

MEETING MINUTES

Southwest Florida Water Management District Basin Board Education Committee

The Basin Board Education Committee (BBEC) of the Southwest Florida Water Management District met at 9:30 a.m. on July 7, 2009, at the District's Tampa Service Office.

BBEC Members Present

Maritza Rovira-Forino, Chair
Mac Carraway, Vice Chair, Manasota
Janey Baldwin, Withlacoochee River
Pat Crisman, Peace River
Devon Higginbotham, Hillsborough River
Elaine Perry, Coastal Rivers
Chet Renfro, Pinellas-Anclote River
Fred Trippensee, Peace River

Staff Members

Lou Kavouras
Michael Molligan
Beth Putnam
Robyn Felix
Sylvia Durell
Susan Douglas
Amy Harroun
Stephanie Cardona

Recording Secretary

Toi Basso

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

Call to Order

BBEC Chair Maritza Rovira-Forino called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. and acknowledged a quorum was present.

Approve BBEC Meeting Minutes

Chair Rovira-Forino presented for approval the minutes from the Joint BBEC/BBLRC meeting of March 16, 2009. Following consideration, **Pat Crisman moved, seconded by Mac Carraway, to approve as presented the BBEC minutes. Motion carried unanimously.**

Election of Vice Chair

Cheryl Johnson and Mac Carraway were nominated for the position. Mr. Carraway declined his nomination. **Janey Baldwin moved, seconded by Mac Carraway, that Cheryl Johnson become Vice Chair of the BBEC. Motion carried unanimously**

Report of Committee Chair

Chair Rovira-Forino reported the following:

- The District's Water Program for Restaurant Outreach (Water PRO) celebrated its one-year anniversary on May 15 by signing up the 200th restaurant. On June 29, the District distributed children's activity kits to participating restaurants within Hillsborough County. These kits were created through a partnership with Hillsborough County and City of Tampa utilities. Each kit has a water conservation pledge card attached that will be mailed back to the District to measure the program's effectiveness.
- The youth education staff recently attended the national Project WET Coordinators Conference in Kissimmee and took part in development of new activities for the program. Staff also conducted a Project WET (Water Education for Teachers) facilitator training on June 17 at Nature's Classroom in Hillsborough County. Nineteen facilitators were trained who will be used to train teachers for the District.

- Water conservation signage created by the District is being displayed at the Tampa International and St. Petersburg/Clearwater International airports. Mr. Carraway offered to contact a Sarasota–Bradenton International Airport representative about placing signs at their airport. Ms. Kavouras suggested District staff send pictures of the signage to Mr. Carraway to present to his contact.
- Chair Rovira-Forino suggested the District develop a water conservation recognition program for golf courses that recognizes those golf courses who are already “doing the right thing” by using reclaimed water. She would like staff to develop signage or an award for golf courses to display, which would inform the public of the course’s water conservation efforts. She explained that much of the general public is unaware that golf courses use reclaimed water, creating the impression that golf courses are exempt from watering restrictions. By creating a way to provide recognition, she hopes all golf courses will be encouraged to use reclaimed water. Ms. Kavouras suggested presenting the information to the Green Advisory Committee for their input.

Fiscal Year 2010 Meeting Dates

The following dates have been approved for FY2010 BBEC meetings:

- Wednesday, November 4, 2009
- Wednesday, March 3, 2010
- Wednesday, July 14, 2010

Florida Water StarSM Gold

Sylvia Durell, Florida Water Star Gold project manager, gave an update on the incentive program for builders who incorporate indoor and outdoor water conservation practices in their model homes. The update covered progress that has been made, a list of builders who have signed contracts and future audiences for the indoor and outdoor water conservation program. Potential certification of up to 140 homes to be built by the Florida Home Partnership, Inc., was highlighted. These "affordable" homes will be built in Wimauma and Dade City for first-time homebuyers who fit within a limited income level and are willing to contribute 600 hours of "sweat equity" to the building of their own home and the homes of others in the program.

Media Messaging Research Overview

Beth Putnam, communications manager, provided results of the District’s FY2009 spring media messaging campaign that focused on drought, watering restrictions and conservation during April and May. The presentation focused on results of a four-part comprehensive research plan that helped staff evaluate the campaign and provided information for planning future campaigns. Surveys were conducted before and after the campaign to measure effectiveness. Extensive media relations and outreach work done by the District and local governments before, during and after the media messaging campaign are reflected in the survey results as well. Key findings include:

- A 69% increase in the number of respondents identifying current conditions of water resources as “in a drought.”
- A 36% increase in the number of respondents who correctly stated “we are in a three-year drought.”
- A 44% decrease in the number of respondents who said they did not live in an area with watering restrictions.
- On the whole, those who were exposed to District messages were more likely to report knowledge, attitudes and behavior likely to conserve water and support District actions.
- Insights from the results are being used to develop the FY2010 spring campaign, which will focus on skipping a week of irrigation.

Media Relations and the Drought

Robyn Felix, media relations manager, presented the proactive steps the District has taken to reach out to the news media during the drought. Ms. Felix discussed how the District distributes news releases, pitches positive stories to reporters, conducts annual newspaper editorial board meetings, works closely with TV meteorologists and participates in television programs to get the word out about the drought. As a result, District staff has generated more than 2,260 newspaper, TV and radio stories about the drought.

Innovations in Communication — Social Media

Michael Molligan, communications director, discussed the District's review of the communications potential of social media, which includes tools such as blogs, wikis, podcasts and member communities (Facebook, MySpace, etc.). A multi-departmental social media team was created to explore the benefits and threats posed by new social media tools, including a review of how other governments are using social media. The team is currently focusing on two tools, Facebook and Twitter. A pilot Facebook page was created and is being tested as the costs/benefits are being determined. The District has also created, but not yet used, a Twitter account.

Director's Report

Michael Molligan referenced the new publications produced by the District since the March meeting and upcoming events. He discussed the kickoff of the "Get Outside!" campaign on September 26, 2009, in conjunction with the National Public Lands Day. The campaign is a joint effort between the Land Resources and Communications departments to promote the value of ecosystem protection through recreation on conservation lands. Information on events associated with the campaign will be sent to BBEC members once finalized.

Closing Comments and Adjournment

Chair Rovira-Forino thanked BBEC members and staff for their participation. With no further business or announcements to come before the BBEC, the meeting was adjourned at 11:55 a.m.