

MEETING MINUTES  
Springs Coast Management Committee  
January 9, 2019

The Springs Coast Management Committee meeting convened at 1:30 p.m., January 9, 2019, at the Southwest Florida Water Management District, Building 4 Conference Room 112, 2379 Broad Street, Brooksville, Florida 34604-6899.

**Members Present**

Dave Burnell, City of Crystal River  
Ken Cheek, Citrus County  
Alys Brockway, Hernando County  
Bob Titterington, Marion County (via phone)  
Jason Mickel, Pasco County  
Terry Hansen, FDEP (via phone)  
Jason Wagman, FWC  
Yesinia Escribano, FDACS (via phone)  
Michael Molligan, SWFWMD  
Curt Williams, Agriculture  
Rick Owen, State Parks (via phone)  
Charles Lee, Environmental  
Dave Bruzek, Industry (via phone)  
Heather Young, Regional Planning Council  
Dr. Mauricio Arias, Academia

**Members Absent**

Richard Owen, Public Supply

**SWFWMD Staff**

Randy Smith  
Chris Anastasiou  
Danielle Rogers  
Sky Notestein  
Vivianna Bendixson  
Frank Gargano

**Recording Secretary**

Kelly Page

**Other**

Rick Kirby, Hernando Utilities  
Will Fontaine, FL Governmental Utility Authority  
Alan Garri, Kimley-Horn  
Cara Keller, Kimley-Horn  
Esther Kauffman (via phone)

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FDACS – Florida Department of Ag and Consumer Services  
FDEP – Florida Department of Environmental Protection  
SCMC – Springs Coast Management Committee

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

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Approved summaries from previous meetings can be found on the District's website [WaterMatters.org](http://WaterMatters.org).

**1. Call to Order and Roll**

Mr. Michael Molligan, Employee and External Relations director, called the meeting to order. Roll was called and a quorum was noted.

**2. Action Item: Minutes Approval from December 12, 2018**

*A motion was made for approval of December 12, 2018 minutes. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.*

**3. Public Input**

Mr. Molligan stated there was one blue card present.

Mr. Rick Kirby, Hernando County Utilities, expressed Hernando County's interest in requesting the District reconsider their decision of not funding waste water treatment plant expansions and

upgrades. He explained Hernando County is committed to their projects, but without Cooperative Funding Initiative (CFI) dollars, these projects could be pushed back several years.

Mr. Molligan explained Governing Board subcommittee meetings are the first step and asked if Mr. Kirby was aware of the meeting dates. Mr. Kirby replied in the affirmative but wanted to inform the Management Committee of Hernando County Utilities' intent and to thank the Management Committee for their efforts in evaluating projects.

#### **4. Update: Homosassa Quantifiable Objectives**

Dr. Chris Anastasiou, chief environmental scientist, provided an update on the Homosassa River's SWIM plan, which includes the quantifiable objectives: water quality, water quantity, and natural systems.

Dr. Anastasiou explained Homosassa's water quality has a target clarity of greater than 20 feet in the river and greater than 40 feet in the head springs. Water clarity trends appear to be relatively consistent since 2006, which is above the objective for the springs and slightly below the objective for the river-wide average. The Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) of nitrate in select springs within the Homosassa River system is 0.23mg/L. All of the Homosassa springs with a TMDL are above the 0.23mg/L threshold and show increasing trends.

Regarding water clarity, Mr. Charles Lee asked what depth of water the measurements are collected at. Dr. Anastasiou explained the measurements are taken just below the surface, which is a decision made based on logistics (lower depths would require diving equipment whereas near surface measurements only require the use of snorkel gear). Mr. Lee suggested vertical measurements, or even measurements taken at greater depths, would identify if there was a stratified difference in clarity, suggesting it could be a better indicator of biological health near the river bottom. Dr. Anastasiou explained that for most of the river vertical Secchi depth is greater than bottom. In other words, if one can see to the bottom, a vertical Secchi disk is useless for measuring clarity. Dr. Anastasiou welcomed the committee to discuss this topic at future meetings.

Members asked if these samples are taken during the same season each year. Dr. Anastasiou explained samples are taken on a quarterly basis and efforts are made to try and sample the stations near the same time each year. Dr. Anastasiou also reminded the committee that surface water samples are collected irrespective of tide. Members asked if there is a noticeable relationship between seasonal water clarity observations and the spring flow. Dr. Anastasiou responded in the negative.

Dr. Arias asked if other indicators have been collected and analyzed to determine what might be driving clarity. Dr. Anastasiou responded in the affirmative and mentioned Chlorophyll and Turbidity are the dominant factors affecting in water clarity.

For the water quantity focus area, the quantifiable objective is to maintain the minimum flow, which is greater than 97 percent of natural flow. The Homosassa River is maintaining 99 percent of natural flow. Dr. Anastasiou indicated to the committee that the Homosassa River MFL is under reevaluation and the quantifiable objective of maintaining 97 percent of natural flow may be adjusted depending on the results of the MFL reevaluation.

The natural systems focus area is subdivided into three river-wide quantifiable objectives. The first is to maintain greater than 65 percent coverage of desirable submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV). The second is to maintain less than 10 percent coverage of invasive, or undesirable SAV. As of 2018, invasive SAV cover on the Homosassa River is below 10 percent. Desirable SAV coverage is well below the target at 20 percent for the river. The third natural systems objective is no net loss in natural shoreline along the river. Most recent estimates show that this quantifiable objective is being achieved. However, Dr. Anastasiou pointed out that there are significant ecological shifts

occurring, especially in the lower river including a transition from salt marsh to mangrove forest and loss of palm and cedar islands along the immediate coast. Dr. Anastasiou indicated that these changes are likely the result of warmer temperatures and sea-level rise.

**5. Discussion: Springs Funding Multiyear Requests**

Ms. Trina Vielhauer, Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), explained the projects received from the District are taken very seriously, including multiyear funding projects. When evaluating projects, FDEP takes multiyear tables into consideration. Once a project is approved, FDEP will work with the agency to build a table reflecting projected funding requests for each project year and an agreement will be made that, provided legislative funds are available, FDEP will prioritize subsequent funding on an annual basis.

Members asked whether applicants should submit projects for future years and Ms. Vielhauer responded in the negative. She explained once a project has been accepted, as long as the grant agreement includes the multiyear funding table, project money will come off the top for these projects each year. Ms. Vielhauer added the application does not need to be submitted in subsequent years unless something in the project has changed (scope, funding request, nutrient reduction, etc.).

Ms. Vielhauer encouraged members to reach out to Sandy Waters, program administrator for Springs group, Tom Frick, or herself with any questions.

Mr. Terry Hansen, FDEP, stated Basin Management Action Plans (BMAPs) adopted in July 2018 are now in effect, with the exception of those being challenged. In regard to the Springs Coast, the only spring effected by the BMAP challenge is Rainbow, which still has the previous 2015 BMAP in place.

**6. Presentation: FY2020 Funding Application Preliminary Evaluations Changes**

Ms. Danielle Rogers, environmental project manager, provided a brief recap of the process for recommending projects to FDEP for springs funding consideration.

Ms. Rogers distributed a revised copy of the preliminary evaluations and discussed revisions made to seven of the submitted project applications. These changes are result of revised or miscalculations and involves mostly connection fees, cost effectiveness, project location (whether within a Priority Focus Area), and nitrogen load reduction calculations.

**7. Action Item: FY2020 Springs Funding Project Recommendations and Prioritization**

Mr. Molligan presented opportunity for committee members to change their scores with the new information. He suggested the committee make their scoring changes today, so the scores can be recalculated and immediately presented.

Members questioned why State Parks' scored projects in chronologic order and Mr. Rick Owen responded his agency would rather not place a score on projects. Mr. Owen agreed to withdraw his scores and replace them with "n/a."

Mr. Molligan addressed two projects that received at least one "NR" (not recommended) score from the Management Committee: Pasco County Reclaimed Water Nutrient Removal Study and Marion County State Road 200 Septic to Sewer.

Pasco County Reclaimed Water Nutrient Removal Study – The District scored this request "NR" because FDEP does not fund feasible studies. Mr. Jason Mickel asked whether Pasco County should withdraw this project from consideration and Mr. Molligan explained all projects will be seen by the Steering Committee regardless whether they get recommended or not. Mr.

Mickel decided to leave this study in. ***Members voted 10 in favor and zero against to not include the Pasco County Reclaimed Water Nutrient Removal study on the list of recommended projects.***

Marion County State Road 200 Septic to Sewer – Members questioned whether projects that do not have hook up requirements should be considered for springs funding. The District requires hook up ordinances for CFI but is not required by FDEP for consideration. Mr. Bob Titterington explained their ordinance requires hook up unless there is an existing septic system. However, if this system fails, or if there is not an existing system (new construction), then owners are required to hook up to sewer. ***A motion was made to not include the Marion County State Road 200 Septic to Sewer project on the list of recommended projects. The motion was defeated seven against four.***

Ms. Rogers recalculated the project scores and presented them, along with various ranking options, to the committee. Members asked what the Steering Committee asked for regarding project ranking. Mr. Molligan explained some Steering Committee members wanted them ranked and others agreed with the Management Committee's decision not to rank projects.

Mr. Molligan asked if any other changes should be made to the project list and whether to vote now or wait until the next meeting on how to rank the recommended projects. Ms. Rogers mentioned the project calculations will be updated for the final evaluation review at next meeting. Members decided not to vote on project ranking at this meeting.

**8. Open Discussion**

None.

**9. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 3:47 p.m.