



SPRINGS COAST STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
WEDNESDAY, January 26, 2022 – 2:00 PM
2379 BROAD STREET, BROOKSVILLE, FLORIDA 34604

MINUTES

Committee Members Present

John Mitten, SWFWMD
Robert Holmes, City of Crystal River
Scott Carnahan, Citrus County
Alys Brockway, Hernando County (Alternate)*
Kathy Bryant, Marion County*
Jason Mickel, Pasco County (Alternate)
Kevin Coin, FDEP(Alternate)*
Jason Russell, FWC (Alternate)
Chris Pettit, FDACS*

Staff Members

Jennette Seachrist
Vivianna Bendixson
Randy Emberg
Madison Trowbridge
Randy Smith
John Campbell
Frank Gargano

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 26, 2022, via Zoom.

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

2. Action Item: Minutes Approval from November 10, 2021

A motion was made for approval of November 10, 2021, minutes. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

3. Public Input

None

4. Action Item: FY2023 FDEP Springs Funding Land Acquisition Criteria – Vivianna Bendixson, SWFWMD

Ms. Vivianna Bendixson, SWIM Program Manager, provided members with a brief overview of the water quality, water quantity, and proposed land acquisition criteria.

Mr. Holmes inquired about who does the land acquisition appraisal and how it is done for the State of Florida. Ms. Bendixson explained that the FDEP makes the determination.

Mr. Mitten asked if any of the categories were weighted. Ms. Bendixson responded in the affirmative.

A motion was made for approval of the FY2023 Spring Funding criteria for land acquisition as proposed by staff. Motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

5. Presentation: FY2023 FDEP Springs Funding Preliminary Evaluations, Preliminary Rankings, and Project Overviews – Vivianna Bendixson, SWFWMD

Ms. Vivianna Bendixson, SWIM Program Manager, provided members with a detailed FY2023 application process, along with the FY2022 Springs Coast Management and Steering Committee timeline. She provided the FY2023 FDEP request summary by Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP) and the FDEP Springs funding summary for the SWFWMD region.

Ms. Bendixson provided a brief overview of the applications received in FY2023, along with the FY2023 prioritization matrix.

a) Alachua Conservation Trust

Ms. Erica Hernandez with Alachua Conservation Trust (ACT) provided members with a presentation on the Perpetual Conservation Easement in GHC Farms in Levy County. ACT has facilitated permanent protection of over 54,000 acres and was awarded five separate FDEP Springs grants for acquisitions in Columbia, Suwannee, and Gilchrist counties. The ACT is seeking funding for half of the value of the Conservation easement and acquisition due diligence cost of \$173,288.

Mr. Pettit asked if there is any fertilizer being used on the property which could impact nutrients to the spring and what protections the land has on preserving the low intensity of land use into the future. Ms. Hernandez explained they do limit the intensification, this way the farm does not end up utilizing larger quantities of water. She also explained the property owner does not use fertilizers or herbicides, she continues to use supplemental feeding and maintaining the property with prescribed grazing.

Mr. Pettit asked if Ms. Hernandez or her staff had any communication with FDEP regarding the language with the conservation easement and he encouraged connecting with his staff. Ms. Hernandez expressed appreciation and mentioned sending Mr. Pettit's staff the management plan, along with future projects.

6. Presentation: Nature Coast Aquatic Preserve – Dr. Michael Shirley, FDEP

Dr. Michael Shirley, FDEP, provided an update on the Nature Coast Aquatic Preserve designation in 2020. He discussed a brief overview of the 10-Year Management Plan process and the adaptive management including monitoring, maintaining, and improving

water quality, restoring submerged communities, increasing the resiliency of adjacent shorelines, and enhancing low-impact recreation use and access. A detailed timeline for upcoming advisory committee meetings were provided.

Dr. Shirley discussed next steps for the Section 309 final assessment and strategies including, finalizing report products, creating interactive web application and outreach. They would also like to improve data collection and analysis for integrated management, monitoring and permitting.

Mr. Mitten commented and expressed appreciation for the scientists and experts.

Mr. Mickel inquired about potentially tracking the results from previously funding projects.

Ms. Bendixson confirmed that FDEP does provide results on funded projects.

7. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 3:14 p.m.

8. Next Meeting: March 9, 2022, 2:00 p.m.