

**MEETING SUMMARY**  
**Environmental Advisory Committee**  
**Southwest Florida Water Management District**  
**July 14, 2020**

The Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) of the Southwest Florida Water Management District convened for a regular meeting at 10:00 a.m., July 14, 2020 via remote session from the Brooksville Service Office, 2379 Broad Street, Florida 34604.

**Committee Members Present via Skype**

Jennifer Hecker, Coastal and Heartland NEP  
Becky Ayech, Environmental Confederation of SW FL  
Gordon Colvin, Save the Homosassa River Alliance  
Ed Sherwood, Tampa Bay Estuary Program  
Mark Alderson, Sarasota Bay Estuary Program  
Sid Flannery, Sierra Club Tampa Bay  
Mike Burton, Manatee Chamber of Commerce  
Alan Bailey, Florida Trail Association  
Paul Crowell, Keystone Civic Association  
Dan Savercool, St. Petersburg Audubon Society  
Dwayne Carlton, Ocala/Marion County, Chamber & Economic Partnership

**Recording Secretary**

Kelly Page

**Staff Members Present**

Virginia Singer, Facilitator  
Michael Molligan  
Amanda Rice  
Jennette Seachrist  
Randy Smith  
Chris Anastasiou  
Lori Manuel  
Scott Letasi  
Joseph Quinn  
Wendy Tipton  
Eryn Worthington  
Robyn Felix  
Tamera McBride  
JP Marchand  
Doug Leeper  
Randy Emberg

Approved summaries from previous meetings can be found on the District's website at [WaterMatters.org](http://WaterMatters.org).  
*The numbers preceding the items below correspond to the order of presentation.*

**1. Call to Order and Introductions**

Ms. Jennifer Hecker called the meeting to order and called role.

**2. Additions and Deletions to the Agenda**

Public Comment was added after the original agenda was published.

**3. Approval of the January 14, 2020 Meeting Summary**

*The committee unanimously approved the January 14, 2020 meeting minutes.*

**4. Public Comments**

There were no public comments presented.

**5. Cooperative Funding Initiative Updates**

Mr. Scott Letasi, Project Management office chief, provided the schedule of fiscal year (FY) 2022 Cooperative Funding Initiative (CFI) funding cycle as well as CFI applications changes, third party reviews, cost increase guidelines and use of contingency funds. Mr. Letasi is requesting feedback on the five percent contingency threshold for construction projects 2022 CFI projects and beyond.

Members were uncertain about the five percent contingency on project cost increase and asked how the District decided this. Mr. Letasi explained that some of the Governing Board members feel five percent is an appropriate limit that emphasizes the importance of a well vetted design prior to construction. Feedback will be shared at the July Governing Board meeting as part of the CFI Update

presentation.

Ms. Becky Ayech expressed her concern with some projects allowing up to 10 percent and requested the District reconsider the five percent.

Mr. Dan Savercool commented on the five percent contingency, stating the “amount of the contingency depends on the type of construction, level of uncertainty, and the completeness of the design. The lowest contingency is typically five percent when the design is very complete, site conditions are very well understood, and the construction risk is low (no risk of unknown conditions, escalating disposal volumes, etc.). On the other hand, for higher risk projects 25 percent or even higher is possible if there are many unknowns, significant construction risks, limited design, etc.”

Mr. Mark Alderson identified concerns with the CFI process, which include returning to the Governing Board for scope changes, use of federal funds, and restrictions of using cash only. Mr. Letasi confirmed the mentioned requirements in the CFI process and suggested to speak with him more elaboratively regarding cash only.

## **6. Regional Water Supply Plan**

Mr. Joseph Quinn, Water Supply project manager, provided an update to the Regional Water Supply Plan (RWSP). Mr. Quinn explained the RWSP serves as a long-range (20-year) planning guide on water supply and water resource management decisions. Current five-year evaluation suggests water supply and demands can be met through 2040.

Mr. Sid Flannery asked if there are any specific surface water sources, particularly creeks or rivers that are anticipated for use within the planning period. Mr. Quinn explained staff are primarily looking at existing sources. Mr. Flannery asked whether existing users increasing their storage capacity are evaluated to make sure they are staying within the minimum flows level (MFL). Mr. Quinn replied in the affirmative.

Ms. Ayech asked whether the Myakka River is considered a surface water source. Mr. Quinn explained that the Myakka is very limited and no projects are proposed at this point. Ms. Ayech agreed the Myakka River should not be considered as a source.

Ms. Ayech asked whether the District is actually reserving water quantity. Mr. Quinn replied in the affirmative and identified the Upper Peace River/Lake Hancock reservation. Ms. Ayech congratulated the RWSP team for their efforts and would like to see more reservation projects.

Ms. Ayech referred to brackish water desal and asked how reject water would be disposed of. Mr. Quinn explained deep well injections are one of a few options, but they are addressed on a case-by-case basis. Ms. Ayech also asked whether it could be injected deep enough that it would not affect groundwater sources yet add to the recharge in order to reverse the pressure of saltwater intrusion. Mr. Quinn suggested the team has considered highly treated reclaimed water (not brine water) injections for such recharge capability.

Ms. Ayech suggested staff reevaluate the estimated decline in Agricultural water demands of nine million gallons per day due to land use changes as she feels this number should be greater.

Ms. Ayech expressed her concern with nitrogen levels related to the use of reclaimed water for agriculture and asked whether there are efforts to treat more to remove nitrogen and phosphorous loadings. Mr. Quinn clarified that reclaim water uses have primarily been for citrus, but the expansion of such use is limited. She suggested it is not helpful to have fertilizer bans if reclaimed water is putting more nutrients into the system. Members agreed with Ms. Ayech's concern and added that a key component of restricting nutrient input is restricting where it is applied as well.

Ms. Ayech also suggested bringing water conservation commercials back.

**7. ePermitting Replacement Project**

Ms. Eryn Worthington, Regulatory Support project manager, and Wendy Tipton, Regulatory Support business analyst, provided an update on the ePermitting Replacement Project. Regulation, in partnership with ITB and Appian consultants, have begun the 3-5-year ePermitting Replacement Project by focusing on the redesign of ERP and eCompliance submittal to be followed by Compliance, Water Use and Well Construction Permits.

Ms. Ayech complimented the team and asked if this would eliminate or reduce incomplete data input. Ms. Worthington responded in the affirmative and explained there would still be some requests for additional information as needed but reduced greatly.

**8. Draft 2020 MFL Priority List and Schedule**

Chris Zajac, Environmental Flows and Assessments manager, discussed the proposed 2020 priority list and schedule as well as legal requirements and proposed changes.

Mr. Mark Anderson suggested the Lower Braden River should not be moved back too far because it is an important fishery.

Mr. Flannery asked whether the Lower Peace River (LPR) report includes the MFL for Shell Creek and will the proposed MFL for Lower Shell Creek be changed. Mr. Zajac said the LPR report does include Lower Shell Creek and staff do not anticipate MFLs changing for Lower Shell Creek at this time. Lower Shell Creek is being moved to 2021 to allow staff additional time to develop the recovery strategy.

Ms. Ayech referred to the Southern Water Use Caution Area and asked what intention is behind the MFL set for the aquifer. Ms. Tamera McBride, Resource Evaluation manager, explained the SWUCA MFL is set to halt the rate. Mr. JP Marchand, Water Resource bureau chief, explained when the current SWIMAL was adopted the intent was to slow the rate with the ultimate goal to halt the rate. He said reevaluation will be looking to see if additional data changes that rate. Ms. Ayech asked whether halting saltwater intrusion is an option, and Mr. Marchand suggested staff cannot predict future objectives. Current objectives are to slow the rate and the next steps will be to stop it.

**9. Advisory Committee Engagement Survey Results**

Mr. Michael Molligan, Employee and External Relations Division director, provided results from the advisory committee outreach survey staff conducted in December and January.

Committee members asked whether a report is given to the Governing Board following each meeting and Mr. Molligan replied in the affirmative. Members appreciate when Governing Board members are in attendance and suggested the liaison report be orally presented at Governing Board meetings.

***Ms. Ayech made a motion for the liaison to provide an oral report at the Governing Board meeting once the committee has met. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.***

Ms. Ayech requested more actionable items to come before the committee. Ms. Hecker suggested staff to flag items that will be going before the Governing Board for action so the Environmental Advisory Committee has an opportunity to comment.

**10. Hydrologic Conditions Update**

Mr. Molligan provided an update on hydrological conditions as of June 23, 2020. He explained the dry season rainfall is above normal to date. Mr. Molligan explained the rainfall for June is mostly within normal range.

Members appreciate the updates and would like to continue receiving them.

**11. Governing Board Liaison Comments**

None

**12. Open Discussion and Development of agenda topics for the Environmental Advisory Committee meeting in the District's Tampa Office tentatively on October 13, 2020 at 10:00am.**

- Update on Flatford Swamp project, including a discussion on the model used to assess ag water in the Upper Myakka as well as the process of injection wells
- Upper Myakka mining expansion
- District's knowledge and efforts of exotict and native flora and measures being taken to control them
- Update on stakeholder Hillsborough MFLs
- Algae issue the District is working with FWC on for Charlotte Harbor. Members would like to know the situation and also requested to include seagrasses.
- Any items going before the Governing Board that the committee could take action on as well as upcoming Board topics or public commenting occuring in that timeframe for the committee to weigh in
- Various strategies for saltwater intrusion the District is considering other than aquifer levels
- Effect of urbanization on rainfall patterns

**13. Announcements and Other Business**

Mr. Flannery applauded the District for allowing comments during the public review of MFLs.

**14. Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.