

**Northern Tampa Bay Phase II Local Technical Peer Review Group (LTPRG)  
Keystone Civic Center, 17926 Gunn Highway, Odessa**

**Meeting 25  
December 1, 2004 - 9:30AM**

## **Summary**

The following were in attendance: **R. Warren Hogg**, Tampa Bay Water; Doug Keesecker, Tampa Bay Water; Chris Shea, Tampa Bay Water; **Annemarie Hammond**, Pasco County; **Andy Smith**, Hillsborough County; Scott Emery, Hillsborough County; **Laura Morris**, Quest Ecology for WRWSA; **Cliff Harrison**, EnHydro for WRWSA; Peter Schreuder, Schreuder, Inc.; **Dave Slonena**, Pinellas County; **Gordon Leslie, Jr.**, Hillsborough County EPC; **Michael Hancock**, SWFWMD; **Ted Rochow**, SWFWMD; Robert Peterson, SWFWMD; B. Terry Johnson, SWFWMD, and **Doug Leeper**, SWFWMD. Names in bold are designated representatives for the LTPRG.

Doug Leeper noted that the minimum and guidance levels for 14 northern Tampa Bay area lakes (Bell, Bird, Green, Moon, Padgett, Parker-Ann in Pasco County, and Charles, Dan, Garden, Jackson, Mound, Platt, Reinheimer and Strawberry in Hillsborough County) approved by the Governing Board in August are currently being reviewed by the Department of State and are expected to be incorporated into District rules by the end of the year. He also noted that staff expected to present proposed minimum levels for 15 other area lakes (Hunters, Lindsey, Mountain, Neff, Spring, and Weekiwachee Prairie-Theresa in Hernando County; Crescent, Horse, Pretty, and Taylor in Hillsborough County; Buddy Clear, Hancock, Middle, and Pasadena in Pasco County) to the Governing Board for adoption later this month. Finally, he noted that several other northern Tampa Bay area lakes (Allen, Harvey, Raleigh, Rogers, Starvation, Virginia and Wimauma in Hillsborough County; Crews, Iola, Jessamine, King, King-East, Linda, Pasco, Pierce, Unnamed #22-Loyce in Pasco County) are scheduled for minimum levels development during the next few years.

Terry Johnson informed the group that the Governing Board approved the Proposed 2005 Minimum Flows and Levels Priority List and Schedule, and that the document has been provided to the Department of Environmental Protection for review.

Michael Hancock gave a presentation that reviewed the various projects under the Northern Tampa Bay Phase II program. The projects are in various stages of completion, and are being performed by the District, Tampa Bay Water, the USGS, and other local governments, agencies, universities, and consultants. The presentation can be found on the Northern Tampa Bay II website. Mr. Hancock explained that data collection and quality, the development of analytical tools, and testing of alternative management techniques have been the focus during the first several years of the program, and that the application of data and tools will become the focus in the next

several years. As seen in the presentation, there are many completed or ongoing projects in the program, aimed at the successful completion of the original goals of the program. Mr. Hancock said that he would like the group to begin more detailed discussions in the coming months on the application of the data and tools to the process of recovery assessment.

Michael Hancock gave a presentation on the results of the October 2004 field test of the latest revisions to the Wetland Assessment Procedure, and on the follow-up discussion by the Wetlands Subcommittee. The Wetlands Subcommittee met on November 29, 2004. The presentations at the subcommittee, and at the LTPRG, can be found in the Northern Tampa Bay II website.

In general, the District staff found significant variability in some of the zonation scores, but, in contrast to the conclusions derived from the May test, the reasons for the variability were much more clear. These reasons for variability and problems with interpretation of the results included:

- 1) General lack of explanations
- 2) Species identification disagreements and difficulties
- 3) Not seeing key species
- 4) Difficulties in estimating percentages
- 5) Difficulties identifying hummocks and shallow areas
- 6) Difficulties in determining how much cover is needed to downgrade zonation
- 7) Apparent weighting of species differently within the same zone classification
- 8) Mistakes in zone assignments
- 9) Miscellaneous quality control problems

Additionally, District staff felt that most of the significant reasons explaining the variability could likely be handled through training and quality control, rather than changes to the methodology. The subcommittee members generally agreed with these conclusions.

District staff felt that stress scores showed a large amount of variability, but, unlike the zonation scores, the reasons for the variability were not as clear. Additionally, many of the reasons identified would require changes to the method. The identified reasons for variability and problems with interpretation of the results included:

- 1) All the problems with the zonation score are carried over to the stress score, and then increased by variability in stress interpretations
- 2) General lack of explanations
- 3) The 1-5 scale may be too refined
- 4) Zonation and Stress scores must be consistent
- 5) There are many different opinions on what stress means
- 6) All inappropriate species must be considered in the stress score

District staff concluded that although there is important information in the stress data provided by the evaluator, much of it is captured in the zonation score, and the information could probably be sufficiently captured in a more qualitative manner. District staff therefore suggested eliminating the stress scoring system, and replacing it

with a more narrative section in the field sheet. This section would likely include check boxes to categorize the amount of stress observed by the evaluator. The wetland subcommittee agreed that this should be considered.

District staff's general recommendations were to move forward with the zonation score method, revising the stress information as explained above, and to continue to discuss the remaining issues with the overall WAP method. Moving forward with the zonation score method would include further discussions on the species list, zonation assignments, and guidance on the zonation decision-making that could be included in training and manuals. The subcommittee agreed.

The goal for completing the remaining work is March 1, 2005, which would provide enough time to bring the method to the March Tampa Bay Water Board for approval. A series of subcommittee meetings will be held between now and March 1 to discuss the remaining topics and finish the new method.

The next regular LTPRG meeting is scheduled for 9:30 AM on February 2, 2005 at the Keystone Civic Center in Odessa.

# **AGENDA**

## **Northern Tampa Bay Phase II Local Technical Peer Review Group**

### **Meeting 25 Keystone Civic Center, 17926 Gunn Highway, Odessa**

**December 1, 2004 - 9:30AM**

1. August meeting follow-up
2. Miscellaneous updates
  - Lake MFL Update
  - Future presentation/field trips
3. Ongoing Project update and Recovery Discussion
4. Results of October WAP Test
5. Issues for Next Meeting – February 2, 2004