



## **SPRINGS COAST MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING**

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2023 – 1:30 PM**

**2379 BROAD STREET, BROOKSVILLE, FLORIDA 34604**

### **MINUTES**

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#### Committee Members Present

Michael Molligan, SWFWMD  
Doug Baber, City of Crystal River  
Ken Cheek, Citrus County  
Jody Kirkman, Marion County  
Cisco Pavez, Pasco County  
Ken Weaver, FDEP  
Yesenia Escribano, FDACS  
Suzy Folsom, Public Supply  
Charles Lee, Environmental  
Alana Todd, Regional Planning Council  
Ilia Balcom, Industry  
Patricia Spellman, Academia  
Rick Owen, State Parks

#### Staff Members

Vivianna Bendixson  
Randy Smith  
Madison Trowbridge  
Virginia Singer  
Jeremy McKay

#### Committee Administrative Support

Lauren Vossler

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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

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#### **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 December 6, 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 October 25, 2023**

***A motion was made for approval of October 25, 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 FY2024 projects. She provided the FY2024 Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) funding request summary by Basin Management Action Plan and the FDEP Springs

funding summary for the SWFWMD region. FDEP announced its FY2024 selection, which included \$4.5 million awarded to the District the City of Crystal River Wastewater Treatment Facilities Upgrade. Dr. Trowbridge discussed the two FY2024 applications received and the prioritization matrix.

## **5. Presentation: FY2025 Project Presentation by Applicant**

### **a) Hernando County Utilities Department**

Mr. Ron Patel with Hernando County Utilities Department (HCUD) provided members with a presentation on the Septic-to-Sewer Conversion Project District A, Phase Two 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 \$3,544. HCUD is seeking \$800,000 in FDEP Springs funding for this project. The anticipated project start date is in 2024 and scheduled to be completed in 2026.

Mr. Patel presented the Hernando County private package plant connections. This project is a continuation of the county's effort to provide wastewater service to existing private wastewater package plants adjacent to Weeki Wachee Springs and 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 \$5,000,000 in FDEP Springs funding for this project.

Mr. Charles Lee asked why the District has received less applications in FY2025 than in past years. Dr. Trowbridge explained it is attributed to timing and certain projects have already received funding. Multi-year funded projects are not shown on the list of FY2025 applications, as those projects are being managed by FDEP.

Mr. Lee asked if there are any efforts being made in the future to recruit additional projects. Dr. Trowbridge explained that Mr. Frank Gargano, Senior Governmental Affairs Regional Manager, makes a substantial effort to provide outreach prior to the time the applications are due. She also stated she would like the counties to provide feedback. Mr. Ken Cheek with Citrus County explained they currently have a lot of projects in the construction phase, but that he is confident funding requests will be submitted next year.

Mr. Lee asked if the expense per housing unit regarding the septic-to-sewer project was \$30,000. Mr. Ken Cheek said the cost to homeowners will be \$3,600. Mr. Michael Molligan explained that the county will cover the other 90% of the connection costs.

A discussion ensued regarding lawn turf's role in nutrient management.

## **6. Discussion: January Meeting Information – Dr. Madison Trowbridge, SWFWMD**

Dr. Madison Trowbridge, Springs Scientist, provided members with information on the upcoming site visit to the Three Sisters Springs Trail. She mentioned carpooling is encouraged, dressing comfortably and restrooms will be available on-site. She explained RSVPs will be needed by December 15. The agenda located on the website has all the necessary information, including driving directions.

## **7. 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. 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 importance of research conducted by Karst Underwater Research (KUR). 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. He mentioned most of Florida's drinking water comes from a well, with the majority of surface activities directly affecting groundwater.

Ms. Patricia Spellman asked how the 31.8 million gallons per day of groundwater compares to total recharge in the area and municipal pumping. Mr. Vinzant responded he did not know that data but would research.

Mr. Lee asked if any consideration has been given to expanding FARMS outreach to agricultural users in new developments and homeowner associations. Mr. Vinzant explained the program focuses on the agricultural side; however, the District also offers the Water Incentives Supporting Efficiency and the Florida Water Star programs for those audiences. Mr. Molligan followed up with information regarding the Florida Water Star program.

Mr. Lee encouraged the District to look at the Sun Bridge development in Osceola County. He mentioned there is virtually no lawn surface and irrigation systems are extremely limited.

**8. Open Discussion**

Mr. Molligan announced his retirement from the District on January 5 and Ms. Jennette Seachrist as the new SCMC chair.

**9. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.