

**APPROVED  
MEETING SUMMARY**

**Environmental Advisory Committee  
Southwest Florida Water Management District  
September 14, 2009**

The Environmental Advisory Committee of the Southwest Florida Water Management District convened for a regular meeting at 1:00 p.m., September 14, 2009, at the Tampa Service Office, 7601 Highway 301 North, Tampa, Florida.

**Committee Members Present**

Gregory Nowaski, Chair, Control Growth Now, Inc.  
Mark Alderson, Sarasota Bay NEP  
Dwayne Carlton, Ocala/Marion County COC  
Holly Greening, Tampa Bay Estuary Program  
Eileen Hart, Keystone Civic Association  
Dave Kandz, St. Petersburg Audubon Society  
Carl Keeler, Izaak Walton League  
Betsy Roberts, Env. Confederation of SW FL  
Mike Burton, Manatee County COC  
Bob Upcavage, Suncoast Native Plant Society  
Alton Cheatham, Charlotte County COC  
Mitch Almon, Florida Trail Assoc. Suncoast

**Guest Speaker**

Michael Kelly, Director  
Hillsborough County Real Estate Department

**Staff Members Present**

Lou Kavouras, Facilitator  
Lois Sorensen  
Marty Kelly  
Mike Heyl  
Clark Hull

**Recording Secretary**

Joanne McClellan

**Committee Members Absent**

Dana West – Greater Sarasota COC  
Sharon Terrill-Elfers – Sierra Club Tampa Bay  
Alan Grubman–Save the Homosassa River Alliance  
Keith Renish – Heartland Environmental  
Dave Bulloch – American Littoral Society  
Glenn Compton – Manasota 88  
Wade Matthews – Sarasota Audubon Society

**Governing Board Member**

None

Approved minutes from previous meetings can be found on the District's Web site at ([www.WaterMatters.org](http://www.WaterMatters.org)).

*The numbers preceding the items below correspond with the order of presentation.*

**1. Call to Order and Introductions**

Chair Greg Nowaski called the meeting to order at 1:07 p.m. He welcomed members, staff, and interested persons.

**2. Additions and Deletions to the Agenda**

Lou Kavouras, Deputy Executive Director, Outreach, Planning and Board Services, stated a change to Item 8. Michael Kelly, Director of the Hillsborough County Real Estate, is to present the *Cone Ranch Update* for Steve Blaschka, the District's Land Acquisition Manager.

**3. Approval of Previous Meeting Summary**

A motion was made and seconded to approve the June 8, 2009 meeting summary as presented. Motion carried unanimously. Chair Nowaski questioned non-participation of members. Lou Kavouras explained that the Board Policy states that if there are three unexcused absences, membership is forfeited. Ms. Kavouras suggested letters be sent to the members asking for active representation .

**4. Hydrologic Conditions/Drought Update and Water Shortage Restriction**

Lois Sorensen, Demand Management Coordinator, started this item with a brief review of the process for water shortage decisions made by the Governing Board. Ms. Sorensen then reviewed current conditions. Much of the region is still dealing with impacts of a three-year to four-year rainfall deficit. Looking at 12-month and 36-month rainfall data, some areas have experienced declines since last month. Groundwater levels have had some improvement over the summer, but declines have begun earlier than normal. Lakes never

even reached the low end of the normal range of fluctuation. River flows have had some improvement over the summer, returns to the normal range happened late in the summer and flows may have already peaked for the season. Reservoir levels have come up significantly. The rainfall forecast shows a chance for above normal conditions; however, if the El Nino weather pattern has already peaked, this may not happen. Ms. Sorensen then discussed key provisions of the current Water Shortage Orders, Modified II and Modified III restrictions. On September 29, the Governing Board will decide whether to keep these restrictions or let them expire. Staff will also be recommending rulemaking to incorporate "lessons learned" from the current drought into the District's Water Shortage Plan. Eileen Hart suggested that the current restrictions should be kept in place to help water levels get above-normal to counteract how below-normal conditions impacted wetlands and the aquifer, to provide long-term environmental protection. Lou Kavouras stated that when conditions are such that current restrictions can be lifted, year-round water conservation measures will go back into effect. Holly Greening moved and Eileen Hart seconded a motion to recommend the Governing Board retain Modified Phase III restrictions until all resources are showing sustainable recovery. The motion passed unanimously.

**5. Rulemaking Update**

Lou Kavouras informed the Committee of the following items: The Governing Board is initiating rulemaking to start working on modifications to the water shortage rule; in August the Governing Board adopted the year-round water conservation measures and there is consistency with the other water management districts; in September the Governing Board will adopt amendments to the Enhanced Water Conservation rule; the Governing Board approved the Lake Hancock Reservation to reserve quantities to meet minimum flows on the Upper Peace River; and, the Governing Board will be asked to repeal the Xeriscape Incentive rule due to the passage of Senate Bill 2080 that removes the need for this rule.

**6. Minimum Flows & Levels (MFL) Update**

Dr. Marty Kelly, Minimum Flows & Levels Program Manager, explained that the District is legislatively mandated in Florida Statutes, section 373,042 to do Minimum Flows and Levels and the program is funded through ad valorem taxes. All data reports outlining proposed minimum flows or levels are posted on the Documents and Publications page of the District Web Site at: [watermatters.org](http://watermatters.org). The focus of the presentation was on springs and estuaries. Weeki Wachee Watershed and Springshed was discussed with regard to a unique aspect of manatees and the thermal modeling done by staff to assure the manatees' need for a thermal refuge when looking at spring flows and the salinity levels in the estuary area. Dr. Kelly discussed Gum Springs and how a flow diversion project over time will determine impacts. Historic information was given regarding Dona Bay and Cow Pen Slough. In the MFL it was proposed to keep historical flows, but take the flows from Cow Pen Slough and allow a considerable amount of available water to be diverted away from Dona Bay to keep salinity levels more consistent on Dona Bay. The Anclote River System begins as a fresh water and ends as an estuary. The Anclote is impacted by wellfields. Depending on the time of the year, the amount of water that can be pumped was determined to help in reducing impacts to the river. Background of the Lower Hillsborough River Recovery Strategy Implementation was discussed as well as a number of strategies proposed for the City of Tampa and the District to move flows along portions of the Hillsborough River, the Blue Sink Project, Morris Bridge Sink, and transfers from the Tampa Bypass Canal. The committee was informed that the MFL Priority List Update will be going to the Governing Board in September 2009, and in October the Governing Board will be given a MFL Report for the Lower Myakka River, followed by a MFL report for Chassahowitzka River and Springs in January 2010.

In response to a question concerning the utilization of Howard F. Curren treated wastewater to augment the Hillsborough River, Lou Kavouras suggested asking Sandra Anderson from the City of Tampa to give a presentation of the City's Reclaimed Water Master Plan.

**7. Springs Protection Ordinances**

Dwayne Carlton, EAC Representative from Ocala/Marion County Chamber of Commerce, provided background regarding Marion County and their river and springs system. Mr. Carlton explained that over time, because of the geology and the exposure of the Floridan Aquifer to the surface in the area which results in a high recharge area and due to a growing population, the county has experienced water quality degradation. In response to this issue, Marion County adopted an ordinance, along with a multi-pronged effort to reduce nutrient runoff to surface waters and leaching into ground water through various policies, such as stormwater management, water conservation conversion from septic systems to central sewage treatment,

public education and development standards set in the Marion County Land Development Regulations. Fertilizer was identified as the cause of the degradation. Highlights from Marion County's document entitled *Florida-friendly Fertilizer Use on Urban Landscapes* were explained, along with *Landscape Standards and Tree Preservation*, and the creation of a *Springs Protection Overlay Zone* to preserve the quantity and protect the quality of the Floridan Aquifer underlying Marion County and to protect the environmental, recreational, and economic values of Silver Springs and Rainbow Springs.

**9. Cone Ranch Update**

Eric Sutton, Director of Land Resources, introduced Mike Kelly, Director of the Hillsborough County Real Estate Department, who provided information concerning a permanent preservation plan for Cone Ranch. Mr. Sutton explained the District role is that of support in this process. The Florida Conservation and Environmental Group, LLC (FCEG) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) presented a conceptual proposal to the Hillsborough Board of County Commissions (BOCC) to preserve Cone Ranch. In response the BOCC created the Cone Ranch Environmental Advisory Panel (CAP) to consider this proposal and to develop a recommendation for preserving Cone Ranch. CAP is supported by a technical resource group. FCEG created a ground breaking concept of selling a government owned piece of land to private conservation entities and, if successful, can be used as a model transaction to partner the private sector with government to further environmental preservation and protection. TNC is providing guidance and expertise as a technical resource to the proposal. FCEG and TNC are working with environmental experts to create a perpetual, ironclad conservation easement to be placed on all of Cone Ranch. The property will then be transferred or sold to a specially created not-for-profit Cone Ranch Land Trust (CRLT) for disposal to private conservation buyers or other qualified parties who will be permanently bound by the conservation easement running with the land. The committee was informed of all details of the preservation plan. The timetable for the plan is for tentative approval from the CAP and BOCC on October 15, 2009, the launch of formal marketing efforts for Cone Ranch on November 1, 2009, with a transfer of Cone Ranch to the land trust on January 1, 2010, then a continuing process through September 30, 2010 for final closings of conservation buyers.

**10. Net Improvement Policy for Stormwater**

Clark Hull, ERP Program Director, stated that stormwater discharges to receiving waters not meeting water quality standards are required to cause net improvement of the receiving water body for those parameters that do not meeting standards. If water quality standards are not met and the system will contribute to the existing condition, mitigation for water quality impacts can consist of water quality enhancement. Projects considered to contribute to an existing violation are generally those which are located in the same subbasin and drain to the impaired water. This can be rebutted by specific information that the project does not discharge the problem pollutant to the affected water body. Mitigation measures must be implemented that will cause net improvement of the water quality in the receiving water for those parameters which are not meeting standards. Criteria for achieving net improvement were discussed. It was stated that a treatment train can be used to achieve net improvement.

**11. Low Impact Development (LID)**

Clark Hull explained that LID is aimed at managing stormwater runoff close to its source and through natural processes. It was further explained that LID can be further described as "...a land planning and engineering design approach that implements engineered small-scale hydrologic controls to replicate the pre-development hydrologic regime of watersheds through infiltrating, filtering, storing, evaporating, and detaining runoff close to its source (en.wikipedia.org)". Florida is developing a statewide rule that will include LID practices. Some goals of LID are to reduce site filling, preserve native vegetation, reduce and disconnect impervious surfaces, increase infiltration, match pre- and post-development discharge quality and quantity characteristics, and reduce water use. The most effective LID practice in many parts of Florida is stormwater harvesting. Several examples were given for the use of green roofs, pervious pavement, and bio-retention. The most effective places to use LID are redevelopment sites with no additional fill requirements and tidal discharges requiring no attenuation.

**12. Next EAC Meeting**

The next EAC meeting is scheduled for December 7, 2009 at 1:00 p.m. in the District's Tampa Service Office.

**13. Remaining FY2010 EAC Meetings**

The remaining FY2010 EAC meetings are scheduled to begin at 1:00 p.m. at either the Sarasota or Tampa Service Office. The location is indicated after each meeting date: Monday, March 8, 2010 (Tampa); Wednesday, June 16, 2010 (Sarasota); and Monday, September 13, 2010 (Tampa).

**14. Development of Agenda Topics for the December 7, 2009 Meeting**

- City of Tampa Reclaimed Water Master Plan – Sandra Anderson, Reclaimed Water and Continuous Improvement Manager
- FEMA Map Modernization – Gordon McClung
- Hydrologic Conditions and Water Shortage Plan Update – Lois Sorensen
- Climate Change
- ASR Update/Arsenic Issue

**15. Announcements and Other Business**

None

**16. Adjournment**

There being no further discussions, the meeting was adjourned at 5:20 p.m.