



South Florida Water Management District

WATER RESOURCES ACCOUNTABILITY AND COLLABORATION PUBLIC FORUM MINUTES

December 3, 2020

10:00 AM

via Communications Media Technology

www.SFWMD.gov

Moderator: Drew Bartlett, Executive Director

1. Welcome and introductions

Mr. Bartlett opened the meeting at approximately 10:00 AM and provided a brief summary of flood mitigation efforts for the 8.5 Square Mile Area (SMA), and project modeling options.

This item is recorded at:

<http://sfwmd.igm2.com/Citizens/SplitView.aspx?Mode=Video&MeetingID=2044&Format=None>

2. Structural and non-structural opportunities to address high water conditions in Water Conservation Areas (WCAs) and seepage induced flooding at 8.5 Square Mile Area (SMA) (Staff contacts: Akin Owosina and Stephen Collins)

Mr. Owosina provided an overview of flood mitigation efforts; addressed seepage induced flooding; introduced flood mitigation strategies evaluated by District Hydrology and Hydraulics staff; and, outlined project modeling options.

Mr. Collins presented the non-structural acquisition of real estate process.

3. Discussion from WRAC Public Forum Participants

Charles LaPradd, Miami-Dade County, provided general comments.

Dr. Tom Reinert, Fish and Wildlife Commission provided general comments.

Herbert Raybourn, Walt Disney World, commented on project modeling efforts.

Adam Gelber, U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI), provided general comments.

Cara Capp, National Parks Conservation Association, inquired on funding for the 8.5 SMA seepage management project options, to which Mr. Bartlett responded the District was committed to building a short-term solution and would be seeking State and District sources. In respect to the long-term solution, Mr. Bartlett stated that full implementation of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) would require federal funding.

James Erskine, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, commented on high water levels in the Water Conservation Areas (WCAs) and provided general comments on project modeling and curtain wall alignment.

Lee Hefty, Miami-Dade County, inquired on land acquisition and climate change conditions. Mr. Owosina elaborated on the District's Flood Protection Level of Service Program and stated this program identified and prioritized long-term infrastructure improvement needs in response to sea level rise and climate change. Mr. Bartlett stated the District had recently awarded a contract to U.S. Geological Survey to assist with modeling of future rainfall patterns.

Lt. Col. Todd Polk, United States Army Corps of Engineers, thanked Mr. Bartlett and Mr. Owosina for the presentation.

Geoffrey Mullins, Everglades Foundation, thanked presenters and the District's Governing Board for making this issue a priority.

Richard Pinsky, Akerman, LLP, commented on S-333, hydrology comparisons, flood protection, flood mitigation, future development and growth. Mr. Bartlett stated that data of hydrology comparisons were available.

Grant Lanham, Sugar Cane Growers Cooperative of Florida, provided general comments on the project's curtain wall and ground water option.

Doug Gaston, Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation, echoed Mr. Pinsky's comments and inquired on easement acquisition costs. Mr. Owosina stated an easement of approximately 50 to 80 feet was available and would be enough to install a curtain wall, and no additional land costs were expected.

Ingrid Hansen, Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), commended the District for addressing flood mitigation efforts in 8.5 SMA, and commented on the new spillway in place, but unable to be used. Ms. Hansen also informed participants of DEP's intent to issue a permit for the S-333.

Angela Chelette, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS), thanked staff for the presentation and stated FDACS was in full support of the project options presented.

Mr. Bartlett recognized Governing Board Member Ms. Thurlow-Lippisch.

Ms. Thurlow-Lippisch thanked staff and meeting participants for the engaging dialogue.

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4. Public Comment

- Newton Cook, United Water Fowlers of Florida, Inc.
- Nyla Pipes, Florida One Foundation
- Mike Elfenbein
- Daniel Watson
- Mike Collins

5. Adjourn

Mr. Bartlett thanked the public and WRAC Public Forum Participants for engaging in discussion.

The Forum adjourned at approximately 1:00 PM.