Northern Tampa Bay Phase II Local Technical Peer Review Group (LTPRG)
SWFWMD Tampa Service Office, Hwy 301N, Tampa

Meeting 37
May 2, 2007 - 9:30AM

Summary

The following were in attendance: Doug Keesecker, Tampa Bay Water; Chris Shea, Tampa Bay Water; **R. Warren Hogg**, Tampa Bay Water; Scott Emery, EHI/Hillsborough County; **Gordon A. Leslie Jr.**, Hillsborough County EPC**;** Mario Cabana, Hillsborough County; **Dave Slonena**, Pinellas County Utilities; **Annemarie Hammond**, Pasco County; **Laura Morris**, Quest Ecology; Kim Haag, USGS; Terrie Lee, USGS; **Michael Hancock**, SWFWMD; **Ted Rochow**, SWFWMD; Maya Burke, SWFWMD; and **Doug Leepe**r, SWFWMD. Names in bold are designated representatives for the LTPRG.

Doug Leeper provided an update on the status of minimum flows and levels development for currently identified priority water bodies in the northern Tampa Bay area. He noted that in March 2007 the Governing Board approved deletion of Ten Year Flood Guidance Levels from rule amendments pertaining to proposed minimum and guidance levels for selected Pasco County lakes. The modified rule amendments, which include proposed High and Low Guidance Levels and Minimum Levels for Crews Lake, Lake Iola, Jessamine Lake, Pasco Lake, Pierce Lake and Unnamed Lake Number 22 (Loyce Lake), were published in the Florida Administrative Weekly on April 6, 2007. He noted that a public hearing request specifically regarding the proposed levels for Crews Lake was received on April 27, 2006 and the District was planning to include this hearing request on the June Governing Board agenda. Subsequent to the Northern Tampa Bay Local Technical Peer Review Group Meeting the party requesting the public hearing asked that the item be delayed until the July Governing Board meeting. With regard to minimum flows for river systems, Mr. Leeper noted that the report outlining proposed minimum flows for the upper segment of the Hillsborough River was currently being peer-reviewed and that the peer-review panel's report is expected to be completed in mid-May. He also noted that a public meeting on proposed minimum flows for the upper Hillsborough River has been scheduled for June 5, 2007 at the Tampa Service Office from 6 to 8 P.M. He also indicated that staff anticipate presentation of the peer-review panel findings to the Governing Board at the June Board meeting. Finally, he indicated that staff plans to provide an update at the May Governing Board meeting regarding the status of minimum flows development for the Tampa Bypass Canal, Sulphur Springs and the recovery strategy for the lower Hillsborough River.

Kim Haag gave the final presentation on the wetlands augmentation projects being performed by the USGS as part of a cooperatively funded project with Pinellas County, Tampa Bay Water, and the District. Ms. Haag reported on several of the biologic findings of the study, including: 1) the number of shared plant species was often low among wetlands in the same type (marsh and cypress), 2) the use of indices to compare wetland vegetation was of limited value, especially when only abundant

species were used (which is the case in many other parts of the country), 3) species richness of plants was higher in augmented marsh and cypress wetlands than in natural wetlands, 4) the greatest numbers of plant species were found at wetlands at the extreme ends of the hydrograph range (S-63 and Duck Pond), 5) natural and augmented wetlands of same type had similar percentages of OBL and FACW species (w/in 5-10 %), 6) impaired marshes had more FAC species and fewer OBL species, 7) impaired cypress had more FACW species but fewer OBL species, 8) biomass of herbaceous species was higher at augmented marshes, 9) cypress trees were denser and smaller at natural cypress; while there were more dead, leaning, fallen trees at augmented and impaired cypress, 10) macroinvertebrate communities in natural, impaired, and augmented wetlands differed, but patterns attributable to hydrology were not evident in this study (did not see reduced diversity or density at augmented sites), 11) fish were present in wetlands with the longest hydroperiod, 12) macroinvertebrate predators were abundant at all sites. 13) taxa richness was high in augmented and impaired cypress but in only one augmented marsh, 14) macroinvertebrate density was highest in one augmented cypress and one impaired marsh, 15) biomass was highest in augmented marshes due to gastropods (snails), and 16) gastropods (snails) were present at all augmented sites where dissolved Ca++ is available for shell formation.

Michael Hancock presented the results of the annual assessment status of minimum levels in the NTB area through 2006. A copy of the slides used in the presentation is posted on the NTB II website. There are approximately 65 lakes, 41 wetlands, and 7 wells in the NTB area in which minimum levels have been adopted as of May 2007. Information was presented on the 6, 10, and 2 year assessments of each minimum level sites, along with the 6, 10, and 2 year assessments of each Recovery site. Mr. Hancock concluded that the effect of reductions in ground-water withdrawals at the regional well fields is becoming more evident at many of the minimum level and Recovery sites, especially in the areas of well fields that have had large reductions. However, it is still too early for final conclusions to be made. In general, progress is as expected. Mr. Hancock reminded the group that many important decisions are due to be made by 2010, including the final assessment of the first phase of NTB recovery, and the renewal of the Consolidated permit, so many assessments will be performed over the next three years to support this effort.

The next regular LTPRG meeting is scheduled for 9:30 AM on August 7, 2007 at SWFWMD's Tampa Service Office.

AGENDA

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Local Technical Peer Review Group

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1. April meeting follow-up

2. Miscellaneous updates
   - Lake MFL Update

3. Recent findings on the Assessment of Wetland Augmentation – Ecological Comparisons (Kim Haag, USGS)

4. 2007 MFL update (Michael Hancock, SWFWMD)

5. Issues for next Meeting – August 1, 2007