

APPROVED
MEETING SUMMARY

Springs Coast Steering Committee

November 4, 2015

The Springs Coast Steering Committee meeting met at 2:00 p.m., November 4, 2015, at the Southwest Florida Water Management District, Governing Board Room, 2379 Broad Street, Brooksville, Florida.

Members Present

Dennis Damato, Citrus County
Tom Frick, FDEP (via telephone)
Robert Holmes, City of Crystal River
Stan McClain, Marion County
Nick Nicholson, Hernando County
Darrell Smith, FDACS (via telephone)
Shannon Wright, FFWCC (via telephone)

Members Absent

Michael Babb, SWFWMD

SWFWMD Staff

Chris Anastasiou
Robert Beltran
Veronica Craw
Eric DeHaven
Sean King
Sky Notestein
Danielle Rogers
Jennette Seachrist
Chris Zajac

Others Present

Dave Burell, Crystal River

SWFWMD – Southwest Florida Water Management District
FDEP – Florida Department of Environmental Protection

FFWCC – Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
FDACS – Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

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 Call

Chair McClain called the meeting to order. Veronica Craw called the roll and confirmed a quorum.

2. Action Item: Minutes Approval from August 5, 2015

Following consideration, Citrus Commissioner Damato moved for approval, seconded by Crystal River Councilmember Holmes. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Springs Coast Management Committee Update on Rainbow River SWIM Plan

a. Action Item: Final Rainbow River SWIM Plan – Dr. Chris Anastasiou, SWFWMD

Dr. Anastasiou presented the final draft of the Rainbow River SWIM Plan and provided an overview of the table of contents and focused on management actions, projects and initiatives which were discussed through the Technical Working Group and Springs Coast Management Committee. He explained the breakdown of each of the elements in the table of contents and what elements make a healthy spring. Some of the primary issues focused on in the Plan are the elevated nitrate concentrations coming out of the springs, reductions in water clarity, flow reductions and the altered aquatic vegetation community.

Dr. Anastasiou then discussed the three areas of management actions: water quality, water quantity and natural systems (habitat) and what the management actions are in each area, and the quantifiable objectives. He said there is no timeline assigned to meeting the quantifiable objectives. The targets are geared to show progress and the SWIM Plan is designed to evolve as it is implemented.

Dr. Anastasiou discussed the management actions for water quality (agricultural operations and septic tanks) and water quantity (all conservation - public and self-supply, agriculture, industry/commercial and golf courses), which were approved by the Management Committee as priority actions.

Commissioner Nicholson noted that reclaimed water was not specifically included under the conservation items. He does not believe that water conservation on golf courses can be done without reclaimed water. Dr. Anastasiou said that conservation with respect to golf courses is listed as a priority and if the Committee would like to make reclaimed water a priority that is something that the Committee can do.

Chris Zajac addressed Commissioner Nicholson's concerns by explaining that in Marion County, a lot of the reclaimed water that is currently available is already being delivered to the golf courses. The District has worked with Marion County on several projects to deliver reclaimed water, and golf courses are a primary customer. He acknowledged that this is a management action that will be used in this spring-shed. He said it just wasn't identified as the top priority but it is a feasible project that is regularly done with Marion County delivering reclaimed water to golf courses.

Commissioner Nicholson reiterated it doesn't make sense to him to say conservation on golf courses and not mention reclaimed water, which is the primary source of the water for the golf courses.

Chair McClain suggested that Dr. Anastasiou continue with his presentation and then discuss this item to see if it is something the Committee would want to add to the Plan before it is adopted.

Dr. Anastasiou discussed the priority management actions under the natural systems section of the Plan, which are invasive species management and recreation management. These are the two items that the Management Committee felt would be the highest priority in the short term.

Dr. Anastasiou went on to discuss the projects and initiatives under three focus areas of water quality, water quantity and natural systems. He said that each of those groups were broken down into ongoing and priority proposed. The ongoing projects are already being done or being implemented. The priority proposed projects are proposed, not projects that are currently being done. The Technical Working Group, along with the Management Committee, rated all of the proposed projects through the Technical Working Group and voted to make this subset of what they would consider a priority. This does not mean they will all happen or that those left in the appendix will not happen. The third category is the potential proposed projects that are in the appendix. They are still there, they just haven't been elevated into the main body of the document. The reason for this is the project may need more vetting or they didn't specifically address one of the management actions.

Dr. Anastasiou reviewed the individual projects in each of the three areas of water quality, water quantity and natural systems. He said that this is just a starting point and the Plan will evolve and the figures will help to identify potential gaps. He explained as we move from Plan development to implementation, the Technical Working Group will be looking more closely to develop projects that will focus on the larger issues.

Dr. Anastasiou said there was a change made to one of the ongoing projects under natural systems in the cooperative aquatic plant control program. Since the plan was sent for review, FFWCC provided more information and they were added as a lead entity. They provided a more realistic cost for Rainbow, which was \$9,000. Dr. Anastasiou said this is an action item, which can be voted on separately or included in the approval of the Plan.

Dr. Anastasiou said the Rainbow River Ranch acquisition project was accidentally left out of the version of the SWIM Plan that was sent to the Committee. This project falls under natural systems, habitat conservation. The project was approved by the Management Committee and determined to be a priority proposed project. The project is to purchase some or all of the Rainbow River Ranch property along the lower east bank of the Rainbow River. Dr. Anastasiou said this is an action item, which could be voted on separately or together with approval of the Plan.

Commissioner Damato moved to approve the draft as submitted with the two additional items (to purchase the Rainbow River Ranch property and the ongoing project with FFWCC to remove invasive species). Councilmember Holmes seconded for discussion.

Commissioner Nicholson said that he could not vote in favor unless the water reuse is included as part of the water conservation plan.

After discussion, Chair McClain called the question on the motion, which passed with one dissent by Commissioner Nicholson.

4. Springs Coast Management Committee Update on Crystal River/Kings Bay SWIM Plan

a. Action Item: Priority Management Actions – Dr. Sean King, SWFWMD

Dr. King presented an update to the Committee on the Crystal River/Kings Bay SWIM Plan. He identified a list of possible management actions that may or may not be implemented by the agency identified. The Technical Working Group has been charged with gathering specific projects to fall under these management actions for inclusion in the plans, water quality, water quantity and natural systems.

Dr. King went over the priority management actions and provided a breakdown for each section of water quality, water quantity and natural systems. These priority areas are not meant to exclude the other areas; they're just intended to help focus efforts on the near future.

Upon completion of his presentation, Dr. King asked for the Committee's approval on the priority management actions for the Crystal River/Kings Bay SWIM Plan.

Commissioner Damato suggested a slight variance regarding septic tanks. He said that in the Crystal River/Kings Bay area, all of the septic tanks and package plants need to be removed. This will reduce a lot of the nitrate loading through the waterway. He thinks that urban/residential fertilizer should drop to number three on the list under water quality and stormwater should follow after septic tanks.

Councilmember Holmes agreed with Commissioner Damato's comments regarding the order of the projects. He also said he would like to see if something can be done with the State of Florida and FDOT regarding the drainage from 19 to divert the drainage into Kings Bay, to help come up with solutions. Since it is U.S. 19, he suggested the possibility of asking for federal funds to help divert some of the water that goes directly into the bays.

Dr. Anastasiou said that as we move into the implementation of these plans, that is an ideal task to give to the Technical Working Group to approach the State to develop a plan with the State and DOT on those issues.

Commissioner Damato wanted to go on the record to say that there needs to be a residential berm and swale program on residential properties. He recognized it could be difficult because most are already existing properties. He said the City could use some help in retrofitting if we could come up with a model program for that. He also suggested a program regarding reclaimed water stating that there is not the quantity of reclaimed water in Citrus County but, in working with the City of Crystal River, there will be. He mentioned the County will more than likely take over Beverly Hills' wastewater system, and that effluent will go to Brentwood. He said there are programs from DEP to upgrade that plant. He said it would be nice to link the reclaimed water at Brentwood, tie it to Meadowcrest and tie Meadowcrest to the Crystal River reclaimed line and send about 4 – 5 million gpd of water to Duke Energy. That way Duke would not be pumping hardly any water from the aquifer if we could send them that quantity. He said that would be a very cooperative thing amongst very many entities but is possible moving forward.

Commissioner Damato also wanted to be on the record about when Duke Energy builds their gas turbine plant. He said they will probably apply for a package plant. He would like to see Duke take the money they would spend on a package plant and leverage the money with the District, Citrus County Utilities and DEP and put in a small sub-regional plant that could be expanded but it would produce reclaimed water. He said there are resolutions from both Inglis and Yankeetown stating they will take bulk waste water facilities from Citrus County.

Dr. Anastasiou explained that the projects are not ranked in any particular order. They are priority. We may be able to add some language in the appendix or in the body of the document that says these are the three priorities of which these two are the most important, something to that effect. The list was not meant to imply any order.

After discussion, Commissioner Damato moved to approve the priority management actions for Kings Bay/Crystal River SWIM Plan per today's discussion, with an appendix for the items he and Councilmember Holmes mentioned for future implementation. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Nicholson and passed unanimously.

b. Action Item: Quantifiable Objectives – Sky Notestein, SWFWMD

Mr. Notestein presented the quantifiable objectives and available data for the Crystal River/Kings Bay SWIM Plan. Mr. Notestein said that based on input from the working group and the Management Committee, the Crystal River/Kings Bay quantifiable objectives have expanded. The water quality section has been expanded to include water clarity and water chemistry, with proposed values for each. The water quantity section now has the adoption of the MFL for the system for 2017 and the natural systems section has aquatic vegetation, for both invasive and native species, and quantifiable objectives for the shoreline.

Following discussion, Commissioner Damato moved to approve the quantifiable objectives for the Crystal River/Kings Bay SWIM Plan, as presented. Councilmember Holmes seconded, which passed unanimously.

c. Action Item: Ongoing and Recommended Projects – Dr. Chris Anastasiou, SWFWMD

Dr. Anastasiou provided an overview of the priority proposed projects for the Crystal River/Kings Bay SWIM Plan. He said that three of the projects under water quality were originally on the proposed list but have been moved to ongoing. The change was already made and approved by the Management Committee and is included in the version that has been presented to the Committee.

Dr. Anastasiou then went over the list of projects for each of the three focus areas of water quality, water quantity and natural systems, and provided a brief summary of each of the lists.

Dr. Anastasiou said that there were some projects under natural systems that were originally submitted as proposed projects that have been moved to ongoing.

After discussion, Commissioner Damato moved to approve the priority proposed projects list as presented, which was seconded by Councilmember Holmes. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Action Item: SWIM Plan Schedule for Weeki Wachee, Homosassa and Chassahowitzka – Danielle Rogers, SWFWMD

Ms. Rogers presented the SWIM Plan schedule for Homosassa, Chassahowitzka and Weeki Wachee Springs. She explained that the process followed to create the SWIM plan is to get feedback from the Technical Working Group, present the information to the Management Committee who vets, approves, or not, and then send it to the Steering Committee for approval. She presented a proposed schedule over the next 18 months for approval of the SWIM Plans, which shows the dates when the groups would meet, through 2017, with the anticipation that the Weeki Wachee SWIM Plan would be approved in January 2017, Homosassa in April 2017 and Chassahowitzka in July 2017.

Commissioner Damato moved to approve the SWIM Plan schedule as presented, which was seconded by Councilmember Holmes. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Public Input
None

Other Discussion

Councilmember Holmes brought up the possibility of moving the location of the January 6, 2016, meeting, to Crystal River to include other counties and departments, members of the board and other elected officials so they could see what the Committee is doing and to see what the District is helping to do. Commissioner Damato said that he was not against relocating the meeting but thought it would be better to have the Steering Committee approve the Plan and then have a meeting. He said there may be an opportunity to do that as a potential action item for an upcoming meeting on January 28, 2016, when the Citrus County Board of County Commissioners, Cities of Crystal River and Inverness and the school board meet or, have a joint meeting between the District and the entities and have it in January or February and have it be specific to approval. He would like to see the Plan approved first and then announce the approval by the Steering Committee.

Veronica Caw advised that the meetings have been publicly noticed and a change in venue would require a reposting to meet the requirements of the Sunshine law. Keeping the meeting early January and having a release later would allow staff to take the document, as approved by the Committee, and make final editing so it is appropriate for public dissemination. Once approved, if it could be worked into the schedule, a good way to do it would be to do a presentation at Crystal River City Council since it is very site specific, and do the same presentation to the BOCC in February or March. That would help to get the information out.

Chair McClain expressed concern that if the Committee had not yet adopted the Plan, there wouldn't be a final draft that day. He thinks Commissioner Damato's idea is good to engage the public. He asked if it would be possible at the January 6 meeting for staff to put together a couple of scenarios as to how that public role out might take place. Chair McClain asked Ms. Caw what kind of public notice is needed. Ms. Caw advised that at least three weeks' notice was required to make sure all public notices are made. Ms. Caw also said that since these plans are serving as official District SWIM Plans, they will need to go to the District's Governing Board for approval. Then plans will ultimately need approval by DEP before they are fully released to the public as final.

Whatever that future date may be could be adopted at the January meeting. It could possibly be scheduled later in the first quarter of 2016.

The next meeting will January 6, 2016, and there will be an action item seeking approval of the Crystal River/Kings Bay SWIM Plan.

7. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 3:38 p.m.