



SPRINGS COAST STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, January 24, 2024 – 2:00 P.M.
2379 BROAD STREET, BROOKSVILLE, FLORIDA 34604

MINUTES

Committee Members Present

Kelly Rice, SWFWMD
Robert Holmes, City of Crystal River
Rebecca Bays, Citrus County*
Alys Brockway, Hernando County (Alternate)
Kathy Brayant, Marion County*
Ken Weaver, FDEP*
Gregory Workman, FWC
Yesenia Escribano, FDACS*

*Attended via Teams

Staff Members

Jennette Seachrist
Vivianna Bendixson
Jeremy McKay
Madison Trowbridge
Mandi Rice
Carrieann Adkins

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

1. Call to Order and Roll

The Springs Coast Steering Committee (SCSC) of the Southwest Florida Water Management District met for its regular meeting at 2:00 p.m., on January 24, 2024.

Committee Chair Rice called the meeting to order. Ms. Lauren Vossler called the roll and confirmed a quorum.

2. Action Item: Minutes Approval from November 8, 2023

A motion was made for approval of the November 8, 2023 minutes. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

3. Public Input

None.

4. Presentation: FY2025 FDEP Springs Funding Preliminary Evaluations, Preliminary Rankings, and Project Overviews - Dr. Madison Trowbridge, SWFWMD

Dr. Madison Trowbridge, Springs Scientist, provided details about the Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 application process and the Springs Coast Management and Steering Committee timeline for FY2025 projects. She provided the FY2025 Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) funding request summary by Basin Management Action Plan and the

FDEP Springs funding summary for the SWFWMD region. Dr. Trowbridge discussed the two FY2025 applications received and the preliminary evaluations.

5. Presentation: FY2025 Project Presentation by Applicant Hernando County Utilities Department

Mr. Gordon Onderdonk with Hernando County Utilities Department (HCUD) provided members with a presentation on the Septic-to-Sewer Conversion Project District A, Phase Two project located in Hernando County. He mentioned HCUD conducted a Septic-to-Sewer Conversion study in 2016 and a FDEP-funded feasibility analysis in 2020. The estimated connection cost for residents will be approximately \$3,544. HCUD is seeking \$800,000 in FDEP Springs funding in FY2025 for this project. The anticipated project start date is in 2024 and scheduled to be completed in 2026.

Chair Rice asked if the HCUD anticipated 295 residential lots being serviced by the Phase Two development. Mr. Onderdonk responded in the affirmative. He explained there are 295 existing homes, along with vacant lots. However, the benefit received is based on existing homes. The vacant lots will be assessed in the future.

Mr. Onderdonk presented the Hernando County Private Package Plant Connections project. This project is a continuation of the County's effort to provide wastewater service to existing private wastewater package plants within the Weeki Wachee Springshed. The biggest benefit of this project is the removal of an estimated 997 pounds of total nitrogen per year. Over 90% of the project design is completed. Hernando County is seeking \$5 million in FDEP Springs funding for this project in FY2025.

Chair Rice asked out of the requested \$8.75 million for the total project cost, what if the HCUD only receives \$5 million and there is no additional funding. Mr. Onderdonk explained the HCUD would complete the package plants that could be finalized with the available funding and the projects that were negotiated first.

6. Presentation: As Above So Below: Benefits of the FARMS Program on the FL Aquifer – Matt Vinzant, SWFWMD

Mr. Matt Vinzant, Project Manager, presented on the Facilitating Agricultural Resource Management Systems (FARMS) program. Mr. Vinzant discussed the status of the FARMS program and its benefits. He stated there have been 245 Board-approved projects, an estimated groundwater reduction of 31.8 million gallons per day, \$2.43/1,000 gallons of water saved and 90% of FARMS projects are still active throughout the District. He discussed the different types of FARMS projects including alternative water supply, conservation, cold protection, and nutrient reduction/retention. Mr. Vinzant explained that alternative water supply projects either use an existing surface water body, reclaimed water or rainwater harvesting. He explained that rainwater harvesting involves the use of rainwater runoff that is captured from greenhouses and used as a repump. He discussed water quality for the mini-FARMS projects, nutrient management components and challenges the FARMS program faces.

Mr. Vinzant discussed the research conducted by Karst Underwater Research (KUR), of which he is a member. KUR assists with the preservation and protection of aquifers and their water quality by conducting relevant scientific research and documentation of surface features and corresponding underwater caverns and conduits.

Ms. Alys Brockway asked how the mini-FARMS farmers knew about the grants that are offered. Mr. Vinzant explained most of the outreach is done by word of mouth at conferences, vendors, and commodity groups.

Ms. Brockway asked if the FARMS program had run out of funding in the past. Mr. Vinzant explained the last four years the program has run out of funding; however, the District was able

to increase the budget. This year the District has approved 41 mini-FARMS projects with a total District share of \$260,000.

7. **Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 2:51 p.m.

8. **Next Meeting: March 6, 2024 2:00 p.m.**