

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

**Wetland Subcommittee Meeting 1
November 6, 2003 - 9:00AM**

Summary

The following were in attendance: **Dave Slonena**, Pinellas County; **Mike Coates**, Tampa Bay Water; **R. Warren Hogg**, Tampa Bay Water; Doug Keesecker, Tampa Bay Water; Patty Fesmire, Tampa Bay Water; Chris Shea, Tampa Bay Water; **Andy Smith**, Hillsborough County; **Annemarie Hammond**, Pasco County; Lee Walton, Biological Research Associates; Drew Sanders, Biological Research Associates; Shirley Denton, Biological Research Associates; Kirk Stage, Water & Air Research; Patrick Wise, Terra Environmental; Betsy Davis, HDR Engineering; Donald Herndon, U.S. Geological Survey; Gary Lightbourn, UHB; Gary Serviss, UHB; Dana Gaydos, Schrueder, Inc./WRWSA; Jim Mykytka, Reynold, Smith, and Hills; Judy Smith, Reynold, Smith, and Hills; ReNae Nowicki, Berryman & Hennigar; Dan Schmutz, Berryman & Hennigar; Mitch Stack, Berryman & Hennigar; **Michael Hancock**, SWFWMD; **Ted Rochow**, SWFWMD; Robert Peterson, SWFWMD; Ken Weber, SWFWMD; Jill Hood, SWFWMD; Patricia Frantz, SWFWMD; Terry Johnson, SWFWMD; David Carr, SWFWMD; and John Emery, SWFWMD. Names in bold are designated representatives for the LTPRG.

David Carr gave the group a presentation on the results of a District study to evaluate various indicators of hydrology in isolated cypress domes. The presentation can be found on the Northern Tampa Bay Phase II section of the SWFWMD's website. The study surveyed hundreds of elevations of *Lyonia*, moss collars, buttress swelling, *Hypericum* adventitious rooting, outermost cypress, and the saw palmetto fringe in 12 cypress domes that were considered relatively healthy. The study concluded that the median elevations of *Lyonia*, moss collars, and buttress swelling were statistically identical, and very little variability amongst the normalized elevations. The median elevations of the *Hypericum* adventitious rooting and saw palmetto fringe were also statistically identical, showed little variability, and were located about 0.3 feet below the elevation of the *Lyonia*, moss collars, and buttress swelling. Currently, the elevation of the *Lyonia*, moss collars, and buttress swelling are defined as "normal pool".

Based on the results of this work and other observations, Ted Rochow concluded that since the *Lyonia*, moss collars, and buttress swelling (which are used for normal pool indicators in isolated cypress domes) were found to have a 0.3 foot offset from the saw palmetto edge, then saw palmetto edge would be a good normal pool indicator for non-forested wetlands. Dave Slonena expressed some concern that he has seen significant variability in saw palmetto elevations around some wetland and lakes sites, such as Big Fish Lake. Shirley Denton said that this could be overcome by using median levels, rather than extremes. Chris Shea mentioned that the vertical position of saw palmetto associated with a mesic upland ecosystem may be different than those associated with a xeric upland ecosystems. While most seemed to agree that further analysis should be done, there was general agreement that saw palmetto edge (with the offset) would be a good working solution to establishing normal pool elevations in non-forested systems.

Mr. Hancock gave a brief introduction to the District's WAP assessment, followed by presentations by Jill Hood and Dr. Rochow. All of the presentations are available in PDF format on the Northern Tampa Bay Phase II section of the SWFWMD's website. Ms. Hood explained that significant variability between District and Tampa Bay Water consultants was found in most categories of the WAP results, as well as variability between District personnel, and with individuals through time. Dr. Rochow proposed multiple reasons for the variability, including the use of different transects, seasonal variability, disagreement on species' categorization, and unclear direction in the WAP manual.

Mr. Hancock concluded that the various specific reasons for differences needed to be documented as well as possible before further analysis could be done, and proposed a series of meetings with individual Tampa Bay Water consultants and District personnel to identify the reasons. Once the reasons are identified, further assessment will be performed, and any proposed changes to the existing WAP will be presented to the subcommittee. Patty Fesmire mentioned that we should concentrate on the key categories as we move forward. Dr. Denton felt that the goal of the WAP must be taken into account when designing/clarifying methods. Warren Hogg was concerned that if we change the methodology, we must do it in such a way that we would not lose the ability to compare historic assessments. Dan Schmutz said that there needs to be clarification in the manual to be more specific, and that psychologically-based techniques could be used to improve the function of the field forms.

Consultant/District meetings will be scheduled over the next several weeks, and another subcommittee meeting will be scheduled to share the results.

AGENDA

Northern Tampa Bay Phase II Local Technical Peer Review Group Wetlands Subcommittee Meeting

**SWFWMD Tampa Service Office, Hwy 301N, Tampa
November 6, 2003 – 9:00 AM**

1. Normal Pools
 - a. Presentation on District 's normal pool study (D. Carr)
 - b. Discussion of the determination of normal pools in all wetland types (T. Rochow)

2. Wetland Assessment Procedure (WAP) study
 - a. Introduction (M. Hancock, J. Emery)
 - b. Presentation on the results of the comparative assessment (J. Hood)
 - c. Presentation on the initial interpretation of results (T. Rochow)
 - d. Discussion and comments

3. Other projects