

MEETING MINUTES
Springs Coast Management Committee
July 15, 2020

Due to the COVID-19 virus, this meeting was held electronically to reduce public gatherings and practice social distancing.

The Springs Coast Management Committee meeting convened at 1:30 p.m., July 15, 2020, at the Southwest Florida Water Management District, Building 4 Governing Board Room 4134, 2379 Broad Street, Brooksville, Florida 34604-6899.

Members Present

Michael Molligan, SWFWMD
Ken Cheek, Citrus County*
Alys Brockway, Hernando County*
Bob Titterington, Marion County*
Jason Wagman, FWC*
Celeste Lyon, FDEP*
Will Fontaine, FGUA*
Yessenia Escribano, FDACS*
Curt Williams, Agriculture*
Dave Bruzek, Industry*
Ken Frink, City of Crystal River*
Jake Cuarta, Pasco County (alternate)*
Charles Lee, Environmental*
Alana Todd, Regional Planning Council*
Suzy Folsom, Public Supply*
Dr. Mauricio Arias, Academia*

*Attended electronically

Members Absent

Rick Owen, State Parks

SWFWMD Staff

Vivianna Bendixson
Frank Gargano
Randy Smith

Recording Secretary

Lauren Vossler

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

This meeting was held via Skype for Business. 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 May 27, 2020

A motion was made for approval of May 27, 2020_minutes. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

3. Public Input

None.

4. Action Item: Approve FY2022 Springs Funding Process – Vivianna Bendixson, SWFWMD

Ms. Vivianna Bendixson, SWIM supervisor, provided members with a brief overview of the Fiscal Year 2021 (FY2021) funding requests. Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) is finalizing selections on the submitted projects, Ms. Bendixson anticipates the project selection announcement to be made mid-August. Ms. Bendixson supplied the FY2021 FDEP request summary by Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP). She also provided the FY2022 proposed springs funding application process. Ms. Bendixson mentioned evaluations and categories remain the same for the FY2022 process. The only change made for the water quality and water quantity criteria was the language for project readiness. This change was made to clarify the ranking definition.

A motion was made to approve the FY2022 Springs Funding Application, Evaluation and Prioritization process. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Mr. Alan Garri asked if the draft application is related to the spring funding guidance document and nutrient benefit calculation from package plant and commercial septic tank removals. Ms. Bendixson responded FDEP had provided additional information on package plant calculations, and the District will be updating its calculator on what is validated and verified. FDEP has not provided additional guidance on commercial septic tank removal. If an application is submitted with this type of project, it will be addressed on a case-by-case basis until further guidance has been provided by FDEP.

5. Action Item: Approve Future SCMC Meeting Dates – Vivianna Bendixson, SWFWMD

Ms. Bendixson provided a proposed FY2021 timeline and future Springs Coast Management (SCMC) and Springs Steering Committee (SCSC) meeting dates.

A motion was made for approval of future SCMC meeting dates. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

6. Presentation: Nonpoint Source Management Funding Opportunities – Emily Forinash, FDEP

Ms. Emily Forinash provided information regarding two grants.

1. The State Water Quality Assistance Grant (SWAG) that funds capital improvement projects that treat stormwater.
2. The 319H federal grant that administers Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) funds and has a wider range of projects it supports; however, this grant can take up to two years from application to be able to expend funds.

Ms. Forinash provided requirements and eligibility for each grant. Both grants use the same application proposal form which includes grant proposals being accepted year-round and evaluated twice a year. Ms. Forinash explained that FDEP helps administer water and springs restoration projects, but they do not manage them. Ms. Forinash explained how to apply for nonpoint source grant funding. Once evaluations are done for all projects reviewed in that funding cycle, applicants will receive one of four notification emails stating whether they have been selected for state or federal funding, not selected and no further actions is required or not selected and action is required.

Mr. Randy Smith, Natural Systems & Restoration Bureau chief, inquired about the term “shovel ready” and if the project must be shovel ready at the time of application or it will be shovel ready two years later when applicants are likely to receive funding. Ms. Forinash explained it depends on the type of funding that best supports the applicant’s project. With the SWAG grant, being shovel ready at the time of applying would be preferred. With the 319H grant, the applicant can make a note of shovel-ready date and will still receive full points.

Mr. Ken Cheek asked if the 319H grant is federal money would that federalize the project. Ms. Forinash responded in the affirmative.

7. Presentation: Florida's State Revolving Fund Programs – Tim Banks, FDEP

Mr. Tim Banks stated the state revolving fund provides low interest loans for drinking water, wastewater, and storm water facilities. This fund revolves using loan repayments, investment earnings and bond proceeds, and there is approximately \$250 million available annually. Mr. Banks mentioned the two types of programs that are available: The Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) and the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF). Mr. Banks stated the CWSRF has done over \$5.1 billion in loans and the DWSRF has made \$1.4 billion in loans. Mr. Banks said loan terms are generally 20 years but can be 30 years for financially disadvantaged communities. The repayments are semi-annual and financing rates are fixed upon loan execution. Mr. Banks discussed typical projects that are funded which include wastewater collection and treatment, drinking water distribution and treatment, stormwater, and reuse. Types of loans available include planning loan, design loan, planning/design loan (DWSRF only) and construction loan.

Mr. Molligan asked once someone meets the eligibility requirements, is it a first-come, first-served system or is there a prioritization process. Mr. Banks explained there is a prioritization process; however, they have funded all applicants that have met the requirements. Should they run out of money at the end of the fiscal year then the prioritization will be utilized.

8. Discussion: Technical Working Group

Ms. Alys Brockway discussed bringing back the technical working group. The idea of this group is to examine the foundation of Surface Water Improvement and Management Program (SWIM) plans and updates and potentially update quantifiable objective documents.

Dr. Maurice Arias is highly supportive of bringing this technical working group back. Dr. Arias suggest discussing the science behind algae blooms and the status of coastal springs in Florida.

Mr. Randy Smith mentioned we would like to keep a narrow scope for our staff and other technical working group members. He agreed that quantifiable objectives review deserves attention which could lead to some adjustments. He suggested that the committee bring proposals and member suggestions to the next meeting.

9. Open Discussion

10. Adjournment

With no further business the meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.