

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
Springs Coast Steering Committee
Brooksville, Florida January 10, 2018

The Springs Coast Steering Committee convened at 2:02 p.m., January 10, 2018, at the Southwest Florida Water Management District Governing Board Room, 2379 Broad Street, Brooksville, Florida.

Members Present

Kelly Rice, SWFWMD, Chair
Robert Holmes, City of Crystal River Councilman
Scott Carnahan, Citrus County Commissioner (via telephone)
Ron Oakley, Pasco County Commissioner
Tom Frick, FDEP
Kathy Bryant, Marion County Commissioner (via telephone)
Shannon Wright, FWC
Ray Scott, FDACS

Members Absent

Nick Nicholson, Hernando County Commissioner

SWFWMD Staff

Chris Anastasiou
Mary Kassabaum
Sky Notestein
Jennette Seachrist
Danielle Rogers

Recording Secretary

Kelly Schwegel, SWFWMD

Others Present

Terry Hansen, DEP

SWFWMD – Southwest Florida Water Management District
FDACS – Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

FDEP – Florida Department of Environmental Protection
FWC – Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

A list of others present who signed the attendance sheet is filed in the permanent files of the Springs Coast Steering Committee.

1. Call to Order and Roll

Committee Chair Rice called the meeting to order. Ms. Kelly Schwegel called the roll and confirmed a quorum.

Committee Chair Rice stated the District's Governing Board approved the adoption of the Chassahowitzka and Homosassa SWIM Plans, which includes the adoption of SWIM plans for all five of the first magnitude springs systems (Rainbow, Crystal River/Kings Bay, Weeki Wachee River, Homosassa River, and Chassahowitzka River).

Committee Chair Rice stated the Management Committee met monthly through November to develop a master list of projects for DEP springs funding consideration, and this recommended list will be presented today for the Steering Committee's recommendation.

2. Action Item: Minutes Approval from 07/12/2017

Committee Chair Rice called for the motion to approve the minutes for the July 12, 2017 meeting.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the July 12, 2017 meeting minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Public Input

There were no blue cards presented for public input.

4. DEP Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP) update – Terry Hansen, DEP

Mr. Terry Hansen, DEP basin coordinator, explained the guiding legislation of the Florida Springs Protection Act (2016-1), which requires all Outstanding Florida Springs to adopt the BMAP within two years of initiation, including five-year incremental milestones and an implementation plan that is designed to achieve the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) no more than 20 years after adoption.

Mr. Hansen pointed out the Onsite Sewage Treatment and Disposal Systems (OSTDS) locations, BMAP area, springshed and Priority Focus Area (PFA) of Crystal River/Kings Bay, which are used to determine the efforts needed to achieve the TMDL. Mr. Hansen identified these features within Homosassa and Chassahowitzka as well, noting the PFA was almost the entire springshed for Crystal River/Kings Bay. In these PFA areas, the septic loading number is greater than 20 percent, which means we are mandated to have an OSTDS remediation plan. There are other areas (Chassahowitzka PFA) not necessarily required, but DEP deems an OSTDS remediation plan is necessary in order to achieve the TMDL.

DEP is working with local governments and health departments to find ways to assist in funding new nitrogen reducing septic systems/sewer connections for homeowners. Mr. Frick added that the current law states conventional septic tanks are going to be prohibited once the BMAPS go in place on June 30th, 2018. Added costs for a new system can be \$5,000 up to \$25,000 for homeowners.

Commissioner Scott Carnahan asked if bioreactors are being considered and Mr. Frick stated they are permissible through the department of health, but the process of monitoring that permit is too bureaucratic for homeowners to maintain.

Mr. Brian Armstrong asked to clarify whether there will be no septic installations within those PFA's, and Mr. Frick responded that homeowners can still put in a septic tank, but it must be an approved nitrogen reducing system. This will go into effect once the BMAPS get signed, which will be no later than June 30, 2018.

Commissioner Ron Oakley asked when the standard changed that homeowners could hook up to sewer systems. Mr. Hansen replied that times have changed and business as usual is no longer good enough for the environment.

Committee Chair Rice asked if local governments have clearly defined what an advanced septic system is. Mr. Frick responded that DEP is working with the health departments of each county in providing a variety of solutions for homeowners.

Commissioner Kathy Bryant questioned if there will be an extension offered since we have not identified the exact systems permitted and we know they are costly, and Mr. Frick responded that there are solutions available with varying costs. He added that the law is written, which is why DEP is offering funding assistance to help alleviate these costs to municipalities and to homeowners.

Committee Chair Rice asked if all PFA's have been clearly defined geographically and Mr. Hansen responded yes, and they have been shared with District staff, counties and health departments, as well as publicly.

5. Draft District Cooperative Funding Initiative (CFI) Septic and Package Plant Conversion Project Controls – Jennette Seachrist

Ms. Jennette Seachrist, P.E., presented the draft CFI septic and package plant control language that will be presented to the Governing Board at their January 23rd meeting. These draft controls will be used as the basis for funding projects which result in PFA nitrogen load reductions. District staff

have drafted these controls in order to ensure the District's investment in septic conversion projects will be protected.

These draft controls/requirements include:

1. Project must be located within a PFA
2. Project must be funded by DEP/state, with an expected funding split of DEP 50%; local government 25%; and District 25%. Any state or federal appropriations and grants would equally reduce the local government and District funding
3. The District will consider funding septic conversion master plans at 50%, with local governments funding 50%
4. Cooperator must have ordinances which require:
 - a. connection if sewer is available within one year following project construction
 - b. proper abandonment of septic tanks
 - c. no new conventional septic systems constructed within PFA
 - d. define enhanced septic system that meets BMAP and FDOH standards or rules.

Ms. Seachrist said this information will be presented to the Governing Board in January and the District will work with the cooperators, stakeholders, and agencies over the next year to refine the controls. Ms. Seachrist requested to return in April to provide an update and seek input from the Steering Committee.

6. Action Item: Approval of Recommended Projects for FY2019 State Springs funding – Sky Notestein

Mr. Sky Notestein identified the Springs Coast Management Committee's (SCMC) accomplishments in 2017, including the approval of the last three of five SWIM plans and the committee's review process for project submittal for DEP springs funding. The SCMC set criteria each project application would need to address in order to qualify for DEP consideration (pounds of nitrogen reduced, cost effectiveness, project completion dates, locations, etc.). The SCMC ultimately elected to recommend the complete list of projects be forwarded to the Steering Committee for consideration.

Mr. Notestein pointed out the locations of the projects as well as the types of projects for each springshed. In addition to the SCMC reviewed projects, there was a late project submission. The District would like to present the project list to the Governing Board in April and to DEP in May.

Committee Chair Rice instructed the committee to take action whether to approve the recommended project list to be presented before the Governing Board. Discussion ensued as to whether the committee should eliminate, or prioritize, any of the funding requests. Chair Rice suggested the committee is not prepared to evaluate each project today and Ms. Seachrist assured the Steering Committee that the Management Committee spent significant time and consideration in determining how to evaluate projects. The Management Committee ultimately decided to have the grantor (DEP) decide which projects would be funded.

The committee made a motion to approve the Management Committee's recommended Springs projects, upon approval of the District's Governing Board, to the DEP for further review and funding consideration. The motion passed, four in favor against two oppose. Mr. Tom Frick and Mr. Ray Scott abstained from voting.

Mr. John Lubimir, President of Biome Recovery of Florida, presented his submittal for DEP springs funding as a pilot project that will serve as an alternative to disposing septage. A decommissioned wastewater treatment plant in Citrus County is proposed to be retrofitted to remove over 56,000 pounds of nitrogen from land application within the BMAP areas with a cost of less than \$13 per pound. Biome Recovery of Florida is requesting \$2 million from DEP to fund project construction,

which according to Mr. Lubimir will ultimately keep septage pump-out costs lower, help reduce the cost of retrofitting septic systems and make a major contribution in meeting the TMDL requirements.

Committee asked if the County was in partnership with Biome Recovery of Florida and Mr. Lubimir said yes, and the partnership benefits the County while providing a testing ground for the retrofit system. Ms. Seachrist told the committee the District performed a high-level review using the data received from Biome Recovery of Florida, and Mr. Lubimir added that this project has been through a six-month vetting process through the St. John's Water Management District, before the company elected to withdraw (property owner of site was no longer available).

A motion was made and seconded to recommend the committee move the Biome project forward with the other projects. The motion passed unanimously.

7. Springs systems SWIM plans – Dr. Chris Anastasiou

Dr. Chris Anastasiou, Chief Environmental Scientist, informed the committee that District staff are currently assessing the quantifiable objectives for each of the SWIM plans, and has asked to present these findings at a future committee meeting.

8. Action Item: Approval for upcoming meeting dates

The committee has accepted April 4th and July 11th of 2018 for the next committee meeting dates.

9. Adjournment

Committee Chair Rice adjourned the meeting at 3:51 p.m.