

**Northern Tampa Bay Phase II Local Technical Peer Review Group (LTPRG)
Keystone Civic Center, 17926 Gunn Highway, Odessa**

**Wetland Subcommittee Meeting 2
April 29, 2004 - 9:30AM**

Summary

The following were in attendance: **R. Warren Hogg**, Tampa Bay Water; Doug Keesecker, Tampa Bay Water; Patty Fesmire, Tampa Bay Water; Chris Shea, Tampa Bay Water; **Rich McLean**, Pinellas County Utilities; Kirk Stage, Water & Air Research; Ben Mercadante, Water & Air Research; Diane Willis, Berryman & Hennigar; Mitch Stack, Berryman & Hennigar; Judy Smith, Reynolds, Smith, and Hills; Stephanie Morse, HDR; Dan Fraser, HDR; Kym Rouse Campbell, Biological Research Associates; Lee Walton, Biological Research Associates; Shirley Denton, Biological Research Associates; Scott Emery, Hillsborough County; Laura Morris, Quest Ecology; Tricia Dooris, Dooris and Assoc.; Brian Ormiston; Pam Latham, PBS&J; **Gordon Leslie**, Hillsborough County Environmental Protection Commission; **Michael Hancock**, SWFWMD; Jill Hood, SWFWMD; John Emery, SWFWMD; **Ted Rochow**, SWFWMD; and David Carr, SWFWMD. Names in bold are designated representatives for the LTPRG.

An overview of the revised Wetland Assessment Procedure (WAP) was given by Michael Hancock, Ted Rochow, and Jill Hood. This was the same presentation given at the April 7, 2004 LTPRG meeting. The presentation can be found at the Northern Tampa Bay Phase II website under the Wetland Assessment Procedure page (WAP Presentation, April 7, 2004).

Following the WAP discussion, Mr. Hancock and Dr. Rochow gave a presentation on the WAP field application test that will take place during May. This presentation is also available on the same web page. Mr. Hancock explained that the goals of the test include a test of scoring consistency, collection of opinions on the overall method, and collection of opinions on the field form. There are ten test wetlands – four located at the Cypress Creek wellfield and six located at the Morris Bridge wellfield. The four sites at the Cypress Creek wellfield are Cypress G (aka W-56), Marsh D (aka W-16), W-11, and W-41. The six sites at the Morris Bridge wellfield are X-3, Well Marsh (aka MBR-42), X-4 (aka MBR-89), Clay Gully Cypress (aka MBR-88), Trout Creek Marsh, and South Cypress Marsh (aka MBR-29). Each site is marked with pink flagging tape. Dr. Rochow has established a transect at each site, and has labeled the Historic Wetland Edge, NP-6, and Wetland Interior at each site with labeled wooden stakes topped with fluorescent orange paint. All other stakes and markers should be ignored. Each participant should assess each of the 10 wetlands. Although the test participants do not need to establish any transects, they are asked to give their opinions on the transect setup. If two or more assessors travel together, each evaluator should work

independently. All wetlands must be assessed within the May 2 to May 22 period. Evaluators are asked to complete a WAP form for each wetland, including the extra questions for the test. Each evaluator should also assess the transition and deep zones of each wetland, even if they normally would not (comments to this effect would be very helpful in these cases). Since there will be many people evaluating each wetland during a short period, participants were asked to use extra care when walking through the wetlands to minimize impact. If established trails or roadways cut through any of the transects, evaluators were asked to discount any vegetational effect the trails have in their scoring. When all the field forms are completed, evaluators were asked to please document any additional comments that they may have on the WAP methodology and process, and submit the results to the District (Dr. Rochow) as soon as possible. If anyone has a problem finding a wetland or transect, gets lost, or has any questions regarding the methodology, all participants were encouraged to call District staff for assistance.

Several questions were asked on the WAP methods in general and as they apply to the test. John Emery asked how the scoring system would work when there is no transition zone or when there is no deep zone. District staff replied that they would review the scoring system as it applies to those situations, but that it should not be a problem for the test. Pam Latham asked if there should be a minimum threshold for the number of trees necessary before scoring is applied. Staff responded that the decision needs to be left as a judgment call for the evaluator, since a small number of trees can sometimes provide valuable information on wetland health. Someone asked if the wetland histories would be supplied for each of the test wetlands. Staff replied that they would not, but since the participants have various levels of knowledge concerning the history of the test wetlands, the test would provide an evaluation of the importance of wetland history knowledge. Shirley Denton asked about scoring trees on hummocks that may be rooted in the ground of the wetland. Staff responded that this too would need to be a judgment call on a case-by-case basis, but that it was not expected to be a common situation. Dr. Denton also asked if the District plans to apply the WAP methodology outside of the Northern Tampa Bay area or outside the District, and wondered how it would apply to other wetland types. Staff responded that other applications had not been considered to date, but could be in the future.

Following the meeting, the group toured each of the wetlands to be evaluated as part of the test at the Cypress Creek and Morris Bridge wellfields.

AGENDA

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1. Introductions
2. Overview of revised Wetland Assessment Procedure (WAP) and discussion
3. Presentation and discussion of WAP test
4. Discussion of any other WAP issues
5. Tour of WAP test wetlands