

MINUTES OF THE JOINT WORKSHOP

Southwest Florida Water Management District Governing Board and Withlacoochee Regional Water Supply Authority Board of Directors

Wildwood, Florida

April 27, 2009

The Governing Board of the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) and the Withlacoochee Regional Water Supply Authority (WRWSA) Board of Directors met in a workshop session at 2:00 p.m. on April 27, 2009, at the Wildwood Community Center. The following persons were present:

SWFWMD Board Members Present

Todd Pressman, Vice Chair
Jennifer E. Closshey, Secretary
Ronald E. Oakley, Treasurer
Hugh M. Gramling, Member
Sallie A. Parks, Member
H. Paul Senft, Jr., Member
Douglas B. Tharp, Member
Judith C. Whitehead, Member

SWFWMD Board Members Absent

Neil Combee, Chair
Bryan K. Beswick, Member
Patricia M. Glass, Member
Albert G. Joerger, Member
Maritza Rovira-Forino, Member

SWFWMD Staff Members Present

David L. Moore, Executive Director
William S. Bilenky, General Counsel
Lou Kavouras, Deputy Executive Dir.
Richard S. Owen, Deputy Exec. Dir.
Eugene A. Schiller, Deputy Exec. Dir.
Bruce C. Wirth, Deputy Executive Dir.

SWFWMD Recording Secretary

C. LuAnne Stout, Admin. Coordinator

WRWSA Board Members Present

Dennis Damato, Citrus County Commissioner,
WRWSA Chair
Richard Hoffman, Sumter County Commissioner,
WRWSA Vice Chair
Barbara Fitos, Marion County Commissioner,
WRWSA Treasurer
Randy Mask, Sumter County Commissioner
Stan McClain, Marion County Commissioner
Rose Rocco, Hernando County Commissioner
Winn Webb, Citrus County Commissioner

WRWSA Board Members Absent

Gary Bartell, Citrus County Commissioner
James Adkins, Hernando County Commissioner
John Druzbeck, Hernando County Commissioner
Jeff Stabins, Hernando County Commissioner
Mike Amsden, Marion County Commissioner
Christine Dobkowski, Belleview City Commissioner
Joe Bernardini, Brooksville City Councilman
Dale Swain, Bushnell City Councilman
Phillip Price, Crystal River Councilman
Kent Quinn, Ocala City Councilman
Daniel Owen, Ocala City Councilman

WRWSA Staff/Consultants Present

Jack Sullivan, Executive Director
Pete Hubbell, Water Resource Associates

A list of others present who signed the attendance roster is filed in the permanent records of the District, and copies of the slide presentations are available upon request.

Welcome and Introductions

SWFWMD Vice Chair Pressman called the workshop to order and welcomed the attendees. He then led the Pledge of Allegiance. He noted that the SWFWMD Chairman Combee had intended to be here but was unable at the last minute. He thanked his fellow Governing Board members for attending the workshop.

SWFWMD Vice Chairman Pressman said that, during his time on the Board, he has seen the role of water supply authorities grow in regard to the regional concept and municipalities coordinating efforts to pool resources. The result of that type of organization has allowed significant and positive

operational elements that are working. As the WRWSA is working and moving forward, the same results and success will be achieved.

Vice Chairman Pressman thanked Mr. Tharp for his representation of this part of Florida and his assistance in coordinating The Villages tour earlier today. He then requested each person introduce themselves and state which Board represented and any other affiliations.

WRWSA Chair Damato said he has had the privilege of touring The Villages twice. It is encouraging to see their water conservation efforts. Mr. Moore said that, when the SWFWMD evaluated The Villages' water use permit several years ago, their average use then was 14 million gallons per day (mgd) and now it is about 10 mgd which is an admirable achievement in light of their expanding population.

Drought Update - Water Shortage Restrictions Overview

Mr. Owen provided an update on current drought conditions and reviewed water shortage restrictions by county. He noted that, at last month's Governing Board meeting, the concept of performance measures for the Tampa Bay area's water shortage orders was discussed. Compliance with the applicable water use permit withdrawal limits are overall goals stated in the District's Water Shortage Plan. Mr. Owen reviewed the four phases for water conservation measures.

Mr. Owen said state law allows two water management districts to enter into an interagency agreement when a project or local government straddles their boundaries, and that agreement allows one agency to delegate responsibilities to the other. There has been an interagency agreement in effect for unincorporated Marion County to provide consistent lawn and landscape irrigation schedules, per the County's request, since February 2008. As originally designed, both sides of the county could follow St. John Rivers Water Management District (SJRWMD) year-round (non-drought) schedule. However, since SWFWMD had a water shortage order in effect, both sides needed to follow the order instead.

Minimum Flows and Levels (MFLs) Schedule and Status

Mr. Wirth noted that Section 373.042, Florida Statutes, states the minimum flow for a given watercourse shall be the limit at which further withdrawals would be significantly harmful to the water resources or ecology of the area; and, the minimum water level shall be the level of groundwater in an aquifer and the level of surface water at which further withdrawals would be significantly harmful to the water resources of the area. Mr. Wirth provided an update on the current MFLs priority schedule for the region through 2011, MFLs already adopted by county, and springshed systems.

Mr. Moore said consistency in approach is important. Both SWFWMD and SJRWMD are doing independent analyses of Silver Springs and Rainbow Springs and then both staffs will address their findings.

WRWSA Transition Status and Activities Since Last Workshop in March 2008

Mr. Sullivan reviewed the WRWSA's transition since the workshop a year ago. For new Board members, he provided a brief orientation of the WRWSA's formation, representation, funding and expenditures. As an interim measure, the WRWSA now occupies space at the SWFWMD's headquarters in Brooksville with administrative and technical support provided by the SWFWMD.

Mr. Sullivan noted that Marion County has joined the WRWSA, bringing the number of Board members to 18. The WRWSA is currently working with Marion County to finish incorporating the County into its Master Plan, working with SWFWMD and SJRWMD staff to resolve boundary issues in Marion County relevant to the Water Supply Plan, making presentations to local governments to obtain input on how to structure transition to alternative water supplies over time, and working toward completion of project feasibility studies and project prioritization for presentation to the WRWSA Board by the end of 2009.

In response to Ms. Whitehead's question, Mr. Sullivan said that the WRWSA uses grants to partner with the counties to support water conservation coordinators.

Regulatory and Water Resource Coordination (SWFWMD and SJRWMD)

Mr. Moore reiterated that the five water management districts (WMDs) have been working for years to achieve consistency in coordinating efforts associated with boundary issues. He noted that there are structural and organizational differences with the five WMDs. The SWFWMD has basin boards that use the cooperative funding program to partner with local governments. About three years ago, boundary issues in central Florida were addressed by the creation of the Central Florida Coordination Area to achieve consistency on as many issues as possible. A rule is being developed and a planning approach is moving forward. The long-range planning effort is working to resolve as many differences as possible and there are more similarities than differences. Everyone recognizes the need for conservation, and demand projections show the need to develop alternative water supplies at some point in the future. Once there are resolutions, staff will provide an update to the WRWSA Board.

WRWSA Water Supply Plan and Regional Framework for Future Water Supply Development

Mr. Sullivan introduced the WRWSA's consultant, Mr. Hubbell, principal with Water Resource Associates. He reviewed the phases of the WRWSA Master Regional Water Supply Planning & Implementation Program:

- Phase I – WRWSA 2005 Master Regional Water Supply Plan Update – Identify Water Demands & Projects (Completed)
- Phase II – Feasibility Analysis and Prioritization of Proposed Water Supply Projects, Reclaimed Water Projects and Water Conservation Programs within the WRWSA (Underway)
- Phase III – Detailed Design of Selected Water Supply, Reclaimed Water and Water Conservation Projects within the WRWSA
- Phases IV-V – Construction and/or Implementation of Recommended Projects
- Phase VI - Update of WRWSA Regional Water Supply Plan (every five years)
- Phase VII - Northern District Modeling & Technical Support for Local Communities (more detailed groundwater modeling; analyze impacts of MFLs on water supply facilities)
- Marion County rejoined Authority (9/8/08); revising Phases I and II to incorporate Marion County into Master Plan (Underway)

Mr. Hubbell reviewed the water supply development challenges including overcoming the mindset of unlimited groundwater supplies; establishing MFLs within the region; increasing projected water demand in all use categories; addressing high per capita water usage; competition between communities for limited groundwater; limited development of water utilities within the region; distance between water utilities; near-term alternative water supply development potential limited; and differences in SWFWMD and SJRWMD's perspectives on water supply availability, planning and development. Challenges for water demands include increases in all water use categories, high per capita numbers when compared to SWFWMD's goals, water conservation programs are a relatively recent priority in the region, high potential for more beneficial reuse systems, utility service areas are spatially widely distributed, currently no regional interconnects or systems exist, and high projected rate of domestic self-supply demand. Challenges for groundwater include groundwater will not meet some existing and most future water supply needs, development of groundwater is highly dependent on MFLs, springsheds cover a large percentage of the region, more costly development (dispersed wells/transmission), regionally developed groundwater needed sooner than anticipated, SWFWMD and SJRWMD's differing perspectives on availability, and alternative water supply requirements on most water use permits issued.

Mr. Hubbell said the WRWSA's goal regarding boundary issues is a consistent approach for water supply planning, allocation and development within Marion County and counties that border the WRWSA. Challenges include different groundwater modeling utilized, interpretation of existing and potential resource impacts, perspectives on remaining groundwater availability, emphasis on conservation and reuse, water shortage and year-round water conservation, per capita water use

determination and District goals, existing and future water demand projections, differences on water allocation strategies, reliance on alternative water supplies (when/how much), MFLs development, and interdistrict water supply opportunities.

Mr. Hubbell said continuing and future work efforts include incorporating Marion County into Regional Water Supply Plan by 2009; establishing WRWSA's regional framework, assisting local governments in developing water conservation and reuse projects within each county to extend use of groundwater; coordinating and developing dispersed groundwater sources to assist with near term problems in west Hernando County and northeast Sumter County (short-term); and facilitating issues for use of the surface and desalinated water as alternative water sources (mid-term and long-term).

In response to Mr. Senft's question, Mr. Hubbell said The Villages is using the Lower Floridan Aquifer and the City of Wildwood is investigating use of the Aquifer. He said a proposed wellfield is being considered to meet future demand projections in the area but it may not be needed. Mr. Sullivan noted that work is being done to determine the availability of the Lower Floridan Aquifer in the region.

Vice Chairman Pressman said the goal of 150 gallons per day (gpd) per capita seems high compared with Tampa Bay Water's per capita of 100 gpd and Hillsborough County's of 90 gpd. Mr. Hubbell said the SWFWMD set the 150 gpd requirement. He said some communities are higher and there should be reductions once water conservation and reclaimed water projects are in place. Mr. Moore said there is significant ground water in this region and per capita reductions further extend the availability of ground water. He noted that The Villages' permit includes monitoring for environmental impacts to determine if alternative water supplies will be needed. Mr. Hubbell said the SWFWMD's emphasis has been future development of water supplies on a regional basis.

Mr. Sullivan said the WRWSA has developed a concept called "Regional Framework." Systems should ultimately be interconnected to maximize use of remaining dispersed groundwater sources and provide backup for distribution and/or emergencies throughout the system. Systems should provide water supply from diverse sources to ensure sustainability (groundwater, surface water and desalination). WRWSA's framework for future water supply development assumptions are:

- (1) Groundwater is the preferred water supply source and should be maximized throughout the region;
- (2) Groundwater is still available in many areas within the region and can be effectively developed by local governments and the WRWSA;
- (3) Regional water supply development will be needed and logically take place in short-term (10-20 years), mid-term (15-30 years) and long-term (25-50 years) increments; and
- (4) Both centralized and decentralized water supply systems should be developed with the thought of interconnection of systems in the future to create a water system that can accept surface and desalinated water (alternative water supplies).

Mr. Sullivan noted that, unlike areas to the south, most of the local water supply systems are not well-established or extensive. There is still groundwater available in the Withlacoochee region if developed properly. The Withlacoochee region has an opportunity to make the transition to a regional system and incorporate diverse water sources in a deliberate manner without being in a crisis mode. To encourage regional water supply development, the following needs to occur:

- (1) Change policy in SWFWMD's cooperative funding to allow funding for groundwater-related projects. For example, financial assistance in developing specific wellfields for the WRWSA (e.g., Sumter and Citrus counties) that will be part of the regional framework; financial assistance in interconnecting the water supply facilities to become part of the regional framework.
- (2) Longer term permits (e.g., 20 years versus 6 years) for local utilities that agree to include their water supply facilities as part of the regional framework system.
- (3) Potential land acquisition and/or use of District land for water supply projects.

- (4) SWFWMD to work with the WRWSA to promote use of the Regional Master Plan in prioritizing local cooperative funding projects.
- (5) Utilize SWFWMD regulatory program to further direct the regional framework.

In summary, Mr. Sullivan said the WRWSA will continue working with SWFWMD and SJRWMD staffs to resolve boundary issues in Marion and Sumter counties, complete work on integration of Marion County into Plan by mid-2009, finalize planning program and project prioritization by end of 2009, continue work with local governments on formulating the "Regional Framework" concept, and work with SWFWMD staff to identify needs of the WRWSA and incentives that will promote regionalization.

Open Discussion

Vice Chairman Pressman opened the floor to discussion. He said that one element that does not appear emphasized is conservation efforts. Mr. Sullivan said the conservation message needs to be promoted. He said the WRWSA supports water conservation coordinators and is developing a cooperative funding project to encourage conservation in the region. Vice Chairman Pressman said water conservation efforts are a phenomenal source of savings, and he would like to see it have a higher priority. Mr. Sullivan said he agrees and progress is being made for the WRWSA to focus more on conservation.

Ms. Fitos said that Hernando County has a tremendous conservation program and the difference it has made is measurable. She said The Villages promotes its conservation and that is a significant example of great messaging to its residents. Ms. Fitos said the education level for conservation and how developers apply it to building the communities will help promote the message. Mr. Sullivan said Hernando County's program has a very well developed water conservation program and the others are showing progress. He said Hernando County has a water conservation coordinator and this concept is being expanded to the other counties. He noted the counties are in the lead role, not the WRWSA.

In response to Mr. Senff's inquiry about interconnecting, Mr. Hubbell said, in reference to Marion County, the issue of interconnecting is whether it makes sense to take water from the western side (SWFWMD) of the county to the eastern side (SJRWMD)—crossing boundaries. He said this is one of the boundary issues and should there be restriction of inter-district transfer of water within a particular county to support its needs. Mr. Moore said that there has been recent legislation so that water transfers within the county do not have the same difficulties as taking from another county.

Ms. Closshey said that last year regionalism was the major topic for discussion and she is pleased to see it emphasized. She asked Mr. Hubbell to review the master plan's timetable when the District will receive requests for funding and project timelines. Mr. Hubbell said the incorporation of Marion County will be early this summer to identify future demand areas. He said the projects will be categorized by short-, mid- or long-term by the end of 2009. He said the "Regional Framework" projects are so that all scenarios are considered. In response to Ms. Closshey's question, Mr. Sullivan said this information will be presented in the next month or two to the counties and cities for their endorsement. He said then Phase II planning will be complete and prioritization of the projects will begin. In response to Ms. Closshey's inquiry about funding, Mr. Sullivan said the WRWSA governance documents will need revision because they only deal with the organization and not the regional framework.

Ms. Parks said that she knows this is not easy going to the local governments, but they need to be well informed and this is a joint effort. She requested that Ms. Closshey's questions be answered, and she agreed with Vice Chairman Pressman that conservation needs more emphasis which is an easy and cheap effort. Mr. Sullivan said ground water needs to be extended, and it can be extended further with conservation while alternative water supplies are investigated. He said he will meet with Tampa Bay Water and Peace River/Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority staffs to discuss governance issues. Ms. Closshey said she encourages him to meet with them which will help promote unity with the total regional master plan instead of project by project. She said the SWFWMD's legal department may be able to outline essential components for funding projects.

Ms. Fitos commented that she wholeheartedly concurs with conservation but asking individuals within communities to lower their consumption comes with a credibility issue. She said it is an education opportunity on all of our parts—whether it's the WRWSA, SWFWMD or local governments. She said the public sees the continuing issuance of permits for large sub-regional water use permits for The Villages, City of Ocala, etc., but the public also sees the controversial bottled water permits be approved which are systemic relative to how the law is written. Ms. Fitos said the individual homeowner says why do I have to lower my consumption when those massive consumptive use permits are being issued. She said it becomes a credibility issue. She said Marion County is participating with Florida's Eden (30 counties) by adopting Cynthia Barnett's book "Mirage" as their one book, one region read. Ms. Fitos said she could think of no better way of using that type of vehicle to bring it down to the public's level to explain the history of water in Florida. She said it also is a hopeful book since it discusses what we as individuals within our communities can do to conserve. She said we need to educate the public that our organizations are trying to accomplish. Ms. Fitos said conservation is the key way to extend the groundwater supplies. She reiterated it becomes an education and credibility component we must all embrace in order to let our citizens understand the importance of this and why we are asking them to buy into it. She said any organization loses their credibility unless it can be explained and shown why it is needed in a cohesive way.

Ms. Rocco said most counties are seeing that regional planning is necessary. She said cooperative funding is an important factor and it fills everyone's need without one person taking on the full cost. She said that, although this is a concept, counties want to know cost specifics. Ms. Rocco said the educational process is important so the more information provided and the more it can be simplified for our constituents the better. She voiced her agreement that a conservation effort at this point is the most cost-effective way to move forward.

The next proposed joint workshop is tentatively scheduled for April 26, 2010.

Vice Chairman Pressman thanked the City of Wildwood for use of its facility.

Adjournment

Vice Chair Pressman adjourned the workshop at 4:01 p.m.