

**Northern Tampa Bay Phase II Local Technical Peer Review Group
Cypress Creek Well Field Facility**

**Meeting 4
December 6, 2000 - 9:30AM**

Minutes

The following were in attendance: Zhongyan Lin, Hillsborough County EPC; Gordon Leslie, Jr., Hillsborough County EPC; Crystal Clark, Hillsborough County EPC; Dave Slonena, Pinellas County; Rich McLean, Pinellas County; Charles Fletcher, del a Parte and Gilbert; Doug Durbin, BRA for Pinellas County; Shirley Denton, BRA for Pinellas County; Doug Keesecker, Tampa Bay Water; Patty Fesmire, Tampa Bay Water; Chris Shea, Tampa Bay Water; Bob McConnell, Tampa Bay Water; Ralph Craig, City of St. Petersburg; Jeff Vilagos, City of Tampa; Scott Emery, Hillsborough County; Joe Birch, Brellove, Dennis & Assoc. for Hillsborough County; Cliff Harrison, Schreuder, Inc. for WRWSA; Vivienne Handy, Quest Ecology for WRWSA; Mark Barcelo, SWFWMD; Len Bartos, SWFWMD; David Carr, SWFWMD; John Emery, SWFWMD; Michael Hancock, SWFWMD; Clark Hull, SWFWMD; Marty Kelly, SWFWMD; Doug Leeper, SWFWMD; Adam Munson, SWFWMD; John Parker, SWFWMD; Ted Rochow, SWFWMD; Richard Schultz, SWFWMD; and Ken Weber, SWFWMD.

Michael Hancock reminded the group that the NTB II website is continually being updated, and to please visit the site regularly for updates on the program. Mr. Hancock also mentioned that the message board for LTPRG representatives should be up in a couple of weeks.

Mr. Hancock presented a time line of the establishment of the Chapter 373 Peer Review Program. He said that the District plans to finalize the list of required expertise and draft RFQ soon after the first of the year, and to report to the District's Finance and Administration Committee during their January meeting. The District's goal is to release an RFQ sometime in February. Once submissions to the RFQ have been reviewed, the results will be presented to the LTPRG, possibly in April.

Mr. Hancock mentioned that he had not received any comments on the draft list of expertise that was distributed during the November LTPRG meeting, and asked if anyone had any comments at this time. There were no comments.

Doug Leeper updated the group on recent events concerning the development of the Category III Lakes minimum levels methodology. Mr. Leeper said that he and other District staff had presented the same material from the November LTPRG meeting to

interested parties in the Southern Water Use Caution Area. He then discussed the time line for the Category III lakes method, including voluntary scientific peer review. All comments on the material presented in November are needed by December 31, 2000. The District plans to mail out a methodology document by mid-January 2001, with copies going to the voluntary peer review panel and interested parties. The response from the peer review panel is expected by the end of February, with District staff recommendations for minimum levels presented to the SWFWMD Governing Board at the March Governing Board meeting.

Mr. Leeper announced that he was considering Dr. Ken Wagner and Dr. Forrest Dierburg to fill two of the three panel seats (both of whom served on the peer review panel for previous minimum levels methodologies), and suggested that the third panelist be a local consultant. Mr. Leeper asked the group for input on the selection of the third panelist.

The discussion was then opened for comment on the Category III Lakes minimum levels methodology that was presented in November. Doug Durbin asked if the original authors of the bird study have been consulted. Mr. Leeper answered yes, and explained that Mark Hoyer, one of the two experts involved in the original study, had been part of a consulting team that proposed the use of the study for the minimum level analysis. Dave Slonena said that he felt that different lakes had different value, and should be considered in the methodology by dividing Category III lakes into subsets. Dr. Denton asked if the SWFWMD had investigated the St. Johns River Water Management District's minimum level method for lakes, and Mr. Leeper answered yes. Mr. Slonena and Rich McLean asked how the differences in harm and significant harm affect the methodology, and wondered what direction we would be giving the District's Governing Board concerning this manner. Mr. Hancock responded that those topics are applicable to the process, but were outside the scope of the LTPRG discussions. The concerns would be noted, and passed on to SWFWMD Executive and Legal staff.

The concept of using a safety factor with any scientific determinations was brought up. Chris Shea proposed that a safety factor could be based on the size of the lake's littoral zone. Dr. Zhongyan Lin expressed several concerns about the limitations of the existing field study and data, including limiting sampling, completeness of sampling, consideration of lake depth, and whether the lakes used in the study were similar to Northern Tampa Bay lakes. Several District staff responded that while we agree that the existing data and studies have limitations, we are obligated by statute to use best available information to establish levels now. As with previously established minimum flows and levels, the District will continue to study the lakes in order to refine and improve the levels in the future. Dr. Durbin suggested that we might be able to pull data and information from the existing studies that is more applicable to the Northern Tampa Bay area, rather than using it all. Mr. Leeper responded that he did not think that was possible.

Dr. Durbin suggested that a flow chart approach was desirable, which would allow various parameters to be used for different lakes. District staff responded that because

the Governing Board would be considering multiple factors, a flow chart approach could be used if breakpoints are established. Mr. Slonena advised that there should be coordination between the minimum flow and level effort and the mitigation work being performed by Tampa Bay Water. Mr. Hancock agreed, and said that the coordination would take place.

The next topic of the meeting was wetlands ratings and minimum levels. Mr. Hancock introduced the topic, explaining that the District would need to rely on both data collected by Tampa Bay Water and the District for future MFL-related activities, including an assessment of recovery in 2010. Therefore, although District staff involved in ongoing MFL work are not really interested in altering the current EMP process, certain issues about the process need to be addressed. Issues needing discussion include wetland classifications, biologic assessments, collection of hydrologic data, and the determination and establishment of normal pool.

Dr. Ted Rochow proposed that wetlands be categorized into eight groups for MFL purposes, based on a review of various possible methods. The categories proposed were: 1) cypress (isolated), 2) hardwood (isolated), 3) marsh (isolated), 4) cypress marsh (isolated), 5) wet prairie (isolated), 6) Cypress (contiguous), 7) hardwood (contiguous), and 8) mixed hardwood/cypress (contiguous). Dr. Rochow explained that the categories could be revised as needed with better understanding in the future. Dr. Denton suggested that an assessment of wetlands in other parts of the District be performed, to identify types not common in Northern Tampa Bay. She suggested, for instance, that marsh contiguous be added to the list, since this type of wetland system is found in the SWUCA area. Dr. Durbin suggested that lake cypress and marsh wetlands be added to the list. District staff agreed that such an assessment should be done, and that the suggested types will be added, but that the Northern Tampa Bay area is the current focus. Dr. Rochow also asked that any further ideas be directed to him.

Mr. Hancock gave a presentation that brought up several issues concerning biologic assessment. Since future MFL work will likely include correlations between hydrologic data and biologic data, questions answered on the current EMP forms should be reviewed to see if they are optimally set up with correlations in mind. One example is to try to replace questions requiring a yes/no response with questions that require a scaled response. Mr. Hancock suggested that a categorical study may be helpful. Other biologic issue addressed included the consistency of data collection by various biologists, extent of documentation of various observations not covered with specific questions, and how to establish a data base to store all information in the EMP forms. Mr. Hancock suggested that action be taken to address these issues. Mr. Hancock also suggested that the group should consider the need for an overall wetland rating for use in various activities, such as Tampa Bay Water's mitigation work.

Mr. Hancock presented several issues related to the collection of hydrologic data. It was stressed that Tampa Bay Water and the District need to coordinate their efforts to assure that the data collection network is of high quality, that the data stations are

consistently constructed, and that data is consistently collected. Because the network will be needed for the long term, and be used for important water management decisions, Mr. Hancock felt that standards should be established for the security of easements, when applicable, and for physical protection of the wells. Mr. McLean suggested that there may be a need to consider purchasing easements. Finally, the issue of normal pool was presented, including the need to establish normal pools in all wetlands, and the need to determine if normal pool is being consistently determined by various individuals.

A member of the group asked if the overheads used in the presentation could be added to the Northern Tampa Bay II website. Mr. Hancock said that they could be added.

The next LTPRG meeting will be held at 9:30 AM on February 7, 2001, and the location will be the SWFWMD's Tampa Service Office on Highway 301. The topics of the meeting are to be determined later.

Agenda

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1. November Meeting Follow-up
2. Chapter 373 Peer Review (Michael Hancock)
3. Category III Lakes MFL methodology (Doug Leeper)
4. Wetlands Evaluations and MFLs (Ted Rochow and Michael Hancock)
5. Other issues
6. Issues for the Next Meeting - February 7, 2001 (at the Tampa Service Office)