

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

**Meeting 22
April 7, 2004 - 9:30AM**

Summary

The following were in attendance: **R. Warren Hogg**, Tampa Bay Water; Kathleen Coates, Tampa Bay Water; Doug Keesecker, Tampa Bay Water; Patty Fesmire, Tampa Bay Water; Chris Shea, Tampa Bay Water; Peter Nesmith, Water & Air Research; Diane Willis, Berryman & Hennigar; Debbie Segal, Jones, Edmunds; Jim Mykytka, Reynolds, Smith, and Hills; Judy Smith, Reynolds, Smith, and Hills; Ryan Horstman, Reynolds, Smith, and Hills; Betsy Davis, HDR; **Richard Voakes**, City of St. Petersburg; Trudy Killen, FDC; **Andy Smith**, Hillsborough County; Scott Emery, Hillsborough County; Mario Cabana, Hillsborough County; **Cliff Harrison**, Schreuder, Inc for WRWSA; Laura Morris, Question Ecology for WRWSA; **Gordon Leslie**, Hillsborough County Environmental Protection Commission; **Annemarie Hammond**, Pasco County; Kim Haag, USGS; **Michael Hancock**, SWFWMD; Jill Hood, SWFWMD; John Emery, SWFWMD; **Ted Rochow**, SWFWMD; Mark Barcelo, SWFWMD; Ken Weber, SWFWMD; David Carr, SWFWMD; Len Bartos, SWFWMD; Marty Kelly, SWFWMD; B. Terry Johnson, SWFWMD; and **Doug Leeper**, SWFWMD. Names in bold are designated representatives for the LTPRG.

Doug Leeper reminded the group that three rule development public workshops have been scheduled for discussion of minimum and guidance levels proposed for several Northern Tampa Bay area lakes. The workshops will be held on April 20, 2004 at the Land O' Lakes Community Center, on May 4, 2004 at the District's Brooksville Office, and on May 13, 2004 at the Keystone Civic Center. Mr. Leeper indicated that the levels to be discussed at the workshops could be presented to the Governing Board for adoption in June or July of this year.

Michael Hancock, Dr. Ted Rochow, and Jill Hood gave a presentation on the proposed revisions to the Wetland Assessment Procedure (WAP). The presentation and draft WAP procedure are available on the NTB II website. Mr. Hancock explained that the revision process has been a cooperative effort, with input from most of the current users of the existing WAP methodology. The main goal of the revisions was to create a method that is more understandable, and is better able to produce more consistent and beneficial results. Dr. Rochow gave an overview of the transect setup, as well as the five-year and biannual data collection procedures. Ms. Hood provided an overview of the miscellaneous data collected during the biannual data assessments, as well as some of the other additions to the draft WAP manual.

Several comments, questions, and suggestions were received from the attendees. Diane Willis wondered how the Transition Zone should be monitored when you have a wetland with a very steep bank. Dr. Rochow said that it would be treated very similar to a wetland with a filled Transition Zone, and, if it were the professional judgment of the assessor, only the Deep Zone would be monitored. Judy Smith wondered how the transect concept will be applied to large floodplains. Both Dr. Rochow and Mr. Hancock admitted that the many of the concepts were much more easily applied to isolated wetlands, and that the users, Tampa Bay Water, and the District would need to do their best in flow systems. It was suggested that a subcommittee be formed to discuss issues with monitoring flow systems, and District staff agreed. Jim Mykytka suggested that we might want to have the ecologist note the extent of the assessment area during each visit. The view extent may change seasonally and this would be good information to document. District staff agreed that such notes would be an important addition to the comments in the database.

Kim Haag suggested that we might want to reword the sentence in parenthesis for the Zonation categories. Some have found it confusing to follow. District staff agreed to address that, and requested any suggestions be forwarded. Ms. Willis felt that the DEP state list included in the manual has limitations, and suggested using a modified list that she has developed. All agreed that such a list might be very useful, and the District agreed to review the list. This will be another topic of future discussion.

Patty Fesmire was concerned that the 0.2 and 0.5 foot offsets for saw palmetto and outer cypress may contradict previous normal pool studies. Ms. Fesmire said that this comment was included in those by Dr. Shirley Denton of BRA. Mr. Hancock replied that the new offsets may be different than previous studies, but they are based on more recent and more quantitative assessments. He added, however, that work is continuing on the new normal pool assessment, so the numbers may change. A copy of the results of the study will be provided very soon for review. Warren Hogg said that the report would be needed for review before any Tampa Bay Water Board approval, and District staff agreed. Ms. Fesmire was also concerned that the new study was done during a wet period. David Carr replied that it was actually a dry period. Mr. Hancock added that the rainfall conditions during the time of the study are irrelevant, since the assessment used long-term water level data.

Scott Emery wondered how far out the ecologist would assess leaning trees if you can see them further than you could see groundcover or shrubs? District staff responded that the assessment would be limited by as far as the assessor could see and comfortably make judgments. The 10-meter limitation is the minimum.

Mr. Mykytka suggested using aerial photography to assess changes in canopy. District staff agreed that such an assessment would be helpful, and could be added to the wetland history. Chris Shea noted that we will need to consider confirmation bias when reviewing the data and will need to find a way to either reduce it or account for it.

Ms. Smith asked when is it required to use a professional land surveyor? District staff replied that it was a good question, and is being investigated.

Mr. Hogg was concerned about documenting the version changes and suggested putting comments and responses on the NTB II web page. District staff agreed, and agreed to begin the process of establishing such a site.

Mr. Hancock concluded the meeting by explaining that formatting of submitted material will be determined as a function of the development of the central database for the WAP data. Deadlines for submittal will also be determined later. A field test will be planned for the April-May 2004 time period. A team of ecologists will individually apply the new methodology on a set of wetlands, and the results will be assessed. The individuals involved in the test will be determined over the next couple of weeks, and anyone interested in participating should contact the District as soon as possible. Mr. Hancock also mentioned that the first round of formal training is also planned for the July-August 2004 timeframe, but training at regular intervals is expected.

A follow-up meeting on the WAP revisions will be held at 9:30 AM on April 29, 2004 at the Keystone Civic Center.

The next regular LTPRG meeting is scheduled for 9:30 AM on June 2, 2004 at the Brooker Creek Education Center, 3940 Keystone Road, Tarpon Springs.

AGENDA

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1. February meeting follow-up
2. Miscellaneous updates
 - Lake MFL Update
 - Future presentation/field trips
3. Proposed Wetland Assessment Procedure Revisions
4. Issues for Next Meeting – June 2, 2004 (at Brooker Creek)