

**Northern Tampa Bay Phase II Local Technical Peer Review Group
SWFWMD Tampa Service Office, Hwy 301N, Tampa**

**Meeting 10
January 11, 2002 - 1:30PM**

Summary

The following were in attendance: **Gordon Leslie, Jr.**, Hillsborough County EPC; **Dave Slonena**, Pinellas County; Doug Keesecker, Tampa Bay Water; **R. Warren Hogg**, Tampa Bay Water; Chris Shea, Tampa Bay Water; Mike Coates, Tampa Bay Water; **Ralph Craig**, City of St. Petersburg; **Richard Voakes**, City of St. Petersburg; **Andy Smith**, Hillsborough County; Scott Emery, EHI for Hillsborough County; **Vivienne Handy**, Quest Ecology, Inc. for WRWSA; **Michael Hancock**, SWFWMD; Adam Munson, SWFWMD; **Ted Rochow**, SWFWMD; **Doug Leeper**, SWFWMD; Len Bartos, SWFWMD; John Emery, SWFWMD; and David Carr, SWFWMD. Names in bold are designated representatives for the LTPRG.

Michael Hancock reported that an updated Scope of Work and Progress Report is currently being written, and should be available by mid-February. When finished, the report will be included on the Northern Tampa Bay II website.

Doug Leeper gave a presentation on the comments/questions received from various parties concerning the Category 3 Lake Minimum Level methodology. Mr. Leeper prepared a response for each comment that was received. The comments and SWFWMD responses were included in a Powerpoint presentation and distributed to the LTPRG (the presentation is also attached to the Northern Tampa Bay Phase II website).

For completeness, Mr. Leeper presented SWFWMD responses to comments on legal or policy issues, such as the definition of "best available information", "water resources of the area", "significant harm" and "harm". Mr. Hancock reminded the group that the scope of the LTPRG meetings would be limited to technical discussions, although it is appropriate to note differences in opinion on legal and policy issues that may affect technical analyses. The discussion and debate of non-technical issues must be deferred to other forums, such as Governing Board meetings.

Several issues resulted in lengthy discussions. Mr. Leeper presented that District staff felt that the use of the Reference Lake Water Regime (RLWR) is reasonable, based on the assessment of the District staff, two independent peer reviews, and concurrence of many local experts. David Slonena disagreed, and argued that the current methodology does not adequately account for changes in watershed drainage and

individual characteristics of lakes. Richard Voakes agreed with Mr. Slonena, and added that “flow-through” lakes should be eliminated from the list of reference lakes that were used. Mr. Leeper stated that District staff felt that the analysis was adequate based on best available data, and that the District is currently funding a U.S. Geological Survey project to continue the study of this issue. If future data and assessments call for a change, then the changes in the methodology will be considered then. Mr. Slonena suggested that an average between current and historic lake fluctuations be used as the RLWR. Mr. Leeper argued that because current fluctuations include the effects of pumping, it would not be consistent with Chapter 373 direction to average the two.

On a related issue, Mr. Slonena expressed concern that the RLWR for Big Fish Lake was based on only one reference lake with a limited period of record (Crews Lake). Mr. Slonena suggested that Lake Hancock be considered for use in the RLWR calculation, and that Crews Lake data through as recent as 1985 be used, since the Cross Bar well field had little effect on the surface-water hydrology before that time. Mr. Slonena also expressed concern about the missing period of record in Crews Lake during a period of low rainfall (1970s). Mr. Leeper said that Lake Hancock was not used since it was located in a different hydrogeologic setting. However, both Crews Lake and Lake Hancock do have a similar fluctuation pattern, so its inclusion would not significantly affect the results. He also stated that while there was nothing that could be done about the missing period of record in the Crews Lake water level data, the District would investigate using the Crews Lake data up to 1985.

Mr. Leeper presented an explanation of how the minimum level was determined for Lakes Helen, Ellen, and Barbara. The Critical High Spot & Basin Connectivity Standard was the limiting factor for these lakes.

A discussion on structural considerations and flooding occurred. The District has been checking for low structures that could be affected by increased lake levels, and the subsequent need to adjust the minimum level if needed. Mr. Voakes and Mr. Slonena wondered about impacts to septic tanks if lakes were to reach the proposed minimum levels. Mr. Leeper stated that there is no data base for septic tanks, but the District would inquire during future public meetings with lake residents, and present any possible known effects to the Governing Board.

The control points of several lakes were discussed. There was some disagreement about what should be used at some lakes, but Mr. Leeper felt that the District engineers were confident in the control points chosen. It was agreed that a field meeting would be held on January 17th to visit some of the lakes.

A lengthy discussion on Lake Starvation occurred. Mr. Voakes and Mr. Slonena felt that the elevation of the outlet from Lake Starvation should be used as the high guidance level for the lake, rather than the downstream control point. Mr. Leeper and Mr. Hancock stated that they felt that this would not be justifiable. Mr. Voakes and Mr. Slonena also felt that the effects of upstream land use changes had not been fully assessed. Mr. Voakes stated that he saw decreases in flow from the development

north of Van Dyke Road since the early 1980s. Mr. Hancock said that he did not see clear evidence of decreases in the available water level data that could be attributed to upstream development. He also said that the development to the north was not constructed until the early 1990s.

Mr. Leeper presented the methodology for a revised minimum level at Lake Rogers. Mr. Slonena and Mr. Voakes were concerned that the previously proposed minimum level may cause flooding problems for an access road near the lake. Mr. Leeper offered an alternative that considers the road as a structural concern. The proposed method would lower the High Minimum Level to one foot below the low spot in the road. This would lower the minimum level by over 1.7 feet. Mr. Hancock asked Mr. Voakes if he felt that this new level would address his concern. Mr. Voakes replied that there were other features in the area that he felt would still be adversely affected if the proposed minimum level was achieved, including a bike trail, some piping, and a large oak tree. Mr. Leeper and Mr. Hancock agreed that any such features should be brought to the attention of the Governing Board as they establish minimum levels, but other alternatives may exist to alleviate these concerns other than lowering the minimum level further. Ultimately, how these features will be addressed in setting of minimum levels will be a decision of the Governing Board.

Mr. Hancock gave an update on the Chapter 373 Peer Review Program process (which is included on the Northern Tampa Bay II website). The SWFWMD has reviewed nearly 500 resumes from the SFWMD for possible inclusion in the program. Over 100 resumes from other sources were also reviewed. So far, 498 experts have been assigned to 59 of the 61 categories of expertise that were presented to the LTPRG last year. The District will continue to look for experts to assign to the remaining two categories, and to add to all of the categories. Although 19 categories have 40 or more experts currently assigned (with one category currently having 99 experts), some still have less than 10, which is the goal for each expert category.

Mr. Hancock explained that the process for forming a peer review panel is currently proposed as follows. When peer review is needed, District staff will determine the types of expertise needed, and present the results to the LTPRG. The composition may be adjusted based on comments received. Next, 3-5 experts on the list for each necessary category of expertise will be contacted, to determine the experts interest and availability. The expertise of the peer review candidate will also be confirmed, as well as a check on any conflicts of interest. At least 3 of the interested candidates from each area of expertise will be asked to submit a bid for the job, with the lowest cost expert being chosen. The resulting panel will be presented to the LTPRG, and the review will begin according to Chapter 373. Andy Smith asked if this process would be too time consuming, and Mr. Hancock replied that the District will work on standardizing contracts and procedures to speed up the process for peer review.

Mr. Hancock presented the results of the final inventory of wetlands monitoring stations. The District has been working with Tampa Bay Water to inventory all of the wetlands that are currently being monitored by either agencies. Each wetland has been

assessed for quality of instrumentation, type of wetland, and other attributes. One goal is to make sure each wetland is equipped with a staff gage, one surficial aquifer monitor well in the wetland, and one surficial aquifer monitor well in the adjacent uplands. The assessment resulted in 131 fully instrumented wetlands currently monitored by the District, and 335 wetlands monitored by Tampa Bay Water (each with a varying amount of instrumentation). There are 44 wetlands monitored by both agencies, so the total number currently monitored is 442 wetlands. The most monitored wetland type is cypress isolated (aka, cypress domes), with 191 sites monitored by the two agencies. The District has plans to add about 45 more wetlands in areas of less dense monitoring, and to work with Tampa Bay Water to fully instrument their monitored wetlands. In addition to wetlands, the District monitors about 160 lakes, several streams, and some minor flows. Tampa Bay Water also monitors six streams and 14 lakes.

The next regular LTPRG meeting will be held at 9:30 AM on March 6, 2002. The meeting will take place at the SWFWMD's Tampa Service Office.

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1. October Meeting Follow-up
2. Miscellaneous Updates
 1. Update Scope of Work
3. Category III Lakes MFL discussion (Doug Leeper)
4. Chapter 373 Peer Review update (Michael Hancock)
5. Wetlands data collection network update (Michael Hancock/Ted Rochow)
6. Other issues
7. Issues for the Next Meeting - March 6, 2002 (at the Tampa Service Office)