

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING**  
**Springs Coast Steering Committee**  
Brooksville, Florida      April 8, 2019

The Springs Coast Steering Committee convened at 2:00 p.m., April 8, 2019 at the Southwest Florida Water Management District Governing Board Room, 2379 Broad Street, Brooksville, Florida.

**Members Present**

Kelly Rice, SWFWMD, Chair  
Jason Mickel, Pasco County  
Kathy Bryant, Marion County  
Wayne Dukes, Hernando County  
Greg DeAngelo, FDEP (via phone)  
Scott Carnahan, Citrus County  
Shannon Wright, FFWCC

**Members Absent**

Robert Holmes, City of Crystal River  
Angela Chelette, FDACS

**SWFWMD Staff**

Chris Anastasiou  
Sky Notestein  
Jennette Seachrist  
Vivianna Bendixson  
Danielle Rogers  
Frank Gargano

**Recording Secretary**

Dennis Cockrell

**Others Present**

Gabby Vega, FDEP  
Gordon Onderdonk, Hernando County  
Alys Brockway, Hernando County  
Rick Kirby, Hernando County

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SWFWMD – Southwest Florida Water Management District  
FDACS – Florida Department of Ag and Consumer Services

FDEP – Florida Department of Environmental Protection  
FWC – Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

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A list of others present who signed the attendance sheet is filed in the permanent files of the Springs Coast Steering Committee.

**1. Call to Order and Roll**

Committee Chair Rice called the meeting to order. Mr. Dennis Cockrell called the roll and confirmed a quorum.

**2. Action Item: Minutes Approval from 01/29/2018**

*The committee unanimously approved the January 29, 2018 meeting minutes with the correction of Bob Titterton's representation of Marion County.*

**3. Public Input**

*There were no public comments presented.*

**4. Presentation: Overview of the Septic Upgrade Incentive Program – Gabby Vega, FDEP**

Ms. Gabby Vega, Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), presented the overview of the septic upgrade incentive program, which encourages homeowners to upgrade existing septic systems to include advanced features to reduce nitrogen pollution. The program offers subsidies up to \$10,000 to septic installers or licensed plumbers, retained by homeowners, within a Basin Management Action Plan Priority Focus Area.

Ms. Vega described the application process and listed criteria the applicant (installer) would have to oblige to in order to be considered. They include:

- Identify an eligible homeowner.

- Register as a vendor with the state & complete a Florida Substitute W-9.
- Submit a program application with required supporting documentation.
- Application must be pre-approved, and Purchase Order must be issued before installation can begin.

Committee Chair Rice asked whether the installer identifies the eligibility for the homeowner and Ms. Vega replied those within the appropriate boundaries are eligible and the installer will identify the location to determine if the homeowner qualifies.

Ms. Vega discussed the reimbursement process by stating everything must be done by the installers within 30 days of completing the installation and the contractor must submit a payment request. The expenditures must be supported by accurate, legible and verifiable documentation, which is completed by the installer.

Ms. Vega stated there are no application deadlines and funds are not limited at this time. This is a continuous opportunity and there have been 16 applications so far.

**5. Action Item: FY2020 Springs Funding Final Evaluations and Prioritization – Danielle Rogers**

Ms. Seachrist, Resource Management Division Director, noted there were seven revisions made among the final project evaluations. Specifically, staff removed the District funds from the funding table of the evaluations and added them to the FDEP funding request because District funding has not yet been approved by the Governing Board.

Ms. Danielle Rogers, Environmental Project Manager, presented the FY2020 Springs Funding final evaluations and prioritizations, as well as the Management Committee's process for evaluating projects, as requested by the Steering Committee. She stated the current springs funding request from FDEP for FY2020 is \$49.9 million.

Ms. Rogers pointed out the actions made by the Management Committee at the request of the Steering Committee, such as adding a category for local match, including category ranking and overall ranking, and changing project status to project readiness. She explained how the Management Committee determined high, medium and low ranking for each of the categories as well as the overall ranking. Ms. Rogers explained four of the 16 projects submitted received a high ranking, nine received a medium ranking, and two received a low ranking. One project was not recommended for funding because it is a study and these types of projects do not meet FDEP state springs funding guidelines.

Ms. Rogers asked the Steering Committee to approve the recommended list of projects that will be sent to FDEP in May for funding consideration, following the Governing Board's review and approval at their April 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting.

Committee Chair Rice applauded the effort behind the project ranking. Ms. Wright and Ms. Bryant appreciated the thoroughness of the evaluations and Mr. DeAngelo suggested this serve as a model for future evaluations. **Commissioner Dukes made a motion to approve the ranking made by the Management Committee and forward the projects to FDEP. Mr. Carnahan seconded the vote and it passed unanimously. (Mr. DeAngelo, representing FDEP, recused himself from voting.)**

**6. Presentation: Crystal River/Kings Bay SWIM Plan Quantifiable Objectives Update**

Mr. Sky Notestein, Springs and Environmental Flows Manager, presented the SWIM Plan quantifiable objectives for Crystal River/Kings Bay. The quantifiable objectives include water quality, water quantity, and natural systems categories. These objectives are part of the Surface Water Improvement Management (SWIM) Plan.

Mr. Notestein stated water clarity and total chlorophyll values have fallen below the water quality quantifiable objectives for King's Bay; however, Kings Bay concentrations of total nitrogen and total phosphorous may be meeting the quantifiable objective over the past several years.

Members asked if something happened in 2017 that caused chlorophyll numbers to spike up and Mr. Notestein explained it could be part of the variation observed in the annual data sets or due to factors that mix the bay's water such as wind or heavy recreation, but the team is still analyzing the patterns.

Mr. Notestein discussed the water quantity objective as greater than or equal to 89 percent of natural flow spring flow to the system. The current flow is estimated to be 98 percent of natural (unimpacted) spring flow, which means that the quantity objective is being met and that future planning demand projections should be met as well.

Mr. Notestein explained natural systems quantifiable objective is not being met as the 2018 average values reflected lesser desirable plant coverage and higher undesirable plant coverages than the SWIM plan seeks to achieve.

Mr. Carnahan asked whether there are specific areas within the bay where these problems exist and whether it is most affected in deeper or shallow water. Mr. Notestein replied areas in the Northeast portion of the bay, where there is more fresh water, have more plant abundance. He also explained shallower water can have more submerged aquatic plant abundance because as depth increases, light available for submerged plants goes down.

Mr. Notestein talked about the Hunter Springs Park living shoreline, a project the District helped fund to restore the shoreline, which will support one of the natural systems quantifiable objectives for King's Bay – maintaining or improving the amount of natural shorelines in the system.

**7. Upcoming Meeting Dates are as follows:**

- a. August 28, 2019 – FY2020 Springs Funding Lessons Learned; Rainbow SWIM Plan Quantifiable Objectives Update

**8. Adjournment**

Committee Chair Rice adjourned the meeting at 2:50 p.m.