

MEETING SUMMARY

Agricultural and Green Industry Joint Advisory Committee Southwest Florida Water Management District December 3, 2019

The Agricultural (AAC) and Green Industry (GIAC) Advisory Committee of the Southwest Florida Water Management District convened for a meeting at 9:00 a.m., September 5, 2019, at the Tampa Service Office, 7601 US Highway 301 North, Tampa, Florida.

Committee Members Present

Chair Phil Christman, Florida Recreation and Parks Assoc.
John Miragliotta, FL Irrigation Society
Travis Council, Turf Producers of Florida
Jonathan Brown, Peace River Valley Citrus Growers Assoc.
Curt Williams, FL Farm Bureau Federation
Dale Lewis, FL Nursery, Growers & Landscape Assoc.
BJ Jarvis, UF/IFAS
Eric Dixon, FL Golf Course Sup Assoc.
Alan Jones, FL Fruit and Veg Assoc.
Mac Carraway, FL Turfgrass Assoc.
Shaun O'Brien, FL Turf Producers Assoc.
Dennis Carlton, Jr., FL Cattleman's Assoc.
Michael Matteson, FL Citrus Mutual

Liaison

Michelle Williamson

Staff Members Present

Caroline Browning, Facilitator
Michael Molligan
Ross Morton
April Breton
Mark Luchte
Ken Griner

Recording Secretary

Kelly Page

Approved summaries from previous meetings can be found on the District's website WaterMatters.org.

1. Call to Order and Introductions

Chair Phil Christman called the meeting to order. He welcomed the committee and members introduced themselves.

2. Approval of September 5, 2019 Minutes

Members unanimously voted for approval of the September 5, 2019 meeting minutes.

3. Additions and Deletions to the Agenda

None

4. Public Comments

None

5. Moving Forward with Best Management Practices (BMPs)

Ms. Jessica Stempien, Office of Agricultural Water Policy (OAWP), Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS), provided a presentation on the agricultural best management practices, which are always changing to meet the needs of the legislature and statutes. Ms. Stempien shared OAWP's mission and goals, which include expanding and enhancing agricultural best management practices (BMP) implementation, ensuring agricultural water availability, and managing cost-share programs that support agricultural non-point source BMP implementation and water resource protection projects. Ms. Stempien also shared current agricultural BMP research and agricultural water supply planning.

Mr. Matt Warren, Field Operations, FDACS, discussed the history of the FDACS BMP program, the responsibilities of the field operations section and enrollment metrics. He explained 54 percent of total agricultural acres statewide are enrolled (47 percent within the District) in the BMP program and their goal is to get 100 percent enrolled. Mr. Warren mentioned those within a Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP) are required to enroll and those not within a BMAP are voluntary.

Mr. Curt Williams asked when the meetings with the small farms BMP manual will start up again. Ms. Stempien replied this is on FDACS' rulemaking initiatives list and they want to get through session before this group starts up again.

Mr. Alan Jones asked for explanation on the increase in vegetable production over the next 20 years because he suggests there has been a drastic decline in the last 20 years. Ms. Stempien explained different data sources are used and she could have someone come in to provide a detailed explanation.

Mr. Mac Carraway, Mr. Jones, and Mr. Travis Council inquired about the implementation verification process, particularly with noncompliance. Mr. Warren explained the team will look through fertilizer records and will work with the cooperators to meet compliance. Once all FDACS efforts have been exhausted, the noncompliance goes to FDEP. Mr. Warren noted this compliance is only required for those within a Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP). Those outside a BMAP are strictly voluntary.

Mr. Jones referred to the growing agriculture population and asked whether FDACS anticipates the outreach program. Mr. Warren explained the program is always a challenge because it is difficult to get producers to come to a meeting. Mr. Jones also asked whether there is opportunity for a fertilizer certification program and Warren replied in the affirmative.

Mr. Jones suggested templates to print from the website so data can be consistently calibrated.

6. Citrus Task Force (CTF) Update

Mr. Ross Morton, ombudsman, provided an update on the Citrus Task Force, which include improvements on surface permitting processes, water use permitting, and FARMS. Mr. Mark Luchte explained the surface water permitting improvements, which include waving one round of the five-year recertifications, converting some formal permits to exemptions, and the development of the agriculture team succession plan. Mr. Morton also touched base on improvements in the Water Use section, which include updating the data entry system, adjustments to overpumpage evaluations, an AGMOD update, and water credit rule change.

Members expressed their gratitude to the CTF for looking into ways to reduce costs to the producer. Members asked for the Governing Board to support CTF efforts.

7. Water Use Permit Allocations

Ms. April Breton, Water Use Permit Manager, provided a presentation on water use allocations for agriculture, landscape and recreation. She explained conditions for permit issuance as well as the tools involved in evaluating permitted quantities.

Mr. Carraway asked what the current default is for the duration of a permit. Ms. Breton replied 20 years, unless the permittee requests less.

8. Governing Board Liaison Comments

Ms. Michelle Williamson thanked the committee for their participation and explained their feedback provides invaluable support back to staff and the Governing Board. Regarding the process of moving the FARMS program out of rule and into a Governing Board policy, Ms. Williamson

explained the Governing Board has directed staff to add water quality Best Management Practices (BMPs) throughout the entire District as an eligibility in the new policy, and she looks forward to getting this passed in April of 2020.

9. Development of agenda topics for the next Agricultural and Green Industry Advisory Committee meeting at 10:00 a.m. on March 10, 2020 in the District's Tampa Office.

Mr. Morton will be providing an update on the CTF; Ms. BJ Jarvis explained Dr. Dukes would like to provide an update on agricultural BMPs and Mary Luske has new information on stormwater ponds health and functionality.

Mr. Alan Jones thanked the District for developing an understanding of the water quality concerns and suggested discussion on the outreach program in order to help facilitate education to growers.

Mr. Curt Williams requested information on the M-CORES Task Force planning to address potential impacts on agriculture lands/water quality. Mr. Molligan explained the District has a member for each project sitting on the Task Force and can provide information, if any is available.

10. Announcements and Other Business

None

11. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 11:22 a.m.