

SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT (SFWND)
WATER RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMISSION (WRAC)
Lower West Coast Water Supply Plan Regional Workshop
SFWMD Lower West Coast Service Center
2301 McGregor Boulevard
Ft. Myers, Florida
FRIDAY, MARCH 5, 2010, 9:30 AM
MEETING SUMMARY

- Item 1. Welcome and Opening Remarks – Charles Dauray, Governing Board Member**
- Item 2. Introductions and Today’s Topics - Mark Elsner, Director Water Supply Development**
- Item 3. December 18, 2009 Meeting Follow-up – Terry Bengtsson, Lead Scientist, Water Supply Planning Section**
Mr. Bengtsson reminded the meeting that issues, and goals and objectives for the plan are being finalized and to submit any comments.
- Item 4. Status of Agriculture Industry – Ron Hamel, Executive Vice-President, Gulf Coast Citrus Growers Assoc’n, Fritz Roka, UF-IFAS, Mongi Zekri, UF-IFAS, Gene McAvoy, UF-IFAS, and John Dunkelman, UF-IFAS**
Dr. Roka discussed economic issues related to agriculture and stated that agriculture could be more water efficient with the proper incentives. Mr. Mongi stated that 90% of citrus uses low-volume irrigation, that growers have been replanting, and that about 16,000 acres have been abandoned. Mr. McAvoy said that vegetables are the largest crop in Florida and that changing demographics is a large factor as newer cultures to the area eat more and different vegetables. Dr. Dunkelman discussed IFAS. Questions and answers in this item were:
Q. Is there a plan to inventory land to keep the most productive agricultural land in use?
A. Mr. McAvoy stated there is not much activity to protect agriculture land.
Q. With the recent cold spell, there was much water used for freeze protection which led to sinkholes. What research is being done to lessen this water use?
A. The sinkhole problem is generally not in the SFWMD area. Water is still the best and quickest method of freeze protection. They are working on minimizing the water used; overhead watering uses 3-4 times the amount used by microjet.
Q. If there is insufficient water, is crop loss insurance available?
A. This insurance is not always available or affordable. There is also the loss of wages for employees who would have picked the crop.
Q. Does microjet irrigation produce larger, smaller, or same size crops?
A. Microjet irrigation generally improves the quality of the crop.
Q. Can more alternative water supplies (AWS) water be used for crop freeze protection?
A. Some areas do have the ability to use Floridan and reclaimed water for freeze protection. However, AWS is generally not an efficient way to deliver water to

the groves. The industry is amenable to better ways to use water and have asked for the ability to retrofit stormwater ponds to allow for use as retention areas. Funding and policy changes are needed.

Q. What is the loss in citrus acreage in the LWC as compared to UEC?

A. Grapefruit is more susceptible to greening. There are more grapefruit in the UEC which was a big factor in the crop loss there. The growers in the LWC are using scout trees and nutritional feeding which is helping to keep groves more productive.

Item 5. Benita Whalen, Deputy Department Director, Environmental Resource Department was unable to attend the meeting. Mr. Dauray provided some comments about the EPA numeric standards public comments and the need to be proactive rather than reactive regarding our water resources.

Item 6. Agricultural, Industrial/Commercial, Recreation and Thermoelectric Projected Water Demands – Terry Bengtsson

It was asked if the number of recreation acres receiving reclaimed water was known and the response was this is being worked on and will be included in the draft report but the number is not finalized. A question was asked about the source of water for future demands for thermoelectric power and the FPL representative indicated they would like to review their numbers again. It was also commented that the acreage projections for vegetables may be low and should be reviewed.

Item 7. Protecting Water for the Natural System Lower West Coast Planning Area – Brenda Mills, Lead Planner, Federal and State Policy Division.

Q. The water reservation rule sets aside water for public health and safety or the natural systems; are these mutually exclusive and cause disagreements and disputes to be set up? Is there a definition of public health and safety in Chapter 373?

A. This has not been the case. Chapter 373 will be reviewed for a definition of public health and safety. There was some additional discussion about the Lake Okeechobee and Caloosahatchee reservations.

Item 8. Update: Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) Projects Update – Matt Morrison, Director, Project Coordination Division, and Janet Starnes, Principal Project Manager, Project Coordination Division.

There were no comments or questions

Item 9. Wrap Up/Next Steps – Terry Bengtsson and Mark Elsner

Terry reminded attendees to provide any comments and recommendations regarding goals and objectives of the plan or issues to him soon because the draft chapters 1 and 2 will be distributed prior to the next meeting.

Item 10. Adjourn: 12:40



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