

MEETING SUMMARY

Agricultural and Green Industry Advisory Committee Southwest Florida Water Management District March 10, 2020

The Agricultural (AAC) and Green Industry (GIAC) Advisory Committee of the Southwest Florida Water Management District convened for a meeting at 10:00 a.m., March 10, 2020, 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
Jonathan Brown, Peace River Valley Citrus Growers Assoc.
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.
Dennis Carlton, Jr., FL Cattleman's Assoc.
Andy Neuhoffer, FL Farm Bureau Assoc.

Liaison

Michelle Williamson

Staff Members Present

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

Other

Dr. Michael Dukes, IFAS

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 December 3, 2019 Minutes

Members unanimously voted for approval of the December 3, 2019 meeting minutes.

3. Additions and Deletions to the Agenda

None

4. Public Comments

None

5. UF/IFAS Best Management Practice Research and Extension

Dr. Michael Dukes, IFAS, provided an update on agricultural Best Management Practice (BMP) research projects, which are in effort to reduce the Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs). Projects include:

- Citrus nutrition and water management – addition of organic amendments as well as cover crops, which hold more water as well as some nutrients.
- Compact bed geometry, which results in less water and nutrients required to present the same yields. Other benefits include worker safety and potentially fewer negative effects from environmental hazards (i.e. hurricanes). *This is not yet a BMP but very well could become one.*
- Soil moisture sensors – irrigated ranges can be developed over time to reduce water use.

- Row crop research – control-released nitrogen on crops such as corn and carrot; currently working on revising BMP
- Banding fertilizer – this is precision advertising for agriculture, known as the four R's program: right source, right rate, right time, and right place; helps bring awareness to growers.

Mr. Alan Jones thanked Dr. Duker for bringing the information to the committee and suggested the agricultural industry work with FDACS to brand the four R's certification program.

Mr. Mac Carraway asked if there would be an urban component to the four R's. He explained it would benefit the turf grass industry as well. Dr. Duker agreed.

6. Final Update on the 12 Items of Feedback Received as a Result of the CTF Initiative

Mr. Ross Morton, ombudsman, provided a final update on the Citrus Task Force (CTF), which included the final two proposals: addressing meter testing costs and monthly data pumpage collection and entry. Mr. Morton also explained the next steps, which include a FARMS model economic update.

Committee members discussed their appreciation for the CTF's work. They discussed drafting a resolution to express their confidence in the work of the CTF. The District will provide the committee members a copy of the report for their review. Pending the review of the report the committee will consider drafting and voting for a resolution in support of the District's Citrus Task Force at the next meeting.

Mr. Jones asked for an explanation of an AMR/AMI technology. Mr. Morton explained the rain station records the data and helps determine what kind of technology needs to be set up. He explained it is a case by case situation and could potentially become a FARMS-share cost.

Mr. Christman asked whether leaks can be detected through this process. Mr. Morton explained the data can be made available immediately depending on the software/technology that is utilized which can assist in identifying a leak.

7. FARMS Policy Update and Status of the Model FARMS Economic Study

Mr. Randy Smith, Natural Systems and Restoration bureau chief, provided an update on the FARMS policy, which includes the addition of the northern region as a priority region, requires participants enroll in FDACS BMP through Notice of Intent, and expanded eligibility to include water quality BMP's Districtwide. Mr. Smith explained the Governing Board approved the policy at the February Board meeting and District legal counsel will be moving forward to repeal the District Rule. Mr. Smith also mentioned the District is currently working with a consultant on the model FARMS economic study. He said a draft economic study will be brought to a future committee meeting for review.

8. Hydrologic Conditions Update

Michael Molligan, Employee and External Relations division director, discussed the District's hydrologic conditions. He explained on a 12-month calendar, the southern part of the District is overall drier whereas the north is more wet. Mr. Molligan also mentioned February rainfall was drier than normal.

9. Advisory Committee Engagement Survey Results

Mr. Molligan provided results from the advisory committee outreach survey staff conducted in January. He explained staff are reviewing the feedback to look for ways to improve the advisory committee processes and functions.

10. Legislative Update

Mr. Molligan provided information on legislative statistics, Senate confirmations, and bill tracking. Bills moving forward include water quality improvements, aquatic preserve, and Citrus/Hernando Waterways Restoration Council.

In response to proposed legislation that would ban domestic wastewater discharges into surface waters, Mr. Carraway asked how much domestic wastewater is discharging in the Southwest District. Mr. Molligan said the largest single discharge that he was aware of comes from the city of Tampa with about 50 million gallons per day. Mr. Molligan pointed out that the federal Clean Water Act requires the water receive a certain level of treatment (AWS) before being discharged.

Mr. Carraway asked if there was anything specific in the stormwater design update. Mr. Molligan explained the drive is reduction in nutrients, and the advanced science in stormwater ponds will assist in creating this reduction. Mr. Molligan further explained this rule does not change whether a permit is needed; agriculture is still exempt from these.

11. Governing Board Liaison Comments

Ms. Michelle Williamson thanked committee members for their participation and expressed the importance to the Governing Board.

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

Members would like to discuss the CTF report at the next meeting.

13. Announcements and Other Business

None

14. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 11:48 a.m.