

MEETING SUMMARY
Environmental Advisory Committee
Southwest Florida Water Management District
October 2, 2018

The Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) of the Southwest Florida Water Management District convened for a regular meeting at 1:30 p.m., October 2, 2018 at the Tampa Service Office, 7601 US Highway 301 North, Tampa, Florida 33637.

Committee Members Present

Ed Sherwood, Tampa Bay Estuary Program
Mark Alderson, Sarasota Bay Estuary Program
Paul Crowell, Keystone Civic Association
Allain Hale, Environmental Confederation of SW Florida
Dave Kandtz, Audubon Society
Alan Bailey, Florida Trail Association
Dwayne Carlton, Ocala/Marion County, Chamber & Economic Partnership

Staff Members Present

Caroline McKnight, Facilitator
Michael Molligan
Will Vangelder
Randy Smith

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

Vice Chair Allain Hale called the meeting to order, welcomed members, staff, and interested persons and asked for member introductions.

2. Additions and Deletions to the Agenda

Ms. Caroline McKnight, Board and Executive Services manager, stated the following was deleted from the agenda:

9. Hydrologic Conditions Update

3. Approval of the July 10, 2018 Meeting Summary

The committee unanimously approved the July 10, 2018 meeting minutes.

4. Public Comments

There were no public comments presented.

5. Advisory Committee Policy Updates

Mr. Michael Molligan, Employee and External Relations division director, presented the proposed changes to advisory committee policies, which include:

- Removing member listing within the policy
- Removing term limits for holding office
- Removing length of terms for memberships
- Changing voting requirements from quorum to majority present

Mr. Molligan encouraged feedback from the committee before going to the Governing Board with proposed changes in December. Members requested a copy of the draft policy before it is presented to the Governing Board. Mr. Molligan will provide these to all advisory committees prior to presenting to the Governing Board.

6. Tampa Bay Estuary Program

Mr. Ed Sherwood, Tampa Bay Estuary Program executive director, provided information on the Tampa Bay Estuary Program (TBEP), which has contributed to significant gains in natural resources for the Tampa Bay watershed. Areas of management include water and sediment, bay habitats, fish and wildlife, public access, climate change, dredging, spills, invasive species, public education and local policy/implementation.

Mr. Sherwood explained that recovery projects, despite the continuing population growth and land use alterations within the Tampa Bay watershed, are generally successful and are funded by federal, state, local, private and grant resources.

One of the core initiatives of the TBEP is Tampa Bay Nitrogen Management Consortium, which was conceptualized by a past District Board Member, Dave Moore. This program involves both public and private interest in the reduction of nitrogen while restoring the Tampa Bay watershed.

Members asked about the Tampa Bay Nitrogen Management Consortium and Mr. Sherwood explained this as an ongoing partnership effort to regain seagrass levels. Since 1992, it has involved more than 470 projects and resulting eluding 530 tons of nitrogen from entering Tampa Bay.

7. SWIM Plan Update

Mr. Will Vangelder, SWIM Program manager, introduced the District's SWIM Program, which addresses Florida's water bodies through a joint planning effort among stakeholders. Stakeholders include Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation, as well as local governments. There are currently 12 surface water bodies identified as priority water bodies throughout the District. The SWIM Program is currently working on updating the Charlotte Harbor SWIM Plan.

Mr. Vangelder explained the process of developing a SWIM Plan, which includes: identifying stressors associated with the particular water body, working with stakeholders in developing a draft management plan to bring before the advisory committee(s) for feedback, followed by Governing Board for approval and submission to FDEP.

Currently, there are 84 active projects associated with SWIM. Mr. Vangelder identified completed and ongoing projects, including Cockroach Bay, TECO Rock Ponds, and Coral Creek, as well as Three Sisters Bank Stabilization Project and Seagrass mapping.

Members asked where Coral Creek is, and Mr. Vangelder pointed out its location, explaining they are public lands managed by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and acts as a buffer system to maintain the health of the Charlotte Harbor.

Members asked how much coordination for the Charlotte Harbor SWIM Plan we have with the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD). Mr. Vangelder explained the District's boundary bisects the Charlotte Harbor and the District coordinates with SFWMD in reestablish hydrologic flow.

8. Reconnecting A Stream

Dr. John Kiefer, Wood Water Resources engineer, discussed the process and benefits of reconnecting a stream system. Dr. Kiefer explained his work as a process of compressing two decades of weathering into two weeks, and projected long-term results to include increased biodiversity, decreased erosion, flood mitigation, sustainable and resilient riparian habitat, and nutrient reduction. He identified the Balm Boyette - Stallion Hammock Restoration Project that he is working on, which is funded by FDEP grant money.

Dr. Kiefer showed images of the project site, which was a set of finger lakes that resulted from mining. His team conducted a hydraulic carving to create the stream, which is the process of flushing continuous water flow through the valley for several weeks, resulting in a natural channel. This process compresses two decades of weathering into two weeks. Ultimately, Dr. Kiefer was able to fill in the finger lakes, rebuild the valley and its floodplain, and enlarge the flanking wetland system. Although the valley was built in two weeks, it will take roughly two decades for the channel to reach its natural equilibrium pattern. Ultimately, the creek, or low flows, would be treated for nitrogen and phosphorous loads, the flood plain will be treated by the mid flows, and high flows are diverted into a 20-acre marsh that circulates the stream back into the Stallion Hammock.

Dr. Kiefer explained mining landscapes are the only entity in Florida that explicitly has regulation requiring restoration. He discussed social benefits for stream restoration in an urban setting, such as economic stimulus, neighborhood revitalization, pollution control, flood management, and climate resiliency, and encouraged more stream restoration projects throughout the state.

Members discussed the benefits of stream restoration and suggested making a motion to include stream connection assessments within the SWIM plans.

Members made a motion for the District to identify opportunities for natural stream and channel restoration within the priority SWIM plans that are being developed. After brief discussion, members seconded and passed the motion unanimously.

9. Hydrologic Conditions Update

10. Next Meeting: January 8, 2019

Members requested a presentation on micro plastics as well as red tide for the January meeting.

11. Announcements and Other Business

None.

12. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:20 p.m.