

**DRAFT
MEETING SUMMARY
Environmental Advisory Committee
Southwest Florida Water Management District
January 9, 2018**

The Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) of the Southwest Florida Water Management District convened for a regular meeting at 1:30 p.m., January 9, 2018 at the Tampa Service Office, 7601 US Highway 301 North, Tampa, Florida 33637.

Committee Members Present

Chair Mark Alderson, Sarasota Bay National Estuary Program
Paul Crowell, Keystone Civic Association
Holly Greening, Tampa Bay Estuary Program
Allain Hale, Environmental Confederation of Southwest Florida
Jennifer Hecker, Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program
Mike Burton, Manatee Chamber of Commerce
Robert Wright, Sarasota Audubon Society
Alan Bailey, Florida Trail Association – Suncoast & Heartland Chapters
Dwayne Carlton, Ocala/Marion County, Chamber & Economic Partnership

Staff Members Present

George Schlutermann
Jason Patterson
Brandt Henningsen
Granville Kinsman
Cara Martin, Facilitator

Recording Secretary

Kelly Schwegel

Governing Board Member Present

Michelle Williamson

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 the Winter Haven Chain of Lakes Guideline Update would be presented at the following Environmental Advisory Committee meeting.

3. Approval of the July 11, 2017 Meeting Summary

Ms. Martin noted that Michelle Williamson was not present at the last meeting. The committee approved the July 11, 2017 meeting summary with the deletion of Michelle Williamson from the attendance.

4. Public Comments

There were no public comments presented.

5. Chair and Vice Chair Elections

Mr. Robert Wright was nominated and seconded for Chair. The vote passed unanimously. Mr. Allain Hale was nominated and seconded for Vice Chair. The vote passed unanimously.

6. Exploration of the Lower Floridan Aquifer in Polk County

Mr. George Schlutermann, senior hydrogeologist, Water Supply, spoke to the committee regarding the District's hydrogeological investigation to determine the water quality at varying depths of the aquifer. This process requires drilling through varying confining units to a depth of 3,000 feet.

The project is in the first of three phases, which began in January of 2016 and was the initial drilling and water sampling at the Southeast Polk wellfield. Evidence shows there is a good source of supply from the Lower Floridan Aquifer. The second phase includes converting the well into a monitoring well, and constructing another monitoring well. This phase will allow the District to evaluate changes in gradient and water quality over time. If favorable signs exist, the third phase could be to develop a production well.

Mr. Schlutermann encouraged the committee to provide feedback on environmental concerns or questions as testing continues. Members asked what the federally designation drinking water (USDW) depth is in this location as well as the depth of nearby wastewater injection wells in relation to the test well. Mr. Schlutermann replied the USDW depth is at 2,700 feet and the closest injection well is unknown. Mr. Schlutermann explained the testing is still early and more data is needed to determine a potential injection zone.

Members asked how the Lower Floridan Aquifer will be replenished and what the long-term consequences are if it is not adequately replenished. Mr. Schlutermann explained that there is not yet sufficient data to locate the source of water, which will be necessary to determine how to replenish it and what effects there may be.

Members asked what changed in Florida's interest from attempting to rehydrate the Floridan Aquifer versus now exploring the Lower Floridan and Mr. Schlutermann explained it was the Central Florida Water Initiative (CFWI) who determined the need to meet future supplies.

7. Ridge Lakes Recovery Efforts

Mr. Jason Patterson, hydrogeologist, Resource Evaluation, reviewed the District's goal to work cooperatively with stakeholders in identifying and evaluating potential projects to recover lake levels as part of the Southern Water Use Caution Area to restore minimum levels to priority lakes in the Ridge area.

A five-year assessment was conducted to monitor lake levels and develop lake recovery plans. The District is working with stakeholders/municipalities to determine the best approach for raising lake levels. Recovery options include withdrawal relocation, construction of ribs, surface water/groundwater treatment and injection into lake, among others.

Members asked if it was a good idea to empty reclaimed water near the lake and Mr. Patterson suggested the water would be treated to meet standards before injection into the lake. Members also asked if there is a way to trace the leakage of a lake and use this to evaluate how to sustain it. Mr. Patterson suggested the District and municipalities are currently addressing solutions based on the characteristics of each lake.

8. The District's Habitat Conservation and Restoration Committee

Dr. Brandt Henningsen, chief advisory environmental scientist, SWIM, introduced the District's Habitat and Restoration Committee, which serves to (1) exchange information about habitat restoration and management and (2) create a database for all District restoration projects. Through this committee, the District collaborates with a variety of partners in building very complex, multifunctional ecosystems.

Mr. Henningsen explained the committee invites outside conservation experts to discuss their restoration projects and techniques as well as their land management techniques. The committee currently has 33 members, both District staff and outside agencies, and extended an invitation to the Environmental Advisory Committee members to join the Habitat Conservation and Restoration Committee.

Members expressed interest in collaborating with the Habitat and Restoration Committee and agreed to provide Mr. Henningsen an email address if they wanted to be in contact with this committee. Members requested to view the project database and suggested the District expand their database to include all restoration projects, including projects other organizations have done. Members also requested to attend the Rocks Ponds tour during the Spring meeting.

9. Vertical Datum

Mr. Granville Kinsman, hydrologic data manager, Hydrologic Data, spoke to the committee about the new data collection system used as a reference in determining elevation. Mr. Kinsman's team just completed a lengthy project to replace NGVD29, which is no longer supported by the federal government, with NAVD88.

The transition began in 2001 and affected 2,373 total sites, where team members individually surveyed, set benchmarks and migrated the data. The District found and corrected 147 data problems from the NGVD29 data, and is now consistent statewide with all the other water management districts. This information is documented in the Water Management Information System. All surveys are published and available to the public.

Members asked how the MFL permits would be affected with this new dataset and Mr. Kinsman said both datums (NGVD and NAVD) will be published on the permits. Members also asked for the location of the sea level benchmarks and Mr. Kinsman explained the benchmark is on the Atlantic Coast in Canada. Members asked if this information is linked with the water atlas, and Mr. Kinsman responded that he will find out if they have updated their data yet.

10. Hydrologic Conditions

Mr. Granville Kinsman presented a chart that tracked the rainfall levels within the District for the past 12 months. There are only a few areas below average, and some levels that are currently declining due to the dry season, but this is expected. Overall, the hydrologic conditions are at better levels than this time last year and are within normal range.

11. Next Meeting: April 10, 2018

Chair Alderson suggested holding the next meeting, or July's meeting, at the Rock Ponds location. He also requested to see a presentation from Randy Smith, Bureau Chief, on reconnecting a stream using hydrological flow regimes.

12. Announcements and Other Business

Ms. Holly Greening announced her retirement from Tampa Bay Estuary and introduced Mr. Ed Sherwood, senior scientist, as the new executive director. Members asked for a SWIM plan update.

13. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 3:21 p.m.