The Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) of the Southwest Florida Water Management District convened for a regular meeting at 1:30 p.m., October 15, 2013, at the Tampa Service Office, 7601 US Highway 301, North, Tampa, FL 33637.

Committee Members Present
Dwayne Carlton, Chair, Ocala/Marion County COC
Mark Alderson, Vice Chair, Sarasota Bay NEP
Lisa Beever, Charlotte Harbor NEP
Mike Burton, Manatee County COC
Julie Byrne, Sarasota Audubon Society
Paul Crowell, Keystone Civic Association
Holly Greening, Tampa Bay Estuary Program
Alan Grubman, Save the Homosassa River Alliance
Dave Kandz, St. Petersburg Audubon Society
Greg Nowaski, Control Growth Now, Incorporated
Sam Stone, Charlotte County COC

Staff Members Present
Cara Martin, Facilitator
Mark Barcelo
Estella Gray
Michelle Hopkins
Mary Margaret Hull
Joe Quinn
Jennette Seachrist
Lois Sorensen
Jeff Whealton
Cynthia Taylor

Approved summaries from previous meetings can be found on the District's Web site at (www.WaterMatters.org).

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

1. **Call to Order and Introductions**
   Chair Dwayne Carlton called the meeting to order. He welcomed members, staff, and interested persons and asked for member introductions.

2. **Additions and Deletions to the Agenda**
   Ms. Cara Martin, board & executive services manager, stated that because of a delayed presenter, it is necessary to adjust the agenda accordingly.

3. **Approval of the July 15, 2013 Meeting Summary**
   Following consideration, the committee approved the summary of the July 15, 2013 meeting.

4. **Evaluation of Recreation on District Lands**
   Mr. Joe Quinn, land management manager, explained that the District is currently going through a 2013 Recreation Evaluation. At the direction of the Governing Board, a Recreation Ad Hoc Committee was established to evaluate how the District is using public lands for recreation. Per the statutory requirement, Subsection 373.1391(1)(a), Florida Statutes states “lands titled to the Governing Boards of the Districts shall be managed and maintained, to the extent practicable, in such a way as to ensure a balance between public access, recreational purposes, and restoration and protection of their natural state and condition.” Mr. Quinn defined resource-based recreation as activities conducted in the natural environment that can’t be easily duplicated by man.

   Data was provided on District acreage reflecting the following: 449,000 acres of land protected, 105,000 acres less-than-fee protection, 21,000 acres are not suitable or yet available, 100,000 acres managed by partners and 225,000 acres managed solely by the District. Managed zones for District recreation are determined by delineated management zones, logical access points, existing trail networks, historical information and zones based on habitat sensitivity (soil types, erosion potential and imperiled habitats and species). A supply and demand analysis is completed by reviewing the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) and comprehensive plans and following those determinations, the District decides which areas need more protection and which areas are appropriate for recreation. This process is consistent with the proposed evaluation process. A public meeting is held and the Governing Board’s approval obtained. The SCORP was named as the state’s...
official document regarding outdoor recreation planning. Its purpose is to outline a Five-Year Policy Plan and establish a framework for statewide outdoor recreation planning.

Mr. Quinn clarified for committee members that the 449,000 acres of protected lands does include jointly-owned property.

Members inquired about the 225,000 acres of land managed solely by the District. Mr. Quinn stated that the 225,000 acres were reviewed for surplus and acknowledged that the Lake Hancock area (old Florida Plantation property) is on the surplus list.

Mr. Quinn presented information on the Florida Outdoor Recreation Inventory (FORI) and the Outdoor Recreation Participation survey. It was defined as: an in-depth survey of participation in outdoor recreation activities; explores recreation trends in Florida; and offers quantitative insight on recreation demands of residents and tourists in Florida. A major element in determining level of service (LOS) was the relationship between the number of participants and available facilities. They will divide the recreation program into four planning regions. This process will be similar to the current recreation program and how other recreation entities determine usage. The District will use data from the participation survey and FORI to create a LOS for each activity per region. It was announced that the preliminary findings from the evaluation, public comments and survey are available on the District’s website: www.WaterMatters.org/RecreationEvaluation. The District held a public information meeting on October 3, 2013. As of last week, 1,000 comments have been received and a great deal of positive feedback. A Presentation meeting will be held on October 17, 2013 in the Sarasota Service Office and two other meetings are scheduled. All meeting times are 6:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. The next Ad Hoc Committee Meeting is planned for December 10, 2013 at 9:00 a.m. in the Tampa Service Office.

Committee members inquired if the format of the on-line survey was separated out by regions and asked if the District maintains funding for land management. Mr. Quinn assured members that it is broken down by regions to identify the properties that are available, and that the District is doing well managing the lands.

Members expressed an interest in how the District uses volunteers and wanted to be able to find out about volunteer opportunities. Mr. Quinn identified several volunteer participation types.

The members requested an update on the survey results and Mr. Quinn assured a future update.

Committee members asked for a brief update on the surplus lands. Mr. Quinn explained that most of the properties from the declaration of surplus assessment process have been addressed to the board. Mr. Quinn encouraged members to visit the surplus lands assessment’s website.

5. **Hydrologic Conditions Update**

Ms. Lois Sorensen, demand management program manager, presented various graphs representing the current rainfall distribution, groundwater, surface water and public supply data. The two existing water shortage orders, Phase 1 water shortage restrictions for the entire District and Phase III water shortage restrictions for the tri-county Tampa Bay Water, expired on July 31, 2013. Year-round water conservation measures remain in effect for the entire District. Ms. Sorenson stated that the rainy season was productive but episodic. September is the final month of the rainy season and as of October 14, 2013 the rainfall deficit is 3.5 inches, which is statistically in the normal range of fluctuations. The extended forecast through March 2014 is trending towards drier than normal conditions.

Committee members inquired about increased extreme weather patterns due to global warming and District preparations in the Plant City/Dover area for agricultural use of frost-freeze protection water quantities. Ms. Sorensen informed the members that extreme weather patterns is a problem for all levels of government and the District is prepared for frost-freeze events.
6. **Southern Water Use Caution Area (SWUCA) Update**

Mr. Mark Barcelo, senior professional engineer provided an update on SWUCA and the five-year assessment associated with the recovery strategy. The District currently has three Water Use Caution Areas (WUCAs): (1) Northern Tampa Bay which was declared in 1989 and expanded in 2007, (2) Dover/Plant City area which was declared in 2011 and (3) SWUCA area which was declared in 1992. A brief history description and timeline was provided. If the five-year review does not indicate sufficient progress to meet recovery strategy goals, the Governing Board will revise the recovery strategy, as appropriate, to achieve these goals. The Governing Board directed staff to develop a strategy based on the following three guiding principles: contribute to management and resource recovery, protect investments of existing water use permit (WUP) holders, and allow for economic expansion. Mr. Barcelo identified six major elements of SWUCA recovery strategy. These goals consists of restoring minimum flows to the upper Peace River, restoring minimum levels to priority lakes, achieving the Saltwater Intrusion Minimum Aquifer Level (SWIMAL) and ensuring sufficient water supplies for all existing and projected reasonable beneficial uses. There are eight lakes that were identified in the 2006 SWUCA recovery strategy documents. When the strategy was adopted all eight lakes were below their minimum levels. Currently, seven out of the eight lakes are below the adopted minimum levels. Reductions in groundwater withdrawals in the basin have been observed and have helped to stabilize lake levels in that region. Feasibility of lake augmentation, which was done for Lake Lotus, was estimated at three to four million gallons per day (mgd) to meet the minimum level. District staff will need to assess total potential quantity that would be necessary and weighed against water supply needs.

Committee members inquired about low flow structures; Mr. Barcelo stated that the feasibility study for The Lake Hancock Lake Level Project is complete and revealed positive results.

Presently, there are a total of 27 lakes with adopted minimum levels. Mr. Barcelo discussed the future steps and provided data graphs on the SWUCA Upper Floridian Aquifer (UFA) groundwater withdrawals and alternative water supply. The District has been successful in ensuring water supply needs are met. An additional 94 mgd of demand is needed by 2025. Though basin-wide groundwater withdrawals have been declining, water demands have been met through conservation and development of alternative water supplies (AWS). The District is cooperatively funding AWS, $240 million for 50 mgd of capacity; $25 million to Facilitating Agricultural Resource Management Systems (FARMS) for 23 mgd; and $3.6 million for 1 mgd of conservation. Several UFA and SWUCA data slides were illustrated on groundwater withdrawals, water quality, long-term levels and flows, rainfall and groundwater use. A WUCA is an area where the Governing Board has determined action is necessary to address cumulative water withdrawals that are causing or may cause adverse impacts to the water and related natural resources or the public interest. Thus, being declared through rule adoption or issuance of an order imposing special requirements to prevent or remedy impacts. Lastly, future steps include engaging stakeholders in a process to review resources concerns and develop solutions.

Committee members questioned aquifer recharge benefits and the affects to water quality.

Committee members noted that in SWUCA, permitted quantities were cut back, and asked if the District would be doing that again.

Committee members expressed that they felt we were “going backwards” and the District should be leading one-day-per-week watering year-round.

There was a lengthy discussion on sinks in the Peace River and low flow berms. The committee asked for a presentation on this at a future meeting.

7. **Central Florida Water Initiative (CFWI) Update**

Ms. Mary Margaret Hull, lead communications coordinator, provided an update on the Regional Water Supply Plan, outreach activities and public participation. The CFWI region covers five counties, including southern Lake, southern Seminole, Orange, Osceola and Polk. A Steering Committee oversees the CFWI process and provides guidance to the six technical teams. The six technical teams
include: Groundwater Availability Team, Hydrologic Assessment Team, Environmental Measures Team, Minimum Flows and Levels (MFLs) and Water Reservations Team, Data, Monitoring and Investigations Team and Regional Water Supply Plan Team. A draft Regional Water Supply Plan (RWSP) is expected by November 26, 2013 and there will be a public workshop held on December 12, 2013. The draft plan is proposed to go before the water management districts’ Governing Boards in April 2014. The CFWI Steering Committee includes one representative each from: Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS), the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), St. Johns River Water Management District (WMD), South Florida WMD and the Southwest Florida WMD. The committee’s primary oversight is to guide a coordinated effort. Ms. Hull presented three guiding principles as: (1) identify sustainable quantities of groundwater sources; (2) develop strategies to meet water demands; and (3) establish consistent rules. Ms. Hull mentioned that there are challenges, including reaching sustainable groundwater limits in Central Florida with multiple future demands on the area’s water resources as well as overlapping regulatory programs. Graphics were presented on current, historical and future water use vs. population, reuse and conservation. The work of the technical teams will result in one shared groundwater model, one coordinated strategy for minimum flows and levels prevention and recovery and one regional supply plan. Ms. Hull explained that the RWSP is being developed to address both short-term and long-term water issues. Water demand projections are based on best available data. The RWSP will identify options to meet projected demands.

Lastly, the next phase of the water supply planning process will be led by the Solutions Team. The team will develop strategies to meet future water demands by optimizing the use of existing groundwater, identifying demand management activities, identifying viable alternative water supplies and establishing consistent rules. The team will be working closely with all key stakeholders to gain community and financial support for these critical projects. Work is projected to be completed by the end of 2014. The Solutions Planning Team is comprised of senior management staff from the FDEP, FDACS and the WMDs, along with public supply utilities, agricultural and environmental groups and regional leaders and business representatives. It was noted that additional CFWI information can be found on their website: www.cfwiwater.com.

A Technical Methods Workshop will be held on November 7, 2013 in Osceola from 10:00 a.m. until noon. The final public workshop is scheduled for December 12, 2013 in the City of Clermont from 4:00 p.m. until 7:00 p.m.

Several graphs and data were presented on the historic water use, groundwater withdrawals and water supply options.

Committee members expressed their concerns that the Orlando area has been over pumping and no one has any ideas on how to fix it.

Members questioned how governance of this process would be determined and who made the ultimate decision on what projects and funding would be implemented. Ms. Hull stated she believed that the regulatory portion of the Solutions Team would be making these decisions.

8. **Statewide Environmental Resource Permitting (SWERP) Update**

Ms. Michelle Hopkins, environmental permitting bureau chief, presented an update on SWERP. During the 2012 legislative session, House Bill 7003 was approved; establishing a statewide environmental resource permit (ERP) rule. The rule revisions were meant to streamline the permitting process by creating consistent permit types, defining procedures, standardizing forms and creating an applicant’s handbook. A brief description was provided on the SWERP permit types and it was explained that the District’s ERP Basis of Review is now the Applicant Handbook. The following are not regulated by SWERP: existing systems, previously permitted activities, “10-2” general permit construction activities (self certification permit), Statute and Rule exempt activities, activities proposed in an application complete prior to the October 1, 2013 effective date, minor modifications to ERP’s that lessen or do not increase impacts and activities that do not exceed any of the permitting “thresholds.” It was noted that
SWERP streamlined exemptions, general permits, the language is written in a clearer manner and each rule refers to the appropriate Florida Statute. Information was shown listing the new and modified exemptions and diverse permit types. The new conceptual approved permits for urban redevelopment or infill were defined as: limited to county or municipality redevelopment or infill areas designated, requires development of Best Management Practices-based (BMP), stormwater “master plan” demonstrating net improvement and subsequent construction projects authorized through new general permits.

Ms. Hopkins discussed Low Impact Design (LID) considerations noting that SWERP did not change quality or quantity requirements. SWERP rules do not specifically address LID, but it easily fits into the regulatory framework. A LID is a good choice for redevelopment because it allows optimal utilization of space-limited development sites, ideal for sites not requiring flood attenuation or additional fill and provides additional tools to meet net improvement requirements.

Committee members had questions pertaining to urban redevelopment and LID capabilities. Ms. Hopkins provided a clear understanding of urban redevelopment and LID criteria.

9. **Agenda Topics for the Next Environmental Advisory Committee Meeting at 1:30 pm, January 14, 2014**
   - Sinks in SWUCA/karst in Peace River Update
   - Surface Water Improvement Management (SWIM) Program Update

10. **Public Comments**
    A discussion ensued on what the Governing Board wants to hear from the advisory committee members and several members felt that the District presents useful information but does not ask for feedback from the committee members. Ms. Martin assured members that a liaison report containing information from these meetings are provided to Ms. Griffin and the Governing Board members.

11. **Announcements and Other Business**
    Members inquired regarding the 2015 Five-Year Regional Water Supply Plan and Ms. Martin informed the committee it is currently in process.

12. **Adjournment**
    There being no further discussions, the meeting was adjourned at 4:03 p.m.