

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**  
**Springs Coast Steering Committee**  
Brooksville, Florida      April 4, 2018

The Springs Coast Steering Committee convened at 2:00 p.m., April 4, 2018, at the Southwest Florida Water Management District Governing Board Room, 2379 Broad Street, Brooksville, Florida.

**Members Present**

Kelly Rice, SWFWMD, Chair  
Ron Oakley, Pasco County Commissioner  
Kathy Bryant, Marion County Commissioner (via telephone)  
Shannon Wright, FWC  
Ray Scott, FDACS  
Alys Brockway, Hernando County (alternate)  
Tom Frick, DEP (via phone)

**SWFWMD Staff**

Chris Anastasiou  
Mary Kassabaum  
Sky Notestein  
Jennette Seachrist

**Recording Secretary**

Kelly Schwegel, SWFWMD

**Members Absent**

Nick Nicholson, Hernando County Commissioner  
Robert Holmes, City of Crystal River Councilman  
Scott Carnahan, Citrus County Commissioner

**Others Present**

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SWFWMD – Southwest Florida Water Management District  
FDACS – Florida Department of Ag and Consumer Services

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FDEP – Florida Department of Environmental Protection  
FWC – Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

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A list of others present who signed the attendance sheet is filed in the permanent files of the Springs Coast Steering Committee.

**1. Call to Order and Roll**

Committee Chair Rice called the meeting to order. Ms. Kelly Schwegel called the roll and confirmed a quorum.

Committee Chair Rice stated at the last meeting the committee made a motion to approve the Springs Coast Management Committee (SCMC) recommended springs projects upon approval of the District's Governing Board (Board) to the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for further review and funding consideration. The projects will be presented at this month's Board meeting on April 24, 2018.

**2. Action Item: Minutes Approval from 01/10/2018**

Committee Chair Rice called for the motion to approve the minutes for the January 10, 2018 meeting.

**A motion was made and seconded to approve the January 10, 2018 meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.**

**3. Public Input**

There were no blue cards presented for public input.

**4. DEP Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP) update – Tom Frick, DEP**

Mr. Tom Frick, DEP, presented an update on the BMAPs that are ongoing in the Springs Coast. Effective July 1, 2018, developments on lots less than one acre within the identified Priority Focus

Areas (PFAs) are required to use the advanced nitrogen reducing systems when installing a new Onsite Sewage Treatment and Disposal System (OSTDS) or connect to approved waste water treatment facilities. Existing septic systems will be upgraded to advance nitrogen reducing or passive nitrogen reducing systems through a phased implementation as the Department of Health (DOH) updates rules in identifying approved systems.

The DOH is currently working on rule-making that will address some of the rules and options that will be available to homeowners. DOH will also address the implementation of more passive systems, which could be less maintenance and less expensive than the advance systems. DEP will also be working with local counties and water management districts to ensure that funding is available to assist homeowners with the difference in cost of replacing the older systems to the advanced systems.

Ms. Alys Brockway asked if there were anticipated challenges to the adoption of this state requirement and the approximate length of time for DOH to implement a passive system rule. Mr. Frick replied that it is state law that counties must sign this rule prior to July 1, 2018, although they could challenge a BMAP. Also, DOH will have a passive system rule adopted prior to the July 1 date.

Members commented that it would be difficult for large waste water treatment facilities to meet these requirements by their permit renewal date. Mr. Frick explained that each county will have timetables, i.e., design and engineering milestones, put in place for retrofitting waste water treatment facilities which will not require upgrades to be met by July 1, 2018.

**5. SCSC Review Process for FY2020 DEP Springs Funding requests – Sky Notestein**

Mr. Sky Notestein explained the current DEP springs funding review process to the committee. The current process begins with the SCMC, where projects are submitted and reviewed. Approved projects then go to the Steering Committee for approval, and finally to the Governing Board before submission to DEP. Mr. Notestein reminded the committee that members have expressed concerns of the level of review these projects should undergo before submitting to DEP for springs funding.

Mr. Notestein suggested using a modified version of the District's Cooperative Funding Initiative (CFI) evaluation sheets to review the springs funding projects as they are submitted. The process would begin with a kickoff workshop at the SCMC level in August 2018. Project evaluations would then go through both management and steering committee review and recommendations between October 2018 and March 2019. The recommended projects would be presented to the Board for approval in April and submitted to DEP in May of 2019. Timelines would complement the existing CFI program and project verification would be performed by District staff. This would allow for higher level of project review that has been requested by the Steering Committee.

Committee Chair Rice mentioned that the committee could review the projects a few weeks before the January 2019 springs projects review meeting and make requests for project specific presentations at the January meeting if needed.

Ms. Kathy Bryant questioned whether the committee should prioritize the projects. Ms. Jennette Seachrist said the SCMC members discussed this and thought it was better not to give priority ranking because DEP will perform their own review and ranking based on their criteria.

**6. Weeki Wachee SWIM Plan Quantifiable Objectives update – Dr. Chris Anastasiou**

Dr. Chris Anastasiou explained the quantifiable objectives are broken into three focus areas: water quality, water quantity, and natural systems. These objectives are part of the Surface Water Improvement Management (SWIM) plan used to address the quality of the Weeki Wachee River.

Based on the river's average water quality (2006-2017), the quantifiable objective is 120 feet in the spring and at least 50 feet in the river. Currently, the water clarity in the spring is averaging at 121 feet and the river is just below the target at 49 feet. Also, the nitrate concentration level remains the target level of 0.2 milligrams per liter (mg/L).

The water quality quantifiable objective is subdivided into water clarity and nitrates. For water clarity, the target is greater than 120 feet near the springs and greater than 50 feet in the river. In 2017, the average clarity near the springs and in the river was 121 feet and 49 feet respectively. For nitrates, the quantifiable objective is the river-wide Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) of 0.20 mg/L. In 2017, the average river-wide nitrate concentration was 0.78 mg/L.

For the water quantity focus area, the quantifiable objective is to maintain greater than 90 percent of natural flow. The Weeki Wachee River is maintaining 95.1 percent of natural flow.

The Natural Systems focus area is subdivided into two river-wide quantifiable objectives. The first is to maintain greater than 40 percent coverage of desirable submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV). The second is to maintain less than 10 percent coverage of invasive, or undesirable SAV, including filamentous algae. The most recent estimates include 14 percent coverage of desirable SAV and 15 percent coverage of undesirable SAV in the river.

Dr. Anastasiou concluded his presentation by briefly discussing many of the ongoing projects that are helping to address the primary issues facing the Weeki Wachee Springs and River. In particular was the Weeki Wachee recreational carrying capacity study that is in progress.

Members applauded the Springs team for their hard work in protecting Hernando County's first magnitude spring.

**7. Upcoming meeting dates**

The committee acknowledged July 11<sup>th</sup> of 2018 for the next committee meeting date.

**8. Adjournment**

Committee Chair Rice adjourned the meeting at 2:56 p.m.