



South Florida Water Management District

GOVERNING BOARD WORKSHOP MINUTES

June 29, 2021

10:00 AM

District Headquarters - B-1 Auditorium
West Palm Beach, FL 33406

This workshop will provide the Governing Board with an overview of the Lake Okeechobee System Operating Manual (LOSOM). The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Jacksonville District is the federal agency responsible for developing the Lake Okeechobee System Operating Manual (LOSOM). The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is updating the Lake Okeechobee operations manual to reevaluate and define operations for the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule that take into account additional infrastructure that will soon be operational. The additional infrastructure that will be taken into consideration includes the Herbert Hoover Dike rehabilitation, Kissimmee River Restoration Project, as well as the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) C-43 West Basin Storage Reservoir and C-44 Reservoir and Stormwater Treatment Area.

The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) has adopted the following position statement on LOSOM:

“The South Florida Water Management District works to safeguard and restore South Florida's water resources and ecosystems, protect our communities from flooding, and meet the region's water needs while connecting with the public and stakeholders. LOSOM allows us to capitalize on recent infrastructure improvements including rehabilitation of the Herbert Hoover Dike and CERP features. The SFWMD views balancing the differing interests across the system, including flexibility to adapt to current situations to achieve that balance, as integral to the success of the LOSOM process. Those interests include: equitably delivering water supply to society and the environment for beneficial uses during the dry season; increasing the tolerance for temporary/short term higher lake stages during the wet season in order to avoid harmful estuary discharges; and maintaining the other congressionally authorized purposes of flood control, navigation, and recreation.”

Attendee Name	Title	Status
Chauncey Goss	Chairman	Present
Ben Butler		Present
Ron Bergeron		Present
Charlie Martinez		Remote
Cheryl Meads		Present
Charlette Roman		Remote
Jay Steinle		Remote
Jacqui Thurlow-Lippisch		Present
Scott Wagner	Vice-Chairman	Present

1. Call to Order - Chauncey Goss, Chairman, Governing Board
Chairman Goss called the workshop to order at approximately 10:00 AM.
2. Pledge of Allegiance
Vice Chairman Wagner led the Pledge of Allegiance.
3. Part 1: LOSOM Planning Process – Jennifer Reynolds (SFWMD)
Ms. Reynolds introduced Tim Gysan, Project Manager, USACE; SFWMD workshop expert panelists; and, USACE panelists.

District Panelists:

Jenifer Barnes, Lead Hydrologic Modeler
 Jennifer Brown, Senior Specialist Attorney
 Karin Smith, Principal Scientist - Water Supply
 Pete Kwiatkowski, Section Administrator - Water Supply
 Jose Otero, Section Administrator - STAs
 Tracey Piccone, Chief Consulting Engineer - STAs
 Dr. Fred Sklar, Section Administrator
 Phyllis Klarmann, Senior Scientist - Estuary Ecology
 Leslye Waugh, Section Administrator - Project Management
 Dr. Zach Welch, Section Administrator - Lake Ecology

USACE Panelists:

LTC Todd Polk, Deputy Commander, South Florida
 Eva Vélez, Strategic Program Manager
 Savannah Lacy, Water Management Lead and Water Manager for Lake Okeechobee
 Jessica Mallet, Engineering Technical Lead
 Lisa Aley, Planning Technical Lead
 Jason Engle, Water Resources Branch Chief
 Cal Neidrauer, Lead Civil Engineer, Interagency Modeling Center

Ms. Reynolds presented an overview of the LOSOM planning process. Items discussed included the project's purpose, goals, and objectives; the District's role in

the LOSOM planning process and development of a Balanced Plan; and, conceptual plan analysis and project modeling.

Board Comment

In response to Chairman Goss' questions regarding modeling and Storm Water Treatment Areas (STAs), Ms. Reynolds explained limiting factors to flows south might include STAs in the modeling, but it was dependent on the time of year. Ms. Piccone stated the only STAs included in LOSOM modeling with capacity to receive lake regulatory releases were STA-2 and STA-3/4.

Vice Chairman Wagner and Ms. Piccone discussed utilizing the models to maximize sending regulatory releases south during the dry season.

At the request of Chairman Goss, Ms. Reynolds provided an overview of what would occur during Iteration 3 of the LOSOM process.

Ms. Thurlow-Lippisch and Ms. Reynolds discussed the purpose of the LOSOM planning effort and the reason why the four determinants: the Herbert Hoover Dike, Kissimmee River Restoration, C-43, and C-44, that were included in the No Action modeling and why it was called No Action when it included those projects. Ms. Reynolds explained that the action for LOSOM was a new lake schedule and the Federal decision to change the lake schedule was the federal action and the projects were other activities that were not part of the federal decision. Ms. Thurlow-Lippisch then asked why the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) Reservoir was not included in the modeling to which Ms. Reynolds explained the EAA Reservoir would not be completed until after the 2022-2025 timeframe and only infrastructure that would be completed or utilized during this timeframe were included in the modeling.

In response to Mr. Bergeron's question regarding modeling and if the removal of the barriers at the Tamiami Trail were included, Ms. Reynolds explained infrastructure changes that were anticipated in accordance with the Integrated Delivery Schedule (IDS) through 2025 were included. Mr. Bergeron and Ms. Reynolds continued discussion on modeling and the removal of barriers restricting water flows into Florida Bay.

In response to Chairman Goss' question regarding if the Curtain Wall project was included in the modeling, Ms. Barnes stated staff would research and provide an update to the Board.

Vice Chairman Wagner and Ms. Reynolds discussed the advantages of providing analysis on CERP in the modeling but not yet online, after the LOSOM schedule goes into effect, to show the full benefits of CERP.

Mr. Butler, Ms. Barnes, and Ms. Waugh discussed the updated existing conditions represented on slide 11 for the two new baseline scenarios: Existing Condition Baseline (ECBr) and No Action 2025 (NA25).

In response to Ms. Meads' question, Ms. Reynolds stated the goals and objectives between LOSOM schedule and the Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule 2008 (LORS-08) were very similar.

Vice Chairman Wagner commented on one major difference between LORS-08 and LOSOM, the increased presence of harmful algal blooms.

The Board discussed the history of algal blooms in the St. Lucie River and Caloosahatchee River, and the increase in public health concerns due to algal blooms.

In response to Ms. Meads comment regarding LOSOM and LORS-08 similarities, Mr. Mitnik stated one significant difference was LORS 08 had the purposeful intent of lowering lake stages for dam safety and protection of residents surrounding the Herbert Hoover Dike.

In response to Mr. Bergeron's question regarding if the modeling considered the completion of the Modified Water Deliveries project at the Tamiami Trail and included the equalization of water from central to southern Florida Bay with the barriers removed, Ms. Reynolds explained the NA25 model and all the alternatives considered and incorporated the Modified Water Deliveries project and the Combined Operating Plan (COP) at the Tamiami Trail. Mr. Mitnik stated the southern end of the system was modeled with the COP but did not include the complete removal of the Tamiami Trail so an update to COP would occur when the Tamiami Trail project was completed.

The Board and staff continued to discuss modeling plans with the Modified Water Deliveries project.

This item is recorded at:

<http://sfwmd.igmd.com/Citizens/SplitView.aspx?Mode=Video&MeetingID=2065&Format=Agenda>

4. Part 2: LOSOM Iteration 2: Overview of Alternative Lake Schedules – Tim Gysan (USACE)

Mr. Gysan, USACE, presented an overview of the LOSOM Iteration 2 alternative schedules AA, BB, CC, DD, and EE.

Board Comment

Ms. Thurlow-Lippisch and Mr. Gysan discussed the Lake Worth Lagoon's release guidance represented on slide 17.

In response to Ms. Meads' question regarding the water shortage management band releases determined by the State of Florida represented on slides 18 to 29, Mr. Gysan explained once water levels dropped below the Lake Okeechobee water shortage management band, cutbacks to water supply would occur and were determined by the District.

The Board and Mr. Gysan discussed the naming conventions of Zones D through F represented on slides 18 to 29.

Ms. Thurlow-Lippisch and Mr. Gysan discussed Alternative BB wet releases East to the St. Lucie Estuary through S-80 and releases West to the Caloosahatchee Estuary through S-77 represented on slides 19 and 21.

In response to Ms. Thurlow-Lippisch's questions regarding when the last time 7,300 cfs flowed through the S-80 to the St. Lucie Estuary and for how long, Mr. Mitnik explained the last time releases of this magnitude occurred was after Hurricane Irma in 2017 when maximum releases were sent both east and west. Mr. Mitnik stated staff would research how long these releases took place and provide an update to the Board.

In response to Ms. Meads questions, Mr. Bartlett explained a healthy lake zone was from 12.5' to 15.5', and holding the Lake for longer durations above 15.5' in the wet season could count against the ecologic score for lake health and cause a decrease in performance. At the same time, a decrease in performance for lake health could be an increase in performance for estuary discharges because the only way to hold the Lake lower was to discharge to the estuaries.

Chairman Goss recessed the workshop at approximately 12:00 PM.

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5. Part 3: LOSOM Iteration 2: Overview of Model Results – Jennifer Reynolds (SFWMD)

Chairman Goss reconvened the workshop at approximately 12:45 PM.

Ms. Reynolds presented an overview of the LOSOM Iteration 2 alternative performance. Items discussed include project purpose, goals, and perspectives; alternative schedule and release guidance; alternative releases east and west; and, Lake stage performance and management strategies.

Board Comment

Ms. Reynolds introduced Dr. Welch to provide an overview of the performance criteria to evaluate the Lake's ecology.

Ms. Reynolds introduced Ms. Klarmann to provide an overview of the performance criteria to evaluate estuaries.

At the request of Mr. Steinle, Dr. Welch explained how the NA25 represented on slide 37 might affect the performance of the Lake Okeechobee.

Vice Chairman Wagner commented on the importance of CERP for managing the Lake during extreme weather events and storage north and south of the Lake.

Ms. Reynolds introduced Dr. Sklar to provide an overview of the performance criteria to evaluate systems of South Florida.

Vice Chairman Wagner, Dr. Sklar, and Ms. Reynolds discussed the plan performance relative to NA25 represented on slide 38.

Ms. Reynolds introduced Ms. Piccone to provide an overview of the performance criteria to evaluate STAs.

Ms. Reynolds introduced Ms. Smith to provide an overview of the performance criteria to evaluate water supply.

The Board and Ms. Smith discussed the contents of slide 89 regarding the Everglades Agricultural Area and Lake Okeechobee Service Area (LOSA) demands and demands not met and slide 92 regarding water supply to the Lower East Coast (LEC) service areas.

Ms. Thurlow-Lippisch, Ms. Smith, and Ms. Barnes discussed the allocated numbers used for agriculture and permitted water modeling.

Ms. Meads commented on the drought recorded in 2011 and requested staff provide a history on the amount of occurrences users did not get permitted water; when the EAA did not receive what it needed; when crops failed; and, when water restrictions were enforced on the City of West Palm Beach or the City of Okeechobee.

In response to Vice Chairman Wagner's question regarding how much buffer was provided to permitted users, Ms. Smith provided an overview of slide 85 regarding LOSA cutback events and the percentage of cutbacks. Additionally, Ms. Smith stated permitted users were given enough supplemental water for a one in ten-year drought.

The Board and staff continued discussion on the availability of data collected for allocated water delivered to permitted users and volumes of water consumed during a drought; agricultural yield; differences between a water shortage and a meteorological drought; and, LOSA non-drought water supply performance.

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6. Public Comment

In-person:

Mayor Dowling Watford, City of Okeechobee

Sheryl Wood

Steve Davis, The Everglades Foundation

Pam McAfee

Logan Luse, Florida Farm Bureau Federation

Ben Hogarth, City of Stuart

Daniel DeLisi

Becky Harris

Newton Cook, United Waterfowlers of Florida

Jessica Pinsky, Captains for Clean Water

Taren Wadley

Eve Samples, Friends of the Everglades
John Maehl, Martin County Board of County Commissioners
Ernie Barnett, Florida Land Council
Charles Grande, Rivers Coalition

Virtual:

Congressman Brian Mast, U.S. House of Representatives
Mayor Holly Smith, City of Sanibel
Commissioner Ken Russell, City of Miami
Susan Gray
Suzanne Martin
Commissioner Ramon Iglesias, Hendry County
Poonam Kalkat, City of West Palm Beach
Paola Ferreira
Ryan Rossi
Emma Haydocy
Joseph Gilio
Janet Taylor
Lucy Caputi
Lisa Wilson-Davis
Cara Capp
James Evans
David Ray
Lisa Interlandi
Kerri Kates
Michael Collins
Jackson Purvis
Nyla Pipes
Paul Gray
Kelly Cox
Mark Perry
Mike Elfenbein
Richard Weisskoff
Benita Whalen
Stephen Walker
Drew Martin
Mike Conner
Hayden Reddish
Emily Kenyon
Kevin Doyle

Board Comment

Mr. Butler urged the USACE and staff to continue working with stakeholders to resolve questions on the LOSOM schedule.

Chairman Goss commended staff for the informative workshop presentations and for the open and transparent process to support a stronger more improved project.

Ms. Meads commented on the LOSOM objectives represented on slide 5 and expressed full support of Alternative CC.

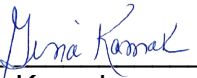
Mr. Bartlett commented on the Board's dedication to the LOSOM project and the District's mission, and stated staff would continue to carefully review LOSOM iterations with a focus on improved estuary discharge deliveries and water supply. Also, Mr. Bartlett stated staff would provide a recommendation to the Board by the next Board meeting.

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7. Adjourn

Chairman Goss adjourned the workshop at approximately 5:50 PM.



Gina Kamak
Deputy District Clerk
South Florida Water Management District