres of cattails but the water will be of better quality. There should be extra 2' of water in the north end of WCA3A.

* What will the affect on Holey Land and Rotenberger?

- Staff indicated that it should decrease the drainage out of the area and therefore improve inundation.

* Will the spreader canal take water from the east and feed it to the west.

- Staff indicated yes, we need to take the treated water from STA3/4 and improve the hydrology in the northwest corner of WCA3A - following the tree island topography.

* What about getting some water west of Miami Canal?

- Staff indicated that was being looked at as part of the planning process.

* How do the S7 and S8 work in this current plan?

- Staff indicated that they will still be used for flood control. The levee between the two will still provide access to WCA3A.

4. Kissimmee River Restoration Updates - Dave Colangelo, Senior
Environmental Scientist, Lake and River Sciences Section, SFWMD

Discussion:

- * What is the approximate water depth in the oxbows?
- Staff indicated 6 to 8 foot.

5. Updates on Public Use Projects and Activities - Dan Cotter, Land Management Section, SFWMD

Discussion:

- * Do you have a date scheduled to take the Loxahatchee Management Area additions proposal to the Coordinating Council?
- Staff answered yes, at their next meeting - June 25th 2:00 at the River Center, in Jupiter.
- * A comment was made that Palm Beach County (PBC) lost their funding for the Ocean to Lake Trail bridge, but PBC we may have a private entity that will fund the bridge. It will be an all-use trail open to hikers, bikers and horses. I know Martin County is talking to Ranch Colony about the trail system adjacent to that development.
- * Will the existing trails on Cypress Creek but kept when it gets designated a Management Area?
- Staff committed to get together and see what can be done in that area.
- * A question was asked about the parking lot north of Thomas Landing, whether there will be some road improvements also? The access road is in pretty bad shape.
- Staff indicated that there were no specific plans on that issue -funding is tight and the District has no real estate interest in the road.
- * A comment was made that on Lake Tiger, there is a great trail head for equestrian use. Polk County owns that property and some folks are talking about putting a boat ramp there.
- * A comment was made that there is a washout around the west side of Masten Dam on the Loxahatchee.

6. Public Use Opportunities for the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes Area and Other District Properties - Jerry Krenz, Land Management Section, SFWMD

Discussion:

- * Rolling Meadows - will this be accessible by non-motorized equipment only?
- Staff indicated that for the first year, yes, but staff will evaluate that after the first year.
- * A concern was made that the District was impeding navigation on a federal waterway and that the District got the funds through the mitigation agreement. This project is being drawn out too long. Who decides what makes it "compatible"?
- Staff replied the project has taken longer than expected as there are completing priorities.
- * The FWC has an upcoming rule making workshop. Do we have the opportunity to bring the hunting issue up after that meeting pending FWC's approval of a new rule that will provide a process for allowing additional short-term hunting opportunities on Rolling Meadows?
- Staff responded yes.
- * Another member replied that he would look into this issue and report back. It may need to be advertised in this next round of rule changes.
- * Concern was again expressed over the definition of "compatible".

- Staff indicated that will be discussed in the permit process.
- * The Chair asked if the public have a right to comment in the permit process?
- Staff replied that they think so. Staff will research and report back.
- * Is construction going to start in August of 2013?
- Staff replied yes, pending any delays. The necessary funding is in the current budget.
- * The Chair expressed appreciation pertaining to all the District has done to get the waterfowl hunting going out there. I would like to see us stay on track. We need to get the deer and small game hunting out there also.
- * How do we get deer hunting in less than two years?
- The Chair replied that as long as we have it to FWC by February we can get it done next year.
- * We are all wanting all we can get out of this property is hog hunting included?
- Staff indicated yes.
- * Let's stay on track and move on the deer hunting and motorized access. Would the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) possibly put in their permit "no motorized use"?
- The Chair indicated yes, that they needed to provide input before the permit is written.
- * When will the District submit the permit?
- Staff indicated the permit would be submitted after the project design is finalized.
- * Appreciation was directed to District staff for promoting some of the issues that are brought up at the Recreational WRAC.
- Staff advised that they would include a presentation on the Rolling Meadows project and the associated permitting process on the agenda for the next WRAC-RIW meeting.

7. **General Comment**

Chairman Cook called for any general comment. I want to thank everyone who helped with the Suwannee River proposal to put conservation land out to bid for private use. Lots of folks commented and we reversed that proposal.

* A few of us have been to Washington about this Kissimmee Headwater Preserve. We see Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWS) doing all kind of work but US Fish and Wildlife doesn't seem to care about land maintenance and management. Since we have been to Washington there has been a lot of trash cleaned up in this area.

* We need to get heard at the FWC workshop.

* I would like to hear about the US Sugar lands. What is the current use? What about the Mecca/L8 reservoir swap?

8. **Adjourn**

The Chairman adjourned the meeting promptly at 8:00 PM.