

MEETING SUMMARY
Environmental Advisory Committee
Southwest Florida Water Management District
July 9, 2019

The Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) of the Southwest Florida Water Management District convened for a regular meeting at 1:30 p.m., July 9, 2019 at the Tampa Service Office, 7601 US Highway 301 North, Tampa, Florida 33637.

Committee Members Present

Ed Sherwood, Tampa Bay Estuary Program
Paul Crowell, Keystone Civic Association
Alan Bailey, Florida Trail Association
Dwayne Carlton, Ocala/Marion County, Chamber & Economic Partnership
Jennifer Hecker, Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program

Staff Members Present

Caroline Browning, Facilitator
Michael Molligan
Jason LaRoche
Joseph Quinn
Will Vangelder
Randy Smith
April Breton

Recording Secretary

Kelly Page

A list of others present who signed the attendance roster is filed in the permanent records of the District. Approved summaries from previous meetings can be found on the District's website at WaterMatters.org.

The numbers preceding the items below correspond to the order of presentation.

1. Call to Order and Introductions

Ms. Jennifer Hecker called the meeting to order, welcomed members, staff, and interested persons and asked for member introductions.

2. Additions and Deletions to the Agenda

The order of items 8 and 9 will be swapped.

3. Approval of the April 9, 2019 Meeting Summary

The committee unanimously approved the April 9, 2019 meeting minutes.

4. Public Comments

There were no public comments presented.

5. Elections of Chair and Vice Chair

Members unanimously voted Jennifer Hecker to serve as committee chair.

Paul Crowell was nominated for vice chair and he declined.

Mark Alderson was nominated for vice chair and members voted for him unanimously. He was absent from this meeting but agreed to serve via email.

6. Legislative Updates

Ms. Cara Martin, Government and Community Affairs Office chief, provided a legislative wrap-up of the 2019 legislative session. Session lasted 61 days with a total of 197 bills passing of the 3,491 filed. Ms. Martin also shared environmental budget appropriations, including the springs funding (\$50 million for 2019 projects already selected and \$50 million toward 2020 projects), Florida Forever (\$33 million) and District land management (\$2.2 million). There were several water quality bills filed but none of these

passed. Ms. Martin also discussed mitigation banks updates, government accountability and environmental regulation.

Mr. Dwayne Carlton said Marion County hopes to have input on the Department of Transportation's corridor expansion to mitigate environmental and farmland impacts. Ms. Martin replied legislation decided which agencies are on the task force.

Members asked for clarification on which agencies, specifically environmental agencies, will be on the Department of Transportation task forces for the multi-use corridors. Ms. Martin identified environmental agencies assigned, such as the Florida Department of Environmental Protection as well as three water management districts. Members also asked whether the legislature identified the end goal for the task force and Ms. Martin explained the purpose is to identify routes for these corridors and take public input.

Ms. Hecker asked whether the mineral rights bill affects environmental land acquisition and if it has an impact on the District's conservation land. Ms. Martin explained the bill is for less than 20 acres and it actually benefits the District's sale of surplus lands.

Mr. Sherwood asked if there are any policies from the District's point of view to address biosolids and Ms. Martin explained these mostly affect the other side of the state. Therefore, the District did not take a position on this matter.

7. Initiation of SWIM Priority List Update

Mr. Will VanGelder, SWIM program manager, provided an update to the SWIM priority list, which occurs every five years. Current staff recommendation is for no changes to be made to the priority water body list. Mr. VanGelder asked for advice and input from the Environmental Advisory Committee concerning modifications. He explained the next step is to take the updates, with EAC's responses, to the Governing Board for approval.

Mr. VanGelder also explained staff are currently updating the Charlotte Harbor SWIM Plan and will update Lake Tarpon and Tampa Bay SWIM Plans with the 2019 budget. These plans have reached their ten-year life cycle.

Ms. Hecker asked whether the update to the Charlotte Harbor SWIM Plan is already included in the water body list and Mr. VanGelder replied in the affirmative.

Mr. Carlton asked why the river systems on the priority list are mostly spring-fed. Mr. VanGelder explained the District is following the state's initiative to prioritize first-magnitude springs, therefore the District has moved these springs' impaired river systems to the priority list. Mr. Carlton asked whether the Withlacoochee River has sufficient impairments to include it as a SWIM priority and Mr. VanGelder explained the majority of the river is contained within the watershed of the first-magnitude springs and is therefore mostly covered by a SWIM plan.

8. Florida Stratigraphy 101, Rocks and Aquifers

Mr. Jason LaRoche, senior professional geologist, provided a presentation on Florida's geological history and how it has influenced the aquifers. Mr. LaRoche explained the aquifer framework and how it correlates to the statewide framework.

Mr. LaRoche explained the Floridan aquifer system is made up of two aquifers, the Upper and Lower, and is separated by a middle confining unit. The Upper Floridan Aquifer is the predominant source of potable groundwater. The Lower Florida Aquifer is non-potable and historically has not been utilized, however, it is being investigated as an alternative water supply through the Central Florida Water Initiative.

Mr. Crowell asked if Florida was created by uplifting or receding of the oceans and Mr. LaRoche replied receding. Mr. Crowell asked if it is unreasonable to assume the Lower Floridan aquifer is not being fed by the oceans on three sides. Mr. LaRoche explained the fresh water is being held in place (by a bubble) because the pressures (of the saline water) from the adjacent oceans as well as deeper in the aquifer are in equilibrium. However, these groundwater boundaries can shift over time for various reasons.

Ms. Hecker asked if there is a geological factor that divides the Floridan groundwater from the surficial water table. Mr. LaRoche explained a primary control is the presence or absence of the Hawthorn clay confining unit, but there can be many other local factors at play as well. There is not one single factor, instead, there are multiple complex factors that dictate where water is absorbed and stored in the aquifer.

Mr. Sherwood asked if sinkholes have created any localized effects on the aquifer. Mr. LaRoche replied in the negative, explaining the aquifer is too massive to be affected by a single sinkhole, but instead is more affected by the accumulation of sinkholes on a broader regional scale.

9. 2020 Regional Water Supply Plan (RWSP)

Mr. Joseph Quinn, Water Supply project manager, provided an overview of the 2020 RWSP development process. Mr. Quinn described the history of the District, its mission, and the roles of the Water Supply section. He described the RWSP progress to date, which includes the development of a communications and outreach plan and preliminary water demand projections.

Mr. Quinn explained that staff are working on chapter revisions and updates through September, which will then be followed by technical editing and review (internal draft) until January. Staff will request Governing Board approval for release of the public draft in March 2020 and then engage stakeholders and the public for comments. Staff will also return to the advisory committees to provide information on components of the plan and to solicit input. The public comment period will extend from April through July 2020, with the final plan scheduled to go to the Governing Board for final approval in November 2020.

Ms. Hecker asked whether there are initiatives for prioritizing potable water supply sources to help meet alternative water supply (AWS) needs. Mr. Quinn explained this is part of our Regulatory process, and the District does consider the lower water quality when evaluating an industry's water needs. Ms. April Breton added AWS options are evaluated as part of the Water Use Permit review process.

Mr. Sherwood referred to sustainability when asking what incentives the developer has to not install St. Augustine in a master planned community. Mr. Quinn referred to Florida Water Star and Florida Friendly Landscaping, which work with builders and Homeowner's Associations to address exterior water use.

10. Next Tentative Meeting: October 8, 2019

Members suggested to discuss topics on:

- Status of the updated MFL's for Chassahowitzka and requested notification when the final recommendation has been made
- Microplastics and bottled water or fresh water sources
- Algae blooms and Florida Gulf Coast University's study on human health impacts
- District's role in restoration activities on lands and vision for the future (referring to mining)
- Stream restoration projects and applicability to SWIM/SWFWMD projects (referring to hydrocarving)
- Evaluate and discuss the committee's role in providing input to the Governing Board and how to help make the committee as useful as possible

11. Announcements and Other Business

None.

12. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:53 p.m.