



Minutes
WATER RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMISSION
Monthly Meeting

April 07, 2016, 9:00 AM
 District Headquarters - B-1 Auditorium
 3301 Gun Club Road
 West Palm Beach, FL 33406

Attendee Name	Title	Status
Douglas Yoder	Alternate for Bill Johnson	Absent
Samantha Whitcraft	Alternate for John Lamkin	Absent
D. Albrey Arrington	Utility	Present
Jeff Ward	Alternate for Barbara Miedema	Absent
Shelley Vana	Local Government	Present
Douglas Bournique	Agriculture	Absent
Bob Ulevich	Alternate for Doug Bournique	Present
Chuck Collins	FWC / Statewide	Absent
Harry Cronin	Alternate for Jim Reynolds	Absent
Jeff Scott	NRCS / Federal	Absent
Vincent Encomio	Alternate for Mark Perry	Absent
Jim Reynolds	Utility	Absent
Kurt Harclerode	Alternate for Pam Keyes	Present
Michael Harford	Local Government	Absent
Mark Perry	Environmental	Late
James Humble	Agriculture	Present
William "Chad" Kennedy	FDEP	Present
John T. Lamkin	NOAA / Federa	Absent
Joan Lawrence	US DOI / Federal	Present
Barbara Miedema	Agriculture	Present
Linda McCarthy	Alternate for Bubba Wade	Present
Kimberly Lawrence	Alternate for Michael Harford	Present
Newton Cook	Public Interest	Present
Don Fox	Alternate for Chuck Collins	Absent
Mary Ann Martin	Public Interest	Present
Bevin Beaudet	Alternate for Shelley Vana	Absent
Brian L. Wheeler	Utility	Present
Joe Capra	Business	Present
Bud Howard	Alternate for Albrey Arrington	Absent
Michael Collins	Public Interest	Present

Mark Dombroski	Alternate for Newton Cook	Absent
Medora Krome	Alternate for James Humble	Absent
James Erskine	Miccosukee Tribe	Absent
John Lesman	Business	Present
Ashley Tripp	Alternate for Mary Ann Martin	Absent
Maelo Reyes	Alternate for Jeff Schmidt	Absent
Rich Budell	Alternate for W. Ray Scott	Absent
Wovoka Tommie	Seminole Tribe	Absent
Malcolm "Bubba" Wade	Agriculture	Present
Jacqui Thurlow-Lippisch	Alternate for Joe Capra	Absent
Neale Montgomery	Business	Present
Harry Raucher	Utility	Present
Pat Martin	Alternate for Harry Raucher	Present
Joshua Kellam	Business	Present
Lance R. Bennett	Business	Absent
Erin Deady	Environmental	Present
Adam Gelber	Public Interest	Present
Jason Liechty	Alternate for Kristin Jacobs	Present
Tom Jones	Agriculture	Absent
Mike Sweeney	Alternate for Brian Wheeler	Present
Pam Keyes	Utility	Absent
Jenny Conner Nelms	Environmental	Absent
Nancy Payton	Environmental	Absent
W. Scott Ray	FDACS / Statewide	Present
Karson Turner	Local Government	Present
Jamie Poulos	Alternate for Lance Bennett	Absent
Shannon Estenoz	US DOI / Federal	Present
Tabitha Cale	Environmental	Absent
Jill Hoog	Business	Absent
Ernie Marks	State Government	Excused
James J. Moran	Chairman	Absent
Kevin Powers	Vice-Chairman	Present

2. Call to Order - Kevin Powers, WRAC Vice Chairman

Kevin Powers, WRAC Vice Chairman, called the meeting to order at 9:02a.m. and recognized the month of April as Water Conservation month. He also commented on the passing of John Arthur Marshall.

3. WRAC Member Issues

Adam Gelber, Atkins North America, said that it's the one year anniversary since the conversation started about Florida Bay. He mentioned the view that he saw when he went to Florida Bay and how the seagrass has died-off. He stated that there's no fish, no vegetation, there's nothing.

Newton Cook, United Waterfowlers, made a few comments in reference to John

Marshall, the Loxahatchee Wildlife Refuge and what the federal government needs to do to help fix the issues. He provided his report on the WRAC Recreational meeting and mentioned that the next WRAC Recreational meeting would take place on June 13th at District Headquarters.

Mike Collins, Florida Keys/Florida Bay, briefly talked about John Marshall and the interesting conversations they've had. He mentioned attending a County Commission meeting with Mr. Antonacci, where a large number of environmental advocates also attended. He spoke about the social media campaign that was launched right after that meeting against Mr. Antonacci, himself and the District. He thinks the information that is being told by the media is a great threat to the efforts of this agency and could destroy everything this agency has worked for.

Kimberly Lawrence, representing Osceola County, announced she would be taking another job and would not be participating as a WRAC member any longer. She stated that she had enjoyed her time and she learned a lot.

Mr. Powers thanked Kimberly for her service as a WRAC member and stated she'd be missed.

Erin Deady, mentioned an article she received that was written in the Keys Press pertaining to concerns for Florida Bay and she requested to have a presentation done at the next meeting about those issues. She stated that we're on the cusp of the LED Update and she said having a presentation detailing how minimum flows and levels operate, how we'd move from prevention recovery strategies and how we'd deal with them in the water supply plan update would be very helpful. She wanted more information on the laws and policies in this situation.

Adam Gelber responded to Erin's comments by informing her that the FWRI would be distributed and this information would coincide with the presentations on operational changes she requested.

Mr. Powers said this information would be passed on to Mr. Moran.

Charles LaPradd, Miami-Dade County Dept. of Regulatory & Economic Resources, addressed the canal levels in the C-103 Canal between the divide structure and the L-31. He mentioned a recent aerial survey that was done in the western divide structure, where the avocados and 30 year old trees have experienced a tremendous amount of die back. He said that visually, the canal is at the cresting stage and has been for quite a while.

Ray Scott, FDACS, commented on the annual C-111 Interagency meeting that was held the previous week. He talked about the data that was presented by District staff and how it illustrated some of the dynamics of what is going on in Florida Bay. He stated that some of the information would be valuable and he would like to see it in a future presentation.

Barbara Miedema, Sugar Cane Growers Cooperative, mentioned to everyone that sugar farming is a part of agriculture and it is a crop in Florida.

Joshua Kellam, The ESG Companies, thanked District staff for the media outreach that has been taking place and getting positive information to the public. He asked that we continue this movement, work together and push forward because this agency has a great story to tell and has done some good things.

Mark Generales, Southern Trust Financial, agreed with Mr. Kellam's comments and requested a report outlining what the plan would be to deal with getting the information to the public. He inquired about the marketing strategy and what it would entail because he thinks this would be helpful. He mentioned that the media is having a series of meetings in Fort Myers on the Caloosahatchee and Lake O releases. He stated the information is not accurate and he's curious to see how the District would handle this.

Shelley Vana, Palm Beach County Commissioner, agreed with Mr. Generales' previous comments and stated she would mention the presentation that Mike Collins referred to at the next Commission meeting. Ms. Vana said it would be great to know what the real science was instead of partnering with individuals that don't have accurate or factual data.

Mike Collins said it would be useful to put together a package, graphically driven, that could be circulated to all the County Commissioners to get everyone on the same page and have some consistency.

LTC Jen Reynolds, USACE, announced the Lake Okeechobee releases for the week and stated there would be no change. They would maintain the 3,000 cfs to the west and 1,170 cfs to the east.

Kurt Harclerode, Lee County Utilities, reported that the Board of County Commissioners codified their water policy issues. Mr. Harclerode stated they wanted to base their decisions on good science and to continue the course with the projects. He requested an after report on the impacts of releases to the estuaries at the June WRAC meeting.

Karson Turner, Hendry County Commissioner, stated the water on the lake is gorgeous and he was appreciative to the Corps for the releases. He thanked the District for the press releases that had been done and he's looking forward to becoming more engaged in the process.

Mary Ann Martin, Roland Martin Marina, commented on the record size bass coming out of Lake Okeechobee. She stated it has been a great year for tourism around the lake. She mentioned a documentary on PBS titled "The Unseen Everglades" and encouraged everyone to take a look at it. She hoped the District would get involved with this project and help educate the public.

Neale Montgomery, Pavese Law Firm, thanked the District for their efforts in getting funding from the legislature for C-43/Lake Hicpochee. She gave kudos to Representative Caldwell, Governing Board member, Mitch Hutchcraft and Phil Flood for getting the facts out and educating the public.

Chad Kennedy, FDEP, stated the Lake Okeechobee annual meeting would be held on May 3rd at 9a.m. in Okeechobee at Indian River Community College.

Newton Cook thanked the Corps and the District for completing the 164,000 acre tree forest marsh restoration project. He stated it's a tremendous accomplishment for the Indian River Lagoon area. He mentioned the Kissimmee River Restoration project and the upcoming final stages. He said we have great success stories despite what is being read on social media. He spoke about a presentation given by Shannon Estenoz to the River Coalition and how this information was received.

Kevin Powers commented that he's proud of this agency for their outreach efforts and he thanked Mr. Cook for his feedback.

Bubba Wade, U.S. Sugar, mentioned that educating the public as to how the system works is key and we've failed miserably because of the misinformation that is out there now. He stated he appreciates the efforts of the District, Governing Board and staff for addressing the issue and putting the "Get the Facts" brochures out there. He said this helps the leaders get the correct information to pass along to the public.

Mark Generales commented on Representative Matt Caldwell's ability to speak to the public on the issues while being in a strong position of leadership. He stated we need to know what's going on in the public. He mentioned that the baby-boomers are getting ready for retirement and they have lots of discretionary income and the ability to get involved more than they did before. Meaning if we're having a problem with the information on social media, there's more to come. He said it's better to get something more comprehensive in place to deal with what's coming and he thinks the District has a good start in the right direction.

4. Legislative Update: Jeff Sumner, Office Chief, Everglades Policy and Coordination Division

WRAC Member Comment

Mark Generales, Southern Trust Financial, questioned the numbers that were presented (slide 9) and he wanted to know if they were formulated. Jeff Sumner responded by stating the numbers were not necessarily formulated, but the Legislature has the authority to allocate more dollars if they chose to.

Beth Lewis, The Nature Conservancy, thanked Jeff Sumner for the comprehensive overview and stated this session was very successful for water this year. She was very pleased that the Legislature took a comprehensive approach to water resources issues throughout Florida. She mentioned she was pleased to see portions of the water bill pass and the establishment of some framework to protect Florida's springs.

Bob Ulevich, Indian River Citrus League, made a comment pertaining to slide 7 of the presentation. He questioned the permit allocation and expiration that was presented. Mr. Sumner responded by stating after an expiration and during a renewal the new permit allocation would be calculated based on the efficiency of the measures that were

implemented.

Mr. Ulevich then asked about a drip system vs. flood system. He wanted to know, as a permit holder, if an individual was at risk of reducing the allocation if new measures were implemented in the past period. Mr. Sumner stated that during the renewal period they look at what the crop is at the time, what the irrigation efficiencies are and what the reasonable beneficial calculations are. They both agreed that nothing had changed in the thought process.

Barbara Miedema, Sugar Cane Growers Cooperative, had a question on the appropriation slide (11) in the presentation. She wanted to know if all of the funding went to the District or if it was shared between the District, DEP and FDACS. Mr. Sumner stated that the 47.8 million dollars for the public/private partnerships was allocated to DEP and he did not know how they were going to disperse it. He stated some of the dollars maybe used to cover large BMAP projects and meetings were starting to take place.

Ms. Miedema then questioned the dispersed water storage contracts and if funding was received from the Legislature. Mr. Sumner responded by stating that remains to be seen and again, spoke to the upcoming meetings that would be taking place about dispersing the funds.

Brian Wheeler, Toho Water Authority, responded to Mr. Ulevich's earlier question pertaining to permit allocation and expiration. He stated that the rules allow for a water user to get their permit extended based upon the level of savings the individual had. He then spoke to Ms. Lewis' earlier comments stating that individuals deal with inconsistencies within the rules processes of the three Districts and he thinks that more collaboration is needed to come up with a consistent set of rules. This would hopefully lead to the process going statewide as opposed to just being in Central Florida.

Joe Capra, CAPTEC Engineering, was trying to gain understanding on the Legislative Appropriations of 2016 (slide 11) and questioned the water quality monitoring and testing aspect that was presented. He wanted to know if it was spread out amongst all the items. Mr. Sumner replied that he was specifically mentioning the money that we receive from Alligator Alley tolls and that a significant amount of those funds goes toward the monitoring program in Florida Bay.

Mr. Capra then asked if there was any throughout the District or if those funds were distributed everywhere else. Terrie Bates responded with they helped to fund the C-111 Project construction and all of the ecological and water quality monitoring that's required for that project as a component of Florida Bay.

Mr. Capra questioned where the appropriations for water quality monitoring would be for the St. Lucie Estuary or the Caloosahatchee. He wanted to know if he could see the dollars associated for these items. Mr. Sumner replied no, our District wide monitoring program is paid for with ad valorem dollars not Legislative appropriations.

Kurt Harclerode, Lee County Utilities, wanted clarification pertaining to the funding for dispersed water storage and if it was coming from the Northern Everglades. Mr.

Sumner stated that this was a possibility and it's under discussion.

Mr. Harclerode then mentioned the \$40 million dollars for C-43 and the \$3 million for research. He wanted more clarification on this. Mr. Sumner stated that he believed that the \$3 million was slated for the Lake Okeechobee Watershed CERP Planning effort and the Western Everglades effort.

Mr. Harclerode agreed with Ms. Lewis' earlier comment and he appreciated everything Mr. Sumner and representatives from around the Districts had done with getting everything together.

Bob Ulevich questioned if the funding for dispersed water management was a continuation of the existing pilot program. Mr. Sumner replied yes. Mr. Ulevich then wanted to know if the legislation funded projects through the Central Florida Initiative would appear on the chart. Mr. Sumner replied no.

Public Comment

None

5. Loxahatchee River Watershed Restoration Project – Plan Formulation Update: Jennifer Leeds, Unit Leader, Everglades Policy and Coordination Division

WRAC Member Comment

Mark Generales, Southern Trust Financial, thanked Jennifer Leeds for the presentation and had a question pertaining to the array of alternatives presented. He wanted to know if the process provided the opportunity to combine more than one alternative using features from each or if you had to choose one.

Jennifer Leeds replied by stating the team looks at various options that comprise the different alternatives; meaning they're looking at various storage features - shallow vs. deep, which they will take forward when doing the analysis.

Mr. Generales replied by clarifying that there are five separate alternatives that were offered and there are elements in each one and he was wondering if they decided to take features from each and combine them. Ms. Leeds responded by stating the team is going to take the alternatives and do the analysis and they may come up with revisions. The process is still open.

Rob Robbins, Palm Beach County ERM, stated good presentation and he thanked the District and Corps staff for a job well done on taking the primary thoughts of the 13 alternatives and capturing them into the final five. He said he would like for the team to revisit the real estate analysis/cost of lands and determine how it would figure into the process.

Albrey Arrington, Loxahatchee River District, questioned the conflicting timelines relative to restoration strategies and PDTs. He stated this was discussed years ago and it

seems that we're doing the exact same process now. He said that the Federal process starts and stops and it may not be on an urgency perspective, but restoration strategies should have some urgency to it. He wanted to know when the timelines do not mesh which one took precedence.

Ernie Marks responded by stating the Consent Order by DEP has the long term timeframe for operations to go online and this was reviewed internally. So, we have some flexibility on our internal schedule. He said we're looking at a TSP coming out or having the alternatives further evaluated to help us make a decision as to how we incorporate this, move early on some things that the team may have and to meet our obligations.

Joe Capra, CAPTEC Engineering, made a comment pertaining to slide 10 in the presentation and wanted to know if the C-18 Basin Storage was the Mecca Property. Ms. Leeds replied correct. He questioned the three year time frame for the process now versus the previous one and half year time frame. He wanted to know if this could be expedited due to all the development going on in that area.

Mr. Marks replied we're looking at the three year smart planning process. He said we realize that it's a massive amount of time, but if there's opportunity to do things faster while keeping an eye on the issues that arise through the various planning processes, we will do that as we continue to move forward. He mentioned that we have limited staff resources and we're focusing on multiple processes as well.

Mr. Arrington then wanted to know how sea level rise was being addressed or the potential for sea level rise relative to the process and the various plan formulations.

Mr. Marks responded by stating the Corps planning process looks at sea level rise and any process that we're doing under CERP. He said that we're following the guidance that was preferred by the Corps and he then looked to John Mitnik for additional comments.

Mr. Arrington responded by stating what used to be the North Palm Beach County Plan is now the Loxahatchee River Restoration Plan and the focus of the plan, as he understood it based on the name change, was to get restoration flows to the northwest fork of the Loxahatchee River. He said, philosophically, if we're addressing sea level rise - would the project get more water, less water or would we just walk away because it's not sustainable.

John Mitnik replied to Ernie Marks' earlier comments pertaining to the Corps providing guidance to the team(s) on sea level rise. He mentioned the range that's provided in the guidance from the Corps of what sea level conditions could be in the future - within the next 50 years. He said it would be up to the team(s) to address how the range would affect the plan formulations they're trying to achieve within the project itself.

Mr. Marks added to Mr. Mitnik's comment by stating as we move forward and build these features, there is an element of adaptive management that we will continue to undertake.

Mike Collins, Florida Keys/Florida Bay, commented on Mr. Arrington's earlier remarks pertaining to the restoration of flows being the fundamental issue and everything else being Christmas ornaments. Mr. Collins stated everybody that wanted something got it and this is how we ended up with 56 projects. He continued with a reasonable scientist or engineer would be able to pick the ten projects that would actually restore flows to the Everglades. He mentioned the difference between restoration strategies and the process that was presented. He stated that if the Corps process was in place, a lot of these projects would have been built already.

Barbara Miedema, Sugar Cane Growers Cooperative, questioned the purpose of the Loxahatchee River Watershed Plan and L-8 storage flow equalization basin being the primary source of water, which was to restore the flow to the river. She also mentioned the 10,000 acres of land that had been acquired and she wanted to know if this new array meets the original objective for the original flow that's necessary to restore the Wild and Scenic Loxahatchee.

Mr. Marks replied we're going to look at all the new information we have, lands that have been acquired, storage needs and flow paths to see which one of the scenarios, from a cost benefit analysis, will provide what the original project set out to achieve. This is what the process will hopefully establish.

Public Comment

Martha Musgrove, Florida Wildlife Federation, stated she didn't think that Ms. Miedema's and Mr. Arrington's questions had been answered. She explained that some of the lands acquired were to expand the general watershed for the Loxahatchee. Ms. Musgrove wanted to know where the line was drawn for salt intrusion. Her thoughts were that the line was drawn at Mile Marker 6. She said if Mile Marker 6 becomes 8, 10 or 11, we won't have a river. She stated we need to get the water there even if it comes from Mecca. Let's use Mecca in conjunction with the other supplies that are reasonably available and get this project done as quickly as possible; reaching the plan that was developed and endorsed by the State and the District.

6. Cooperative Funding Program New Request for Applications: Mark Elsner, Section Administrator, Water Supply Development, Water Resources Division

WRAC Member Comment

Bubba Wade, U S Sugar Corporation, questioned the \$5 million dollars for dispersed water management and he thought there was more than this. Jeff Sumner replied no, not from the Legislative Appropriations for this year.

Mr. Wade then asked if \$5 million was received the previous year as well. He wanted to know how the money was dispersed last year and what the plan was for this year. He questioned if the money was spread on a bunch of little projects or one project. His thoughts were that we asked for a lot more funding.

Jeff Sumner replied yes, our existing 10-year contracts were supported and we were

able to fund those for several years into the future. Also, on the advice of the audit report from our Inspector General, we implemented similar projects on District owned lands with some of the funds.

Mr. Wade responded by asking if the same thing was going to happen this year - would it fund the continuing projects. Mr. Sumner replied yes, that's what we anticipate. Mr. Wade then asked if the project that was supposed to send water to St. John's or South Florida was funded. Mr. Sumner said no because there is not an active contract nor an application submitted to the District for that project.

Joe Capra, CAPTEC Engineering, asked a question pertaining to the two tiers of the 199 conceptual project applications in the presentation. He wanted to know if they were ranked.

Mark Elsner replied that they were not necessarily ranked, but the purpose of the conceptual application was to look at the projects to determine if they were consistent with the District's mission and if they were ready to go. He stated we were looking at a five year period, but the funding was just for the next year or two.

Mr. Capra said he thought he heard, in the presentation, that one didn't necessarily have to have a permit in hand, but that one had to be in the process of getting the permit. Mr. Elsner replied yes.

Brian Wheeler, Toho Water Authority, commented on the funding for the Northern Everglades. He mentioned Senate Bill 552 and the expectation of the matching dollars coming from the Water Management Districts. He hopes that in the future instead of \$9 million it will be \$90 million. He stated right now, this money doesn't move the needle on anything in the Water Supply arena.

Public Comment

None

7. Everglades Stormwater Treatment Areas - Operations and Performance Update: Jeremy McBryan, Principal Engineer, Everglades and Policy Coordination Division

WRAC Member Comment

Mike Collins, Florida Keys/Florida Bay, wanted to know what the numbers were for the 2014 water year using the same dates listed on slide 13 of the presentation. He stated the numbers seemed to be a lot lower.

Jeremy McBryan replied yes, they were lower, but he didn't have the exact figures. He said it was because of the conditions during that time. He stated we were in a unique situation in Water Year 2015 where we had conservation areas at a level where we were able to send water south and we had runoff in the EAA that was lower than normal.

Mr. Collins then mentioned 2005 where we had a huge amount of water that went through the system and about a year and a half later, there were some negative impacts to the STAs. He talked about the vegetative changes and the struggle to replant. He wanted to know what the District's thoughts were if something similar of this nature were to re-occur.

Mr. McBryan responded by stating today - we're spreading the Lake Okeechobee water that we aren't getting south everywhere. STAs 2, 3 and 4 are getting a lot and we're putting it where we can. He said our scientists are looking at the numbers on a weekly and bi-weekly basis, keeping a track of the water depths, looking at inflow loads and looking at the water quality of the lake to see if it's making a difference on STA performance.

Newton Cook, United Waterfowlers, made a comment on the STAs and stated the ducks were down 30% this year. He mentioned the larger amounts of cattails in the STAs and that cattails are free. The cost should be put into the submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV). He said if we're going to run the lake water into the STAs, we're going to have to build more acres. Attention needs to be drawn to what really does the work in the STAs and it's the submerged aquatic vegetation.

Barbara Miedema, Sugar Cane Growers Cooperative, said excellent presentation and really good news on the STAs and their performance, but she was more interested in the A-1 Flow Equalization Basin (FEB) operations on slide 17 of the presentation. She questioned if a complete water budget had been done on this new feature to see how much water could be stored over a period of time and what the estimated time was for this new feature. She stated she was really interested on how this feature could attenuate flow and optimize STA 3 and 4 discharges.

Mr. McBryan replied the projections that he had for volume were prepared in the plan development for 2012. He mentioned the anticipation of 200,000 acre feet of water that could be processed and averaged annually through the A-1. He stated some years this will not happen and the ability to empty the facility will be constrained, which would make the ability to send more water in constrained. He talked about the performance of the system and said inflow concentrations are at 90 ppb and outflows from the A-1 FEB are at 35-40 ppb. These figures are below what we anticipated and the A-1 is a big contributor to the performance of the downstream facilities doing a great job in reducing concentrations.

Ms. Miedema then asked if the water levels were held higher would we see the same concentration reductions. Mr. McBryan replied probably not and stated in the planning, this was one of the benefits of having a shallower facility. What you may not have in a larger facility, you're gaining the performance or phosphorus reduction in the shallower facility.

Karson Turner, Lee County Commission, questioned the performance of the A-1 FEB and wanted to know if it will taper off as the vegetation increases. He stated he knows it's a new facility, but he wanted to know if it was knocking it out of the park because the facility has the ability to flow freely or because it hasn't grown up.

Mr. McBryan responded by saying as the upland plants start decaying and dying a large number of microbes, which are a part of the treatment process, are there working hard. He said eventually, this will decline and at the same time we will see more wetland vegetation being established. This should create a counter balance in the system and we should remain in the 50% reduction range.

Mr. Turner replied this was one thing that he was wondering about and he wanted to know how this would affect the numbers and if this had been taken into consideration. He requested to see slide 13 of the presentation in the previous water year. He responded to Mr. Cook's earlier comment by stating this was their worst duck year as well.

Mr. McBryan stated we know cattails grow freely and they are important, but we are taking the additional effort by adding emergent species such as thalia and bulrush, which are common on the lake. He said there are other species that can sustain deep water conditions better, but all three of these are important as we move forward.

Mr. Turner responded for the record, at the Hendry County Contingency, we hate bulrushes and cattails; but, we love peppergrass, kissimmee and eelgrass.

Joshua Kellam, The ESG Companies, questioned more water going into water conservation areas. He said instead of it going into the STAs, why not send it into the WCAs.

Mr. Cook responded and said we can't because of the older schedules. He stated the Tamiami Trail S-12s are closed six months out of the year.

Albrey Arrington, Loxahatchee River District, wanted more understanding on SAV loss (slide 13) during the dry season. Mr. McBryan gave clarification saying there is less daylight to deal with and the species goes into hibernation mode. He mentioned that low water levels can have an effect as well.

Mr. Arrington mentioned avoiding dry outs and said in a wetland like this, this actually becomes a demand in the dry season as opposed to a source. Mr. McBryan responded it could. Mr. Arrington mentioned the earlier discussion about adding beneficial flow to the Loxahatchee River and said that if we create more natural areas, which are wonderful and will improve water quality, won't we create more demand on the water rather than new sources that can flow to the river during the dry period. Mr. McBryan replied yes, but we can focus on where those supplemental deliveries are made and prioritize on those submerged aquatic cells.

Mr. Arrington continued on his point stating the Loxahatchee needs more water and if we put a wetland in between where we're trying to have a reservoir, we're creating a bigger demand than the source of water that will flow to the river.

Ernie Marks responded by stating Mr. Arrington was right and this is part of what will be looked at during plan development. He continued with we're looking at all of the alternatives to see if we have X amount of storage, have we run it through a natural

area to see what comes out of the other end and does that meet the demands or intent of the project.

Ms. Miedema commented it's not only the demand to keep them wet, it's the estimated time associated with it. She said in a drought, as they found out in the Lake Okeechobee Water Balance, they had to make water deliveries to the STAs to keep them functioning.

Mark Generales, Southern Trust Financial, wanted to know how much time it would take an acre foot of water to make it through an STA. His thoughts were that it varies depending upon how wet the season is or isn't.

Mr. McBryan responded he couldn't give him an answer based on the acre foot, but did give some basic hydrologic residence times and said the normal annual average time would be in the seven to fourteen day range. But, stated this included an 18 hour period on average.

Mr. Generales then wanted to know how does one rehab the plants. Mr. McBryan replied there's a couple different items: there's planting - taking individual stalks of bulrush and putting them in manually, spraying large areas that have been over taken by non-conductive species, spraying cattails and doing some water level draw downs.

Mr. Collins stated he had a problem with the idea that has been prevalent throughout the discussions that wetlands always have to be wet. He said this whole active system evolved when wetlands were wet when there was a lot of rain and they were dry when there wasn't. He mentioned Everglades Park as the example of what happens to an ecosystem when flatline deliveries are used. He stated that if we can create wetlands, when it rains they're going to be wet and when it's dry it may dry out; but that's okay. His concern is not drying out a wetland because that's the way it's supposed to go.

Bubba Wade, US Sugar Corporation, commented on Mr. Kellam's question and Mr. Cook's response pertaining to the structures that are closed and how much water could be sent through them. He mentioned LTC Reynold's comments from the last meeting about what could really go through those structures and he thinks there's a misconception that we can send two million more acre feet of water south if those structures were open. He said the presentation showed limitations from a technical stand point what one could actually send through if the bird wasn't there. He requested a presentation in the future detailing what could actually be sent through those structures.

Mr. Cook replied stating that Shannon Estenoz had a meeting at the River Coalition and in her presentation there was a slide that showed the 18,000 cfs coming in at the top in January, what came out at the bottom and what went under the Trail. He said that was very graphic and people don't understand that there's no conveyance that can send 12,000 cfs south. There's nothing at the bottom of the lake that's equivalent to the Kissimmee River coming in.

Chad Kennedy, FDEP, comments were inaudible.

Mr. Arrington replied this is a very public forum to have discussions about these various issues and wetlands are wetlands and we have an understanding of how they function. But, if the river needs more water during the driest periods and STAs, wetlands, etc. go dry - that's going to be a bad option for the river. Unless, there's a miraculous large deep source of water on the other side of the wetland that can continuously send water through the wetland. He stated a wetland doesn't provide the same benefits to the river in meeting the minimum flow and level and definitively, the restoration flows as a reservoir. He said an STA would be a benefit to the river.

Mr. Collins questioned if Mr. Arrington had just described the C-51 project. Mr. Arrington replied it would be some reservoir that would be meaningfully large. The discussion continued with Mr. Collins and Mr. Arrington responding to each other pertaining to calculations and cost-benefit analysis of the L-8 and it being an expansion of the C-51 project.

Public Comment

None

8. Water Quality into Shark River Slough during WCA3 High Water Emergency Operations: Stuart VanHorn, Water Quality Bureau Chief, Water Resources Division

WRAC Member Comment

Mike Collins, Florida Key/Florida Bay, questioned the information presented on slide #5 (Emergency Operations on L-29). Mr. Collins said there's a lot more water going into the park on the north end and the water quality issues have calmed down. But, his concern in Taylor Slough and the other water basins was that the operations standards were changed and on March 15th the pumps were shut off and two days later it was dry. He wanted to know what was going to be done with all of the information that came out of the South Dade Study because he doesn't see any changes happening in that corner of the park.

John Mitnik replied yes, Mr. Collins was correct on that date; but, it was the S-200 pump station and two trigger wells out in the marsh not the park. He stated one of the wells was above the trigger so, the S-200 pump station did cease operation on that date and has not operated since. However, S-199 has continued to operate and is currently pumping at full capacity (225 cfs). Mr. Mitnik Responded to the comment about the South Dade Study and said we're currently looking at installing additional pumping capacity in both stations.

Mr. Collins asked a question pertaining to levels of the two test wells. Mr. Mitnik replied that he didn't have the information at the moment, but the trends have been going down. He stated that as the March date approached, they thought that both pump stations would not be operating. But, the weather dried up and the one gauge dropped below the criteria and we were allowed to continue to operate those stations.

Mr. Collins proceeded to explain why this information was relevant. He mentioned that there are individuals trying to advocate a lawsuit against the District because the MFLs were missed two years in a row. He said their claims are that the MFL wasn't protected enough and the District has done nothing in its attempt to meet the MFL. He stated there was a lack of rainfall and water coming through the system that caused those two misses and he hasn't been able to convince anyone of this.

Public Comment

Deb Drum questioned the concentration levels in the conservation areas and what the trigger point would be for moving water south out of Lake Okeechobee to alleviate the discharges to the estuaries. Ms. Drum mentioned the spawning season for recreational and commercial fish that use the estuaries in her area and she just wanted to know what the assurances were with the conservation areas.

9. Staff Reports

None

10. General Public Comment

None

11. Adjourn

Kevin Powers, WRAC Vice Chairman, adjourned the meeting at 11:53a.m.