

MEETING MINUTES

Southwest Florida Water Management District Basin Board Education Committee

Tampa Service Office

November 4, 2008

The Basin Board Education Committee (BBEC) of the Southwest Florida Water Management District met on November 4, 2008, at the District's Tampa Service Office, Tampa, Florida.

BBEC Members Present

Maritza Rovira-Forino, Chair
Mac Carraway, Vice Chair, Manasota
Renee Benton, Hillsborough River
Patricia Crisman, Peace River
Cheryl Johnson, Alafia River
Patsy Nathe, Withlacoochee River
Elaine Perry, Coastal Rivers

Staff Members

Lou Kavouras
Michael Molligan
Beth Putnam
Robin Grantham
Mary Margaret Hull
Melissa Roe
Virginia Sternberger

Guests

Myriam Springuel, Science and Environment Council
of Sarasota County

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

Chair Maritza Rovira-Forino called the meeting to order at 9:26 a.m. and indicated a quorum was present. Patricia Crisman was acknowledged as the new primary member of the Peace River Basin Board.

Approve BBEC Meeting Minutes

Chair Rovira-Forino presented for approval the minutes from the BBEC meeting of July 10, 2008. Following consideration, **Mac Carraway moved, seconded by Patsy Nathe, to approve as presented the BBEC minutes. Motion carried unanimously.**

Report of Committee Chair

- Chair Rovira-Forino highlighted several of the Communications Department's FY2008 final accomplishments:
 - Nearly 1.3 million brochures and other materials distributed.
 - More than 537,000 students and teachers impacted through grants and other programs.
 - More than 2 million people impacted through public education efforts.
 - Media messaging efforts resulted in 125 million impressions, representing an 8 percent increase from last year.
 - Staff represented the District at special events that drew more than half a million attendees.
 - Water CHAMP expanded, with 66 percent of all rooms in the District participating.
 - Water Program for Restaurant Outreach (PRO) launched.
 - Staff implemented the Drought Outreach Communications Plan to get the word out about the drought to meteorologists, local governments, editorial boards and 2,259 homeowners associations throughout the District.

- Surveys and focus groups conducted on a variety of topics, including irrigation and fertilizer use. The research results are being used to design more effective programs.
- Chair Rovira-Forino announced that Susan Douglas has been selected to coordinate the Florida Water Starsm — Gold Certification (FWSG) program for the District. FWSG is a new-home certification program that provides incentives to builders and developers who meet criteria in indoor and outdoor water efficiency and best management practices in landscapes. The program originated in the St. Johns River Water Management District and Ms. Douglas was involved in implementing and promoting the program there. The program is being funded in the Southwest Florida Water Management District for the first time in FY2009. Ms. Douglas will work out of the Brooksville office, but she will be traveling extensively throughout the District promoting the program and meeting with certifiers and builders.
- There was a 52 percent increase in the number of Youth Education Splash! mini-grants awarded this year, with 209 receiving more than \$413,000. The increase in requests is attributed to enhanced promotion of the grants and tighter school district budgets.

Partner Spotlight — Sarasota Science and Environment Council

Virginia Sternberger discussed the importance of partnerships to the District's education efforts. Not only do partners provide us with new audiences and high profile venues to deliver stronger, more consistent messages, they also leverage funds to expand project potential. Ms. Sternberger introduced Myriam Springuel, executive director of the Science and Environment Council (SEC) of Sarasota County, who provided a presentation on the history and accomplishments of the organization. The SEC is a coalition of 20 science, environmental and cultural organizations who work together to enhance public awareness about sustainable and conservation practices based on science. Their membership has a potential audience exceeding 300,000 people.

Water CHAMP Audit

Robin Grantham presented the results of a Districtwide study confirming the Water Conservation Hotel and Motel Program's (Water CHAMP) effectiveness at maintaining water savings. The five-year water audit was conducted in cooperation with 16 utility companies to determine the current level of water savings. The audit compared water consumption of 115 Water CHAMP participants before the program's implementation in 2002 to water use in 2007. The Districtwide audit showed that participants saved an average 17 gallons of water per occupied room per day. Based on these audit findings, the cost benefit for the project, using the total cost amortized over five years, is \$0.47 per thousand gallons of water.

Community Education Grants

Ms. Sternberger provided a brief history of the Community Education Grant program, stating that during the 12-year program the District has funded 415 projects educating 4 million people. She distributed the FY2009 Community Education Grants and recommendations to BBEC members for review. BBEC members will review applications for their respective basins and final decisions will be published in February Basin Board packets. Projects are implemented between March 1 and June 30. Of the 74 applications submitted this year, 32 grants were recommended for a total of \$127,000.

Partners In Watershed Education Awards/Conference

Beth Putnam presented information about the District's Partners In Watershed Education Conference and Awards Luncheon planned for November 19 in Tampa. Twenty-eight partners representing "the best of the best" were selected for their efforts in watershed protection and conservation. Several educational sessions are planned to provide participants with skill building

in community-based social marketing techniques such as conducting focus groups, improving program design, evaluating effectiveness, pretesting materials and others. BBEC members were encouraged to attend the conference and luncheon.

Director's Report

Michael Molligan reviewed the following:

- Two Communications Department positions are currently being advertised that will help fill District needs. One position will assist with web site development. As the District's web site grows in importance as a communications tool, more resources are being devoted to its maintenance and enhancement. The other department position will work with District staff to enhance consistent messages through the creation of strategic communications plans.
- Fall media campaign resulted in a reach and frequency of 76/39, which translates to three-fourths of the market audience being exposed to the messages 39 times. The upcoming dry season media messaging campaign will promote water conservation, Florida-friendly landscaping and irrigation.
- The District continues to provide updated drought information to homeowners associations, and guest columns will appear in local newspapers. Monthly meetings with editorial boards are scheduled beginning in January.
- The serious drought continues causing low flows in the Hillsborough and Alafia rivers, resulting in predictions that the reservoir could be dry by mid-May. The Governing Board issued Phase 3 water restrictions that discontinue hand watering and limit micro-irrigation. The Board is also considering encouraging delays in landscaping renovations.

Closing Comments and Adjournment

With no further business or announcements to come before the BBEC, the meeting was adjourned at 11:20 a.m. The next BBEC meeting will be a joint meeting with the Basin Board Land Resources Committee on Monday, March 16, at 9:30 a.m. in the Polk's Nature Discovery Center at the Circle B Bar Reserve in Lakeland.