

MEETING SUMMARY
Environmental Advisory Committee
Southwest Florida Water Management District
January 10, 2017

The Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) of the Southwest Florida Water Management District convened for a regular meeting at 1:30 p.m., January 10, 2017 at the Tampa Service Office, 7601 US Highway 301 North, Tampa, Florida 33637.

Committee Members Present

Chair Mark Alderson, Sarasota Bay National Estuary Program
Alan Bailey, Florida Trail Association – Suncoast Chapter
Julie Byrne, Sarasota Audubon Society
Dwayne Carlton, Ocala/Marion County, Chamber & Economic Partnership
Paul Crowell, Keystone Civic Association
Alan Grubman, Save the Homosassa River Alliance
Holly Greening, Tampa Bay Estuary Program
Allain Hale, Environmental Confederation of Southwest Florida
Jennifer Hecker, Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program

Governing Board Member Present

Michelle Williamson

Others Present

Dave Jellerson

Staff Members Present

Cara Martin, Facilitator
Terri Behling
April Breton
Joel Brown
Eric DeHaven
Don Ellison
Ken Frink
Darrin Herbst
Diana Koontz
Lisann Morris, P.E.
Tara Poulton
David Rathke
Jennette Seachrist
Susanna Martinez Tarokh
Will VanGelder

Recording Secretary

Dennis Cockrell

A list of others present who signed the attendance roster is filed in the permanent records of the District. Approved summaries from previous meetings can be found on the District's website at WaterMatters.org.

The numbers preceding the items below correspond to the order of presentation.

1. Call to Order and Introductions

Chair Mark Alderson called the meeting, welcomed members, staff, and interested persons and asked for member introductions.

2. Additions and Deletions to the Agenda

Ms. Cara Martin, Board and Executive Services Manager, noted that there were no additions or deletions to the agenda

3. Approval of the October 18, 2016 Meeting Summary

Members approved the October 18, 2016 meeting summary with no changes.

4. Public Comments

There were no public comments at this time.

5. Mosaic Sinkhole Update

Mr. Dave Jellerson, Senior Director for Environmental and Phosphate Projects, spoke to the committee regarding the gypsum stack sinkhole at Mosaic's New Wales Plant.

Once the sinkhole was determined to exist, slurry was diverted from the pond into another on-site pond, pumps were used to remove the remaining water from the affected pond, pumping from an on-site recovery well was started, and concerned citizens were offered free testing of private wells.

Mosaic entered into a consent order with FDEP to start sealing the sinkhole and continue the removal of water using the recovery on-site well. As part of the consent order, another recovery well (P4) is being added to the site down-stream of the current recovery well to ensure that no contaminants are missed. Mr. Jellerson told members that currently none of the private wells that Mosaic has tested has shown any of the contaminants that were in the water lost to the sinkhole. Mr. Jellerson did note that about 80 of the wells tested did show poor water quality, which was not uncommon for wells that were installed decades ago.

Members inquired about the depth of the new recovery well P4 and how long pumping from the well will take to capture the water that was lost. Mr. Jellerson noted that it would take several years to recover the water and that the well would be cased down to the most productive zone.

6. District Road Evaluation Project

Mr. Will VanGelder, Land Management Manager, reviewed the District's Road Evaluation Project, which identifies what roads are used on the properties, who uses them, and for what reason.

The first phase of this project evaluated three District properties: Starkey Wilderness Preserve, Lower Hillsborough Wilderness Preserve and Cypress Creek Preserve.

Information from stakeholders was used to develop a GIS layer to show the needs of the various users of District lands. These maps were then used to determine the roads utilized to produce a list of what roads could be abandoned.

Based on this review, the District could abandon 69 miles of road on the Starkey site, saving about \$8,694 in maintenance costs; 15 miles could be abandoned at the Lower Hillsborough site saving close to \$1,890; and 35 miles at Cypress Creek saving close to \$1,050.

Members inquired about what will happen to the abandoned roads. Mr. VanGelder told members that the roads would be allowed to revegetate.

Florida Trail Association voiced an interest in assisting with the evaluation of the District Green Swamp property.

7. Lake Pretty and Armistead Lake Level Guidelines

Ms. Diana Koontz, Structure Operations Manager, told members that the lake level guidelines for Lake Pretty and Armistead were reviewed by the District following requests from residents and based on the effects of a rain event in August 2015.

New recommended guidelines were created following the review of data and residents input.

The Committee voted to send its support to the Governing Board for the process used in the review of Lake Pretty and Armistead Lake Levels and recommended that the District use the process as a model for future reviews.

8. Aquifer Recharge at Flatford Swamp for Southern Water Use Caution (SWUCA) Recovery and Natural System Improvement

Ms. Lisanna Morris, P.E., Senior Professional Engineer, presented members with an overview of the Aquifer Recharge Project at Flatford Swamp, that will help with recovery of the SWUCA and improve the salt water intrusion minimum aquifer levels.

Members were concerned about the outreach for the downstream water use permittees. Ms. Morris stated the District is actively engaged in outreach to the public including a Public Information Open House at the District's Sarasota office on Monday, January 9, 2017 from 3:30 – 5:30 p.m.

Members asked why there was too much water flowing into the swamp. Mr. Morris noted that changes to the basin and run-off from agricultural operations due to clay confinement in the area is causing the excess water.

Members asked about the effects downstream of removing the “excess water” from the system. Ms. Morris noted that during the desktop modeling the downstream system would not be impacted.

Members asked about the difference between this project and other ASR projects. Mr. Morris noted that this project is for aquifer recharge not storage and recovering, meaning that the water injected as part of this project is not meant to be withdrawn at a later date.

Members voted to send their support of the “Test Phase” of this project to the Governing Board and requested additional updates of this project as test results become available.

9. Revisions to Governing Board Central Florida Initiative (CFI) Policy (130-4)

Mr. Eric DeHaven, Assistant Director, Resource Management, reviewed the changes that are being proposed to District Board Policy 130-4, Cooperative Funding Initiative.

The two major changes being made, the addition of a third-party review for projects over 5 million dollars and the removal of the reference to the Basin Boards and the delegation to those boards.

Members asked who selects the third party to review the project. Mr. DeHaven told members that the District selects the firm to do the review, using the District's General Engineering Services contract.

Members were confused by the meaning of the statement in the proposed policy “*It is the intent of the District's Governing Board that the quantity made available...*” members asked that this statement be made clearer and less confusing.

10. Minimum Flows and Levels for Rainbow River, Crystal River/Kings Bay and Pithlachascotee River

Mr. Eric DeHaven, Assistant Director, Resource Management, stated the District has completed its review of three systems and is in the process of setting the MFLs for two springs systems: the Rainbow River in Marion County, Crystal River/Kings Bay in Citrus County and one river system, the Pithlachascotee River in Pasco County.

The District has made recommendations for the three systems and peer reviews of those recommendations is in the process of being completed. Once the peer reviews have been completed the District will reconcile the recommendations of the peer review panel and then present the MFLs to the Governing Board. Rainbow River is expected to be presented in March 2017, Kings Bay/Crystal River in May 2017 and the Pithlachascotee being presented in June 2017.

Members asked if the District has gotten any support or push-back on the plan for the Rainbow River. Mr. DeHaven told members that the District expects to get some push-back in regard to the quality of pumpage data for the system.

Members voiced a concern about water use permit quantities and the effects those permits might have on the recommended flows and levels. Members were told that during the renewal of the permits the minimum flows and levels are taken into consideration.

11. Next Meeting: April 11, 2017 Facilitating Agricultural Resource Management Systems (FARMS) Tour

12. Announcements and Other Business

13. Adjournment