

## MEETING MINUTES

### Southwest Florida Water Management District Joint Meeting of the Basin Board Education Committee and Basin Board Land Resources Committee

Polk's Nature Discovery Center, Lakeland, FL

March 16, 2009

The Basin Board Education Committee (BBEC) and Basin Board Land Resources Committee (BBLRC) of the Southwest Florida Water Management District met at 9:45 a.m. on March 16, 2009, at Polk's Nature Discovery Center in Lakeland.

#### **BBEC Members Present**

Maritza Rovira-Forino, Chair  
Mac Carraway, Vice Chair, Manasota  
Pat Crisman, Peace River  
Devon Higginbotham, Hillsborough River  
Cheryl Johnson, Alafia River  
Chet Renfro, Pinellas-Anclote River

#### **BBLRC Members Present**

Albert Joerger, Chair  
Steve Bissonnette, Alafia River  
George Burt, Hillsborough River  
Mitch Hammer, Pinellas-Anclote River  
Joe Robinson, Hillsborough River  
Bo Rooks, Withlacoochee River

#### **Guests**

Hugh Gramling, Governing Board

#### **Staff Members**

Lou Kavouras  
Michael Molligan  
Eric Sutton  
Beth Putnam  
Robyn Felix  
Cheryl Hill  
Mary Margaret Hull  
Chuck Lane  
Kevin Love  
Dorian Morgan  
Miki Renner  
Joe Tyberghein

#### **Recording Secretary**

Toi Basso

A list of others present who signed the attendance roster is filed in the permanent files of the BBEC/BBLRC joint meeting.

#### **Call to Order**

BBEC Chair Maritza Rovira-Forino and BBLRC Chair Albert Joerger co-chaired the meeting, calling it to order at 9:45 a.m. and acknowledging a quorum was present.

#### **Basin Board Land Resources Committee Business**

##### **Approve BBLRC Meeting Minutes**

Chair Joerger presented for approval the minutes from the meeting of December 3, 2008. Following consideration, **George Burt moved, seconded by Mitch Hammer, to approve as presented the BBLRC minutes. Motion carried unanimously.**

##### **Revisions to Governing Board Policy 170-7, Basin Board Land Resources Committee**

Chair Joerger presented the proposed revisions of Governing Board Policy 170-7, Basin Board Land Resources Committee, and after consideration of the revisions, **Joe Robinson moved, seconded by Steve Bissonnette, to approve the proposed revisions.**

#### **Basin Board Education Committee Business**

Chair Rovira-Forino acknowledged the District's new publications and posters that are being displayed at the Tampa International Airport to promote water conservation. Michael Molligan

explained that the airport agreed to display the posters for free as long as they have advertising space available. Members discussed airport and golf course water usage, noting that most golf courses are not on wells and use reclaimed water to conserve water. Tampa International Airport promotes the District's Water Conservation Hotel and Motel Program and Water Program for Restaurant Outreach, and the District's water conservation staff may offer other programs encouraging airports to conserve water.

### **Approve BBEC Meeting Minutes**

Chair Rovira-Forino presented for approval the minutes from the BBEC meeting of November 4, 2008. Following consideration, **Mac Carraway moved, seconded by Pat Crisman, to approve as presented the BBEC minutes. Motion carried unanimously.**

### **Revisions to Governing Board Policy 170-8, Basin Board Education Committee**

Chair Rovira-Forino presented the proposed revisions of Governing Board Policy 170-8, Basin Board Education Committee, and after consideration of the revisions, **Mac Carraway moved, seconded by Devon Higginbotham, to approve the proposed revisions.**

### **Meeting Overview: Purpose and Goals**

#### **Collaborative Efforts to Promote the Value of Ecosystem Protection Through Recreation on Conservation Lands**

Upon conclusion of the committees' business agendas, Eric Sutton, Land Resources Department director, gave a brief overview of the meeting agenda and shared goals and future concerns of the departments. He explained that recreation and land management allows the District to connect with the public by encouraging District conservation land recreational use and promoting land conservation efforts. He discussed research efforts by the Communications Department and introduced Dorian Morgan to present the information.

#### **Public Opinion Survey Results**

Ms. Morgan presented the results of the random telephone survey. The survey focused on public awareness, opinion and opportunities about the District and the District's land acquisition program. Key results of the public opinion survey include:

- In the general population, 36% gave the District a favorable rating, 20% unfavorable, and 44% neutral.
- By contrast, 94% of those who frequently use District lands gave the District a favorable rating.
- 86% of the general population responded that government agencies should spend more money preserving natural lands.
- 98% of those surveyed want to get out more, mostly to do outdoor activities.
- Hiking was a favorite activity.
- Location and convenient access were the most important factors in deciding to use District conservation lands.
- Simply being outdoors was identified as what respondents enjoyed most about recreation.
- Time commitment was the barrier most people identified that kept them from engaging in outdoor activity.
- Most people engage in recreational activities in groups of friends or with family and learn of opportunities through word of mouth.
- Most want to participate in their favorite activity with little planning or "on the spur of the moment."

- Restrooms were listed as the number one amenity people wanted when planning outdoor activities.

### **Recreation Amenities Plan Implementation**

Joe Tyberghein discussed the recent improvements that had been made to District lands and facilities under the Land Resources Recreation Amenities Plan — consistent signage, well-defined access points, picnic areas, restroom facilities, trail marking and maintenance. He also discussed significant contributions of those participating in the volunteer program and coordination with other Districts through the Inter-District Committee.

### **Get Outside! Campaign**

Robyn Felix reported on past successful outreach activities promoting recreation on District lands. She discussed three segments of *Florida on a Tankful* on Bay News 9 in Tampa, including the broadcast of bicycling at Starkey Wilderness Park. She discussed future media opportunities with Channel 13 and past media coverage for a variety of public events, including the grand opening for Conner Preserve in Pasco County on January 16.

Beth Putnam outlined the Get Outside! campaign planned for fall. Designed from the research results, the campaign will tap into the fact that people want to get outside more and they want their recreation experiences to be easy and convenient. The campaign will communicate that District lands are available and will encourage new and diverse users to experience recreational opportunities. The three pilot sites selected for targeted programs were chosen because they can handle more use without ecosystem damage.

### **Polk's Nature Discovery Center, Exhibits and Programs**

Chuck Lane discussed the history of the property's acquisition and management. Mary Margaret Hull discussed the importance of the partnership with Polk County and Polk County School District for current and future education programming. Polk County Natural Resources Division has stationed one naturalist at the center to coordinate and conduct field trips with public, private and homeschool groups. Summer camps, which are planned to begin summer 2010, fall under the responsibility of this naturalist. Polk County School District has recently hired one full-time teacher for the center. The teacher will develop a field trip curriculum that will be used for all 7,000 Polk County seventh graders in the 2009–2010 school year. She also introduced staff who described the education exhibits and offered members a tour following the meeting.

### **Closing Comments and Adjournment**

Mr. Sutton thanked committee members for their participation and thanked staff for their efforts in bringing this meeting together. With no further business or announcements to come before either committee, the meeting was adjourned at 12:28 p.m.

A tour of the facility and grounds followed the meeting.