



SPRINGS COAST MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING
WEDNESDAY, July 12, 2023 – 1:30 PM
2379 BROAD STREET, BROOKSVILLE, FLORIDA 34604

MINUTES

Committee Members Present

Michael Molligan, SWFWMD
Ken Cheek, Citrus County
Alys Brockway, Hernando County
Mark Thomas, Marion County
Micah Minaberry, Pasco County
Ken Weaver, FDEP
Will Fontaine, FGUA
Michelle Sempstrott, FWC
Yesenia Escribano, FDACS
Curt Williams, Agriculture
Suzy Folsom, Public Supply
Alana Todd, Regional Planning Council
Patricia Spellman, Academia

Staff Members

Vivianna Bendixson
Frank Gargano
Madison Trowbridge
Virginia Singer
Jeremy McKay

Committee Administrative Support

Lauren Vossler

FDACS – Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
FDEP – Florida Department of Environmental Protection
SCMC – Springs Coast Management Committee
FGUA – Florida Governmental Utility Authority

FWC – Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
SWFWMD – Southwest Florida Water Management District
SCSC – Springs Coast Steering Committee
TWG – Technical Working Group

1. Call to Order and Roll

The Springs Coast Management Committee (SCMC) of the Southwest Florida Water Management District (District) met for its regular meeting at 1:30 p.m., on July 12, 2023, via Microsoft Teams.

Mr. Michael Molligan, Employee, Outreach & General Services Director, called the meeting to order. Roll was called and a quorum was noted.

2. Action Item: Minutes Approval from May 24, 2023

A motion was made for approval of the May 24, 2023 minutes. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

3. Public Input

None

4. Action Item: FY2025 FDEP Springs Funding Process – Vivianna Bendixson, SWFWMD

Ms. Vivianna Bendixson, SWIM Program Manager, presented the FY2025 Springs Funding process. She gave a brief description of the water quality, quantity, and land acquisition criteria, along with the FY2025 prioritization matrix.

Ms. Bendixson discussed application changes including an update to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) spreadsheet correcting minor clerical errors, labeling funding tables with the fiscal year, and adding a new picture and new date.

A motion was made to approve the FY2025 Springs Funding application, evaluation, and prioritization process. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

5. Action Item: FY2024 SCMC Meeting Dates – Vivianna Bendixson, SWFWMD

Ms. Vivianna Bendixson, Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) Program Manager, provided members with a detailed proposed FY2024 timeline a site visit to the Three Sisters Springs for committee members at the January 10th meeting.

A motion was made to approve future Spring Coast Management Committee meeting dates. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

6. Action Item: Homosassa Quantifiable Objective Refinements – Dr. Madison Trowbridge, SWFWMD

Dr. Madison Trowbridge, Springs Scientist, discussed the potential quantifiable objective refinements for the Homosassa River. Dr. Trowbridge provided a summary on the Homosassa River quantifiable objectives including water quality and natural systems. She discussed redefining quantifiable objectives as different river portions, moving water clarity to an indicator status and redefining desirable submerged aquatic vegetation targets.

A motion was made to approve refinements to the quantifiable objectives as recommended by District staff.

- ***Update minimum flows target as adopted***
- ***Redefine water clarity as an indicator***
- ***Define water clarity evaluated as headsprings and middle portions***
- ***Define natural systems evaluated as tidal freshwater habitat, transition, and estuarine portions***
- ***Redefine desirable submerged aquatic vegetation targets***

The motion was seconded and passed with twelve in favor and one opposed.

7. Discussion: BMAP Updates – Ken Weaver, FDEP

Mr. Ken Weaver, FDEP, provided members with a basin management action plan (BMAP) update. He mentioned as of July 1, 2023, FDEP published the 2022 Statewide Annual Report (STAR). Mr. Weaver discussed House Bill (HB) 1379 which provided positive changes to the BMAP program and added additional protection for BMAPs and the Florida springs. He mentioned FDEP has a legislative requirement to update all BMAPs by July 1, 2025, along with updating the Nitrogen Source Inventory Loading Tool (NSILT) numbers that go into the Springs BMAP and modeling information. Based on recent data and land use, FDEP will start creating public workshops and providing the information to the District.

Mr. Weaver mentioned by the end of 2023, announcements will be made regarding BMAP meetings concerning updates, along with proposed language updates and stakeholder feedback. Mr. Weaver provided members with a summary of the BMAP schedule, the link to the STAR report, and the BMAP website.

Ms. Alys Brockway asked if the new legislation removed the language that allowed for conventional septic systems to be constructed on lots less than one acre, given sewer would be available within five years. Mr. Weaver confirmed the five years has been eliminated, that advanced systems would be required; however, he believes there may still be some flexibility in onsite sewage treatment and disposal system (OSTDS) permitting.

Ms. Brockway asked if conventional systems that required repair had to go to advanced treatment rather than being repaired. Mr. Weaver explained the OSTDS permitting continued to allow for

repair of conventional systems; however, if enough of the system is being repaired or replaced, it would trigger the permitting as a repair or replacement.

Mr. Molligan asked if the county is responsible for enforcing and authorizing that the new homes get the correct septic system installed. Mr. Weaver explained the county health department is responsible for overseeing that it gets handled appropriately.

8. Presentation: Investigation of Iron Stimulation of Filamentous Algal Growth in Rainbow River – Dr. Madison Trowbridge

Dr. Madison Trowbridge, Springs Scientist, provided members with a presentation on the investigation of iron stimulation of filamentous algal growth in the Rainbow River. She mentioned excess nitrates have contributed to excess algae growth. The three main types of algae include benthic, epiphytic, and planktonic. She stated algae needs more iron than plants. More iron gives algae a competitive advantage and iron is present in sediments. While nitrate is important, iron may be a limiting nutrient in the Rainbow River.

Dr. Trowbridge discussed using benthic chambers to measure the metabolism of the rooted plants and algae, including testing responses to different nutrients and other environmental variables. She stated that in her findings iron was higher in porewater than the water column, and the lower portion has more iron than the other river regions.

Mr. Molligan asked what can be done to address this issue, since it is naturally occurring in this area. Dr. Trowbridge explained what percentage is expected in the river regarding algae abundance. She mentioned there may be some extra management strategies in the future, but that would take additional analysis.

Dr. Patricia Spellman asked if changing iron concentrations contributed to the rapid increase of algae in the Rainbow River. Dr. Trowbridge explained that she had not seen any trends over time with those; however, she is looking for a historic estimate for the algae abundances.

Dr. Spellman asked what the approximate concentrations were being seen in iron. Dr. Trowbridge responded that some of them were fairly low, and she would be happy to send the report with additional information.

Dr. Spellman asked if there was any relationship with dissolved oxygen or parameters. Dr. Trowbridge explained she did see relationship with dissolved oxygen but only with dissolved oxygen in iron concentrations and this was found in the pore water and the water column.

9. Open Discussion

None.

10. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 2:28 p.m.