

MEETING NOTES

Northern Tampa Bay Phase II Local Technical Peer Review Group Wetlands Subcommittee

**Cypress Creek Wellfield
September 13, 2004 - 9:00AM**

Attendees: Warren Hogg, Scott Emery, Brian Ormiston, Chris Shea, Ted Rochow, John Emery, Patty Fesmire, Annemarie Hammond, Diane Willis, Doug Keesecker, David Carr, Michael Hancock, and Jill Hood.

Michael Hancock asked if the group had any questions or changes to the meeting notes from the August 20th meeting. When the meeting summary is finalized, it will be loaded to the web page.

Previous WAP Issues for discussion

1. Plant List Update

Michael Hancock handed out three preliminary plant lists. Ted Rochow and Michael have used the plants that were listed in Tampa Bay Water's current WAP database and have divided the plants according Ted's best estimate of their abundance in the NTB WAP sites (Common and Less Common) and their usefulness for zonation evaluation.

Diane Willis gave a short presentation of the preliminary findings on the Berryman & Henigar plant affinity study. Seven control wetlands were visited (four cypress and three marshes) for the study. The wetlands were all relatively shallow (1.5 to 2 feet). Diane and Ted Rochow established two randomly selected transects within each wetland and recorded the presence/absence of plants as they moved down the transect at 2-inch increments below Normal Pool. A meter stick was extended on alternate sides of the transect at each of these 2-inch increments and plants below the meter stick were recorded. The water depths, relative to normal pool, were also recorded. A total of 61 plant species were found, with approximately 10-20 species per wetland. Diane will email her findings to the group, and Michael has asked the group to review the three preliminary plant lists and Diane's findings and respond with comments and suggestions as soon as possible. The goal is to produce a list suitable for the October test.

2. Assessment area size

It was decided that the assessor would be encouraged to stay within 10 meters, but if he/she felt it was important to go beyond this range, they would note the assessment area used on the field sheet. It was noted that the assessor should only move off the transect when it was necessary to verify a plant identification that is important to the zonation evaluation.

3. Percentage estimate proposals for the test

Michael Hancock handed out a list of three methodologies to assess percentage cover. He has asked that the group review the proposed methodologies and send in any suggestions. The three methodologies, or variations of, will be tested during the new WAP test in October.

The question of using only living vegetation or to include dormant or non-living vegetation in the assessments was discussed. Some noted that it probably did not matter, as long as it was done consistently. It was decided that only the green vegetation would be assessed, but the brown vegetation would be noted in the comments.

4. Photography

It was noted that the photography issue had not been resolved. The group was asked to continue to think about this issue and to send in any suggestions. This issue is not going to be included on the test in October.

New WAP Issues for discussion

1. Stressed plants tracking –various issues

It was decided that the stressed plants section will be left as-is with some clarification. The refined section will be sent out to the group for review and updates will be tested in October.

2. Trees – dead, leaning, etc...

For purposes of the test, it was decided that the standing, dead trees will be removed from the Stressed Canopy score and moved to the Dead trees section. The tree stress/death section will be clarified and sent to the group for review.

Michael Hancock suggested that the following agenda items would not be discussed in detail at this time and would be deferred until a later meeting. It is not necessary that the following items be resolved before the WAP test in October.

3. Quality Control

A formal protocol is needed and one would be established at a later date.

4. Process and formats for submittals

This topic will be discussed further at a database meeting with B&H, TBW, and the District on September 27, 2004.

5. General questions in proposed WAP method

The District recommends keeping this section as is, with the following clarifications: this section is to be considered as a worksheet for updating history, check boxes will be added to the form, last sampling events results should be printed on sheet, and the reference to ground-water withdrawals in the last two questions will be eliminated.

6. Training

The District will take the lead on developing a training program that will be conducted at regular intervals.

7. Comments – how to deal with them

"Comments" will be changed to "Explanations" for appropriate sections of the field form, although areas for general, more optional comments will be provided.

8. Field form issues

Field form issues have been noted and after the new methodology is finalized, the changes will be applied as fitting.

9. Translating old data to new

This will be dealt with as part of the database issues. Old data will be translated after a new methodology is developed.

New Test

The last meeting is scheduled for September 30th. The purpose of this meeting is to prepare for the test and finalize the plant list. Approximately half the day will be spent in the field visiting Cypress Creek wetlands as a mini-training session. The 10 expected test participants will assess several wetlands and then discuss the results as a group to identify outstanding questions on the methodology and plant list.

It is anticipated that the test of the new WAP procedure will take place October 3-16, 2004 using ten wetlands (five marshes and five cypress domes) at the Morris Bridge Wellfield and Hillsborough River State Park. This location will allow the inclusion of wetlands outside of the wellfield, and minimize driving distances. Some of the wetlands for the October 2004 test were previously assessed during the May, 2004 field test, while other wetlands were not previously included. Details, including location information, will be forwarded to the group.