

**Northern Tampa Bay Phase II Local Technical Peer Review Group
Tampa Bay Water Board Room, Clearwater**

**Meeting 5
February 7, 2001 - 9:30AM**

Minutes

The following were in attendance: Zhongyan Lin, Hillsborough County EPC; Gordon Leslie, Jr., Hillsborough County EPC; Dave Slonena, Pinellas County; Rich McLean, Pinellas County; Vivian Arenas, del a Parte and Gilbert, P.A.; Shirley Denton, BRA for Pinellas County; Doug Keesecker, Tampa Bay Water; Mike Coates, Tampa Bay Water; Bob McConnell, Tampa Bay Water; R. Warren Hogg, Tampa Bay Water; Ralph Craig, City of St. Petersburg; Richard Voakes, City of St. Petersburg; Annemarie Gueli, Pasco County Utilities; Andy Smith, Hillsborough County; Cliff Harrison, Schreuder, Inc. for WRWSA; John Emery, SWFWMD; Michael Hancock, SWFWMD; Marty Kelly, SWFWMD; Doug Leeper, SWFWMD; Adam Munson, SWFWMD; Ted Rochow, SWFWMD; Karen Lloyd, SWFWMD; Robert Peterson, SWFWMD.

Michael Hancock presented an update on the time line for establishment of the Chapter 373 Peer Review Program. He said that the District has finalized the list of required expertise, and the RFP is currently being finalized. Staff hopes to release the RFP in early March, and to present an overview of the process to the Resource Management and Development Committee of the District Governing Boards that same month. Once submissions to the RFQ have been reviewed, the results will be presented to the LTPRG, possibly in May. Mr. Hancock stated that although the peer review for the Category III Lakes methodology will take place before the overall Peer Review Program is established, it is the District's intent to perform the Category III Lakes peer review consistent with the manner in which all peer reviews will be performed. Andy Smith asked if policy-based recommendations will be offered to the Governing Board by District staff, along with scientific-based recommendations. Mr. Hancock said that they likely would be, although discussions on policy are outside the scope of the LTPRG. Rich McLean and Dave Slonena asked why the SWFWMD doesn't perform peer review in the same manner as the South Florida Water Management District. According to Mr. McLean and Mr. Slonena, the peer reviewers in the SFWMD determined that "best available" information should be defined as data that can be collected in the future. Mr. Slonena wondered why Category III Lakes methodologies couldn't be delayed until more data is collected. Mr. Hancock said that peer review was being planned in a consistent way with the SFWMD, and that he did not interpret the South Florida review the same way as Mr. McLean and Mr. Slonena. The methods used by the SFWMD are still being reviewed.

Mr. Hancock also presented a brief review of the purpose of the LTPRG. The concern of the LTPRG should be the scientific part of the process only. Other aspects of the MFL process are also very important, but they are outside of the scope of this group. While science is to be considered as part of the establishment of MFLs, it is not the only consideration. The Governing Board has the responsibility to determine each MFL, based on best available scientific analysis and other considerations. Therefore, the scientific discussions taking place in the LTPRG are only part of the input to the Governing Board's decision. Other considerations can be expressed to the Board at regular Board meetings. Additionally, while we do our best to collect information during the process of performing scientific analysis in support of MFLs, we need to set levels now, based on currently available information. This information includes all relevant information that we can reasonably obtain internally, and any additional information that we can obtain through the LTPRG. Future assessment is part of the long-term process.

Doug Leeper gave an update on the development of Category III Lake MFL methodology. Written comments on the information presented on November 2, 2000 were received from Darrel Howton (Hillsborough County EPC), Ralph Craig (City of St. Petersburg), and Charles R. Fletcher (de la Parte & Gilbert for Pinellas County). Copies were made available. Written comments on Hoyer and Canfield's 1994 paper entitled "Bird abundance and species richness of Florida lakes; influence of trophic status, lake morphology, and aquatic macrophytes" were received from James Rodgers of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, and were also made available. Information on several normal pool elevations were received from Hillsborough EPC. The voluntary peer review committee has been set, and includes Keith Bildstein (Hawk Mountain Sanctuary), Forrest Dierburg (Aqua Chem Analyses, Inc.), Jerome Jackson (Florida Gulf Coast University), and Ken Wagner (private consultant). A Category III Lakes MFL methodology document will be published, but the development has been delayed, as has the March 2001 adoption of the lakes.

Mr. Leeper clarified that the Lake MFL method will involve a review of multiple parameters, which may include 1) significant change in lake-fringing cypress wetlands; 2) reductions in expected species richness of lake biota; 3) loss of thermal stratification; 4) loss of connectivity between lakes or basin within lakes; 5) lake recreation potential; 6) lake aesthetic value; 7) adverse effects associated with insufficient water depth at the end of existing docks; 8) significant change in coverage of submersed aquatic vegetation; and 9) significant adverse effects on wetland function. He noted that any ideas on other parameters that should be included will be welcomed.

Mr. McLean asked how the recent augmentation of Big Fish Lake affects the establishment of MFLs on the lake, considering the rules in 40D-8 concerning the augmentation of MFL wetlands and the use of "sentinel systems." Mr. Leeper said he believes the referenced rules apply only to wetlands. Shirley Denton commented that the application of the MFL methods should be reviewed by the peer review group, not simply the methodology. Mr. Smith said that consideration of property values should be included in the lake MFL method. Mr. Hancock commented that such a consideration would be outside the scope of the LTPRG. Others offered ideas on parameters that

might be considered, including septic tank elevations (Mr. Slonena) and low floor slab elevations (Mr. McLean and Mr. Smith). Mr. Leeper confirmed that structural elevations, such as low floor slabs, would be considered in the method. Dr. Denton suggested that dock uses should be considered, and that it should not be assumed that all docks are being used for a specific purposes, such as the mooring and loading of powerboats. Mr. Slonena and Mr. McLean asked the District staff to define the difference between "harm" and "significant harm". Dr. Kelly, Mr. Leeper and Mr. Hancock said that the difference is a regulatory matter, and not a concern of the LTPRG process. Gordon Leslie suggested that the cypress harm standard be considered for systems with cypress trees, regardless of the size of the cypress system. Dr. Denton suggested that social scientists be added to the voluntary scientific peer review panel to address issues such as recreation and aesthetics. Mr. Hancock disagreed, and stated that the purpose of the panel was to address science, not social issues. However, Mr. Hancock agreed that the affect of any potential levels based on non-scientific concerns on the biologic function of a lake would be appropriate for review by the scientific peer review process, and that there may be scientific aspects of issues such as recreation.

Mr. Hancock presented an update on the data network assessment process. Information from several databases are being sought to create an inventory of all wells and staff gauges that could be added to the network. Basic information on each well or gauge is needed to evaluate the station, including well depth, location, construction standards, fire protection, available water level data, and status of required easements. Mr. Hancock suggested that a special meeting on data collection be held sometime in March.

The next LTPRG meeting will be held at 9:30 AM on April 4, 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. December Meeting Follow-up
2. Chapter 373 Peer Review update (Michael Hancock)
3. Category III Lakes MFL methodology update (Doug Leeper)
4. Data Network report (Michael Hancock)
5. Other issues
6. Issues for the Next Meeting - April 4, 2001 (at the Tampa Service Office)