

MEETING MINUTES
Springs Coast Management Committee
May 15, 2019

The Springs Coast Management Committee meeting convened at 1:30 p.m., May 15, 2019, at the Southwest Florida Water Management District, Building 4 Conference Room 112, 2379 Broad Street, Brooksville, Florida 34604-6899.

Members Present

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

SWFWMD Staff

Randy Smith
Chris Anastasiou
Danielle Rogers
Sky Notestein
Claire Stapley

Recording Secretary

Kelly Page

Other

Alan Garri, Kimley-Horn
Will Fontaine, FL Governmental Utility Authority
Joe Kahn, FDEP (via phone)

Members Absent

Charles Lee, Environmental
Richard Owen, Public Supply

FDACS – Florida Department of Agriculture 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

Approved summaries from previous meetings can be found on the District's website 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 February 27, 2019

A motion was made for approval of February 27, 2019 minutes. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

3. Public Input

None.

4. Discussion: FY2020 Springs Funding Process Lessons Learned

Ms. Danielle Rogers, Environmental project manager, summarized the most recent springs funding process and asked each committee member to provide feedback in order to enhance the fiscal year 2021 funding cycle.

Mr. Jason Mickel, Pasco County, commented the 2020 funding cycle was an inclusive and objective process, which allowed the team to prioritize and rank the projects. Mr. Mickel suggested the timing between the Steering Committee and Management Committee could be synced up better.

Mr. Ken Cheek, Citrus County, asked to see a list of previously awarded springs projects and how the Management Committee ranked them so the Management Committee can use this as a tool when planning and ranking future projects. Ms. Alys Brockway, Hernando County, would also like to know from FDEP why each project gets funded.

Ms. Brockway also complimented the framework for springs funding process. She suggested the Management Committee look to the Technical Working Group to continue evaluating the springs' quantifiable objectives and hopes to see these projects benefiting the springs in the long run.

Mr. Bob Titterington, Marion County, said his staff appreciates the online electronic system for Cooperative Funding Initiative (CFI) submission and they suggested the Management Committee consider eliminating the need for two separate applications for CFI and SF. He also asked if possible to set up pre-application meeting with project managers to discuss the technical requirements.

Mr. Jason Wagman, FWC, suggested to maintain a streamlined process for evaluating projects, so the committees can evaluate and recommend projects quicker. This way the meetings can focus back on the original intent for the purpose of the Management Committee.

Ms. Yesenia Escribano, FDACS, suggested to limit the amount of time people are given to discuss a point during project presentations.

Mr. Molligan agreed with the Management Committee's positive feedback. He explained the Steering Committee does not meet as often as the Management Committee, therefore feedback is needed from the Steering Committee upfront, so directions are clear for the Management Committee. He also noted the evaluation process has been refined and staff is working toward a more efficient recommendation process.

Mr. Joe Kahn, FDEP, added FDEP does not anticipate needing the budget approved by the Legislative Budget Committee this year.

Mr. Curt Williams, Agriculture, did not fully understand all the projects and suggested a visual aid, such as sticky notes, during the ranking process.

Ms. Heather Young, Regional Planning Council, appreciated the feedback from the Steering Committee but having their expectations from the beginning would be more helpful. Also, having the first round of adjustments completed on the spreadsheets before the Management Committee begins evaluating would also be more efficient.

Mr. Dave Bruzek, Industry, felt the process had matured to where necessary information in input and provides an equal platform for everyone to evaluate.

Dr. Mauricio Arias, Academia, liked how the Total Nitrogen Reduction was a main part of the required calculations and wants to see applicants explain how they will ensure their reduction target. Dr. Arias

asked if there is an opportunity for studies to be funded. Ms. Rogers explained there is funding available through District or FDEP (TMDL funding/Total Maximum Daily Load) funding.

Mr. Rick Owen, State Parks, appreciated how the stakeholder process was driven by those who participated in the meetings, both springs funding as well as Surface Water Improvement (SWIM) Plans and are represented very well by the District. Mr. Owen would like to see how the SWIM Plans improve as these projects are implemented.

5. Update: Rainbow River Quantifiable Objectives Update

Mr. Sky Notestein, Springs and Environmental Flows manager, presented a technical update on the Rainbow River. He explained the SWIM report was completed in 2015 and data has been evaluated in relation to the quantifiable objectives. Mr. Notestein explained the minimum flow value was not yet established in 2015; It was completed in July 2016 and resulted in a five percent allowable reduction of natural flows for the purpose of meeting human needs, or 95 percent minimum flow. Currently the natural flow is at 98 percent.

Mr. Notestein explained there are seven surface water quality stations on the river, as well as several spring vent stations, which staff collect data from quarterly. The SWIM Plan objective for water clarity river wide is 100 feet or greater, which is not being met throughout the river. However, the stations vary in clarity due to the varying levels of chlorophyll concentration throughout the river. Mr. Notestein also stated the current nitrate levels well exceed the water quality target of less than 0.35 milligrams of nitrate per liter (mg/L).

Mr. Notestein explained the spring flow has wide variations in discharge, which are likely being driven by rain flow patterns, because human use withdrawals remain relatively consistent year after year. Mr. Mickel asked whether alterations to the springshed in storm water changes are captured in the two percent current human use. Mr. Notestein replied in the affirmative, adding that it is primarily human use, or groundwater withdrawal.

Mr. Notestein explained the submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) quantifiable objective is greater than 65 percent coverage of desirable species and less than 10 percent of undesirables. He explained in December of 2018 the District used semi-random quadrants to obtain the most recent data set of SAV coverage. Overall, there is 28 percent coverage of desirable SAV and 20 percent undesirable SAV coverage river wide, which does not meet the quantifiable objective. Mr. Notestein identified two of the dominant species in this river are *Sagittaria kurziana* (in the upper river) and filamentous algae (in the lower river). Dr. Anastasiou explained the lower part of the river was heavily mined until 1960, and wherever there is a disturbance, filamentous algae are likely to move in.

Ms. Brockway asked whether the Management Committee ever discussed having two different objectives in the upper and lower part of the river. Dr. Anastasiou said the committee decided to have one objective because the upper part of the river had such good clarity. Ms. Brockway suggested this may be difficult for people to comprehend because the water at the upper portion of the river is contradictory to the overall average of data collected and mentioned analyzing data solely from the lower portion of the river.

Mr. Mickel suggested to add rainfall to the graph to show the correlation. Mr. Notestein explained it is difficult to define direct correlation of measured rainfall and river flows due to lag time between the two variables. While quantity of rainfall effects spring discharge, defining the relationship is a challenge as there are many variables that are unique to each of the springsheds which would affect the outcomes.

Dr. Arias asked how far the primary flow measurement station is from the main headspring. Mr. Notestein explained it is about five and a half miles downriver. Dr. Aria inquired about surface water

runoff contributions to river flow and Mr. Notestein explained that the primary source of flow to the river is from spring discharged groundwater.

6. Update: Kings Bay/Crystal River Quantifiable Objectives Update

Dr. Chris Anastasiou, chief environmental scientist, presented updates to the quantifiable objectives for Crystal River and Kings Bay. Kings Bay and Crystal River is infinitely more complex than Rainbow River because it is spring fed but also very tidal. Like Rainbow River, Dr. Anastasiou explained, the minimum flow had not yet been set when the SWIM Plan was developed for Kings Bay and Crystal River. The new target is 89 percent minimum flow.

Dr. Anastasiou explained there are 12 stations located throughout Kings Bay to monitor the water quality. The quantifiable objective for water clarity in Kings Bay is set at 20 feet in the river and 60 feet in the headspring. The current average is six feet river wide and 22 feet at the headspring. Dr. Anastasiou said this is partly due to chlorophyll concentration, which is currently more than double the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) of 2.0 mg/L. Total Nitrogen concentration falls below the TMDL of 0.28 mg/L. The TMDL for phosphorus is 0.032 mg/L, which Kings Bay is slightly below as of 2018 data.

Dr. Arias asked why there are phosphorus objectives for Kings Bay and not for the other springs. Dr. Anastasiou explained the objectives are consistent with FDEP and this was the only spring they adopted a phosphorus TMDL. Dr. Arias asked about the total phosphorus in Rainbow River and Dr. Anastasiou said it is consistent on the lower side year after year.

Dr. Anastasiou explained the quantifiable objective for desirable SAV is greater than 65 percent and less than 10 percent undesirable SAV. Average coverage for King's Bay in 2018 was six percent desirable and 14 percent undesirable SAV coverage. Dr. Anastasiou explained filamentous algae is a driver in SAV in Kings Bay.

Mr. Cheek asked if there is a correlation between recreational use and SAV growth. Dr. Anastasiou identified recreational use and manatee grazing as disturbance factors, which promote algae growth. Mr. Cheek asked if data from the Save the River group efforts is being tracked. Dr. Anastasiou said the group has been fairly successful planting grass.

In addition to SAV objectives, Dr. Anastasiou explained there are no net losses of living shoreline along the bay and river. The goal is to increase living shoreline and the District is in support of enhancement projects.

Mr. Wagman asked if these are natural communities and Dr. Anastasiou replied in the affirmative. He explained the planting of vegetation is simply a quicker result for the natural process.

7. Presentation: Upcoming Tasks

Ms. Rogers discussed what to expect over the next year with the fiscal year 2021 spring funding cycle and requested the committee review the proposed meeting dates, which are parallel to the CFI dates, for approval at the next meeting. The committee agreed to keep meeting days and times for next year. They also agreed to set the funding criteria prior the 2021 submission process.

Ms. Rogers explained the meeting dates have not yet been set for the fiscal year 2021 springs funding process. She suggested these be set at the next meeting as well as ranking criteria and prioritization. Ms. Rogers also mentioned the funding criteria for water quantity and land acquisition projects have not been addressed. Mr. Wagman supported the task of having the Management Committee set criteria for water quantity and land acquisition projects in anticipation of future projects.

8. Open Discussion

Mr. Ken Cheek announced an open house in Homosassa to discuss the first phase of the Old Homosassa Septic to Sewer project. The springs funding reduced the cost to property owners from \$32,000 to \$5,800.

Mr. Randy Smith said the Technical Working Group was mentioned many times today and suggested the committee discuss at the August meeting whether to reengage them. Mr. Molligan reminded members the Technical Working Group is not a decision-making body therefore they do not need to follow the Sunshine Law. They can share information among each other and with the Management Committee, however, they cannot make an official recommendation.

9. Adjournment

With no further business the meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m.