

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

**Citrus County Task Force
of the
Citrus/Hernando Waterways Restoration Council**

January 10, 2011

The Citrus County Task Force met at 2:05 p.m., January 10, 2011 at the Lecanto Government Building, Lecanto, Florida.

Task Force

Members Present

Robert Christensen, Member
Sandra Clodwick, Secretary
Michael Czerwinski, Member
Eric Latimer, Member
Michael Moberley, Chair
Wayne Sawyer, Member

Technical Advisory

Group Members Present

Mark Edwards, Citrus Co.
Allen Martin, FFWCC
Philip Rhinesmith, SWFWMD
Judy Ashton, FDEP
Al Grubman, WRBB
Katasha Cornwell, FDOT

Recording Secretary

Josie Guillen, SWFWMD

Task Force

Members Absent

Vacant, Member

Technical Advisory

Group Members Absent

Bill Bachschmidt, WRBB
Colonel Alfred Pantano, USACOE

SWFWMD – Southwest Florida Water Management District
FDEP – Florida Department of Environmental Protection
CRBB – Coastal Rivers Basin Board Member
WRBB – Withlacoochee River Basin Board Member

FFWCC – Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
FDOT – Florida Department of Transportation
USACOE – United States Army Corp of Engineers
TAG – Technical Advisory Group

A list of others present who signed the attendance roster is filed in the permanent files of the Task Force. The numbers preceding the items listed below correspond with the published agenda.

Audio recording of the meeting is available upon request.

1. **Call to Order and Roll Call**

Chair Moberley convened the meeting. Ms. Josie Guillen called the roll and noted a quorum was present; however, the Task Force was not fully constituted due to the resignation of a member.

2. **Pledge of Allegiance**

Chair Moberley led the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. **Review the October 11, 2010 Minutes**

No changes to the October 11, 2010 minutes; however, the minutes could not be approved since the Task Force was not fully constituted.

4. **Fish Populations for Tsala Apopka and Lake Rousseau**

approx. 3 minutes into the meeting

Mr. Allen Martin, FFWCC, gave an update on the Tsala Apopka fish populations in the Floral City Pool, Inverness Pool, and the Hernando Pool areas. Mr. Martin showed on several graphs the number of largemouth bass and bluegill data collected per minute when staff performs electro-fishing. Mr. Allen provided the same information for the fish population in Lake Rousseau. In addition, Mr. Martin included the data for hydrilla coverage. Mr. Martin gave a brief update on the Spivey Lake Project. Mr. Martin stated that FFWCC and Citrus County Aquatics are working on this project. There are 14 acres of material to be removed from the site. Mr. Martin stated there will be some maintenance, some through herbicide and some through harvesting for the next 3 years. The initial harvesting was about \$100,000 and budgeted \$40,000 for the next 3 years for maintenance.

Public Input

- Ms. Hayes, citizen, would like to see the data collected when the individuals spray; how much, when and what kind. Ms. Hayes also asked, "do you collect the data?"
- Ms. Ellen Tate, citizen, stated she is an avid bass fisherman and keeps a diary of what time of day, what was caught on that day, how many, and other information.
- Mr. Steve LaFlair, citizen, stated that there is a correlation between the plant growth and the fish. The lower Withlacoochee River, there is no plant growth, completely stripped out and is devastated. Mr. LaFlair tried to introduce native plants and after the herbicides, the plants are gone, which is destroying the waterway. Mr. LaFlair stated this is being ignored and needs to be further looked into.
- Mr. Al Grubman, WRBB and TOOFAR, commented on the Lake Spivey project recently completed by FFWCC and Citrus County. Mr. Grubman stated he used to fish the areas since before it was finished. Prior to dredging, the area that was inaccessible for fishing and is now accessible. Mr. Grubman thanked FFWCC and Citrus County for making this happen.
- Mr. Harold Beasley, citizen, asked why are they killing the hydrillas? There used to be lots of freshwater shrimp. It was a substance of food for a lot of the fisherman. Mr. Beasley stated they are no longer fishing there because there are no more shrimp. Mr. Beasley stated his friend was fishing in an area at Lake Rousseau called Smith Pasture. In the past, he said another fisherman caught approximately 600 bass out from Peaceful Acres and recorded the data. Mr. Beasley stated his friend caught approximately 200 bass last year. Mr. Beasley stated he goes fishing everyday and the fishery is going down.
- Mr. Jack Scofield, citizen, stated in May 2009 there was sizable gar kill on the lower Withlacoochee River. Mr. Scofield reported the issue. Afterward staff from FFWCC met with Mr. Scofield. Mr. Scofield stated 2 weeks prior to the fish kill, Mr. Scofield noticed there was spraying being done in Lake Rousseau.

5. **Tussock Management**

Due to technical difficulties, the presentation had to be rescheduled.

6. **Flying Eagle/Potts Preserve Prescribed Fire Update**

approx. 1:02 hours into the meeting

Mr. Joel DeAngelis, SWFWMD, stated there is no change in the acreage treated status since the Task Force heard the item at their last meeting. Mr. DeAngelis stated as far as the marsh is concerned at Potts Preserve, between prescribed fire and wild fires, it is in good shape. Mr. DeAngelis stated the last burn he did at Flying Eagle was about 600 acres in 2005. For this year, the last burn at Flying Eagle was attempted in June and July. The water level was above normal in June and because of that the marshes were green. Mr. DeAngelis stated there is a lot of frost-kill, but the water level is too low to safely conduct the burns. Mr. DeAngelis stated provided that we do get some rains, enough water in the marsh to stop fire, the prescribed burns will begin in late February or early March. Mr. DeAngelis stated that he is coordinating with the Division of Forestry and FFWCC to organize a team response. Mr. DeAngelis stated aerial burning is probably going to be the only viable means of getting the acres burnt. Currently, SWFWMD staff does not have that option. Mr. DeAngelis stated what SWFWMD staff wants to see are agencies getting together to do large scale aerial burning. Mr. DeAngelis stated in terms of effectiveness of fire in the areas of Flying Eagle, the concern is if staff will be able to get into those areas. From observing burns in the area, if conditions are severe in terms of drought/dryness and the fuel moisture is low, the fire is going to lay down before it does any good.

Public Input

- Mr. Al Grubman, stated that he and other people have offered to help out with the burning at Flying Eagle. Mr. Grubman stated that Mr. Will Miller, SWFWMD pointed out that they could not use the help of volunteers. Mr. Grubman stated that he understands the limitations of burning.
- Mr. Chester Bradshaw, citizen, stated that prescribed fires are an old way of burning. Mr. Bradshaw stated that commercial industries are now using a rotary mower. Mr. Bradshaw stated that under electrical lines, FDOT roadways are no longer being burned, they are being mowed. Mr. Bradshaw suggested trying another option, looking into innovative ways to what other states are doing.

7. **Water Quality Recap**

approx. 1:30 hours into the meeting

Mr. Philip Rhinesmith, SWFWMD, explained how the data is arranged into divisions. 1.) Tsala Apopka - the separate lakes within each of the three named pools were compared (2006-2009); 2.) Withlacoochee River - 9 Stations compared Total Nitrogen and Dissolved Oxygen (DO); 3.) Rainbow River DO and Total Nitrogen; and 4.) Lake Rousseau (Upstream/Downstream) Total Nitrogen, Trophic State Index (TSI), and DO. Mr. Rhinesmith showed a list of the lakes that are sampled with the most dependable and the least dependable conditions. Mr. Rhinesmith showed a graph with the trends of Total Nitrogen, Phosphorus, Chlorophyll, DO, and the TSI in the lakes.

Public Input

- Mr. Steve LaFlair, stated some of the information was peculiar as far as the DO and the organic levels being lower. Mr. LaFlair asked, "Could there be a correlation with the herbicide and the killing of the all the organic material?"
- Mr. Dan Hilliard, citizen, asked what Trophic State Index meant.
- Captain Ray Wright, Nature Coast Bass Anglers, stated if the Task Force members need further information, the club members would be happy to give you

information on creels, etc. Mr. Wright thanked the county for keeping the lakes and trails open. Mr. Wright stated he would like to see FFWCC continue their good work, such as the Spivey Project. Mr. Wright stated opening more lakes and trails needs to be done. There are other locations that could be opened as well, such as Lake Henderson, and Hernando Lake, and Parson's Point area of Croft. Mr. Wright stated that we've need to keep up with making better fisheries. In the March 2009 edition of a Florida wildlife magazine, there was an article that an FFWCC biologist stocked approximately 22,000 largemouth bass in Lake Okeechobee. In April, approximately 55,000 bass were stocked. Mr. Wright asked if that is what they are doing in Lake Okeechobee and wouldn't it be beneficial to do that here? Mr. Wright also asked if there was any further information on the fish stocking on Lake Okeechobee? Mr. Wright suggested that instead of treating all the areas of hydrilla, some should be left to provide habitat. Mr. Wright stated we need to get our fishery back.

- Mr. Al Grubman, stated he read in the newspaper about the county budget, that it could be facing a diet. Mr. Grubman read a portion of the article, "The county administrator said, an obvious source to ease the pain is delaying or eliminating projects. The public wouldn't notice if the county used money from lake restoration funds". Mr. Grubman stated he will be attending the next county commissioner's meeting and will congratulate each of the Task Force members that attend the meeting and make their point heard regarding the article.
- Mr. Lawrence McConnell, citizen, asked, "What is the purpose of the spraying program (spraying of the hydrilla)? What are we trying to achieve? As a tax payer, how much is this going to cost?"
- Ms. Marsha Drew, Levy County Commissioner, stated what the Task Force is doing is great. Ms. Drew asked if Levy County and the Task Force can work together and be informed of further meetings so there can be a representative attending the Task Force meetings?

8. **Minimum Flows and Levels**
approx. 2:15 hours into the meeting

Mr. Ron Miller, Homosassa River Alliance, stated minimum flows and levels (MFLs) are being evaluated on the rivers and the coastal springs. The springs are pushing out fresh water and the tide is bringing in the salt water which are causing the salinity levels to shift. Mr. Miller's concern is as the springs are being reduced, the salinity zone is pushed back into the spring and is lost. For example, in the Homosassa studies, it shows if the flow is cut back by 1 percent, 15 percent of the bass is lost. What are the impacts of the total flows that have come out of the rivers? Mr. Miller stated in regard to the Homosassa River, not to put wells in the spring heads and watersheds, not to put in wells to ship the water somewhere else. Mr. Miller asked to please help him do that. What needs to be done is to implement a policy that prevents locating well heads in areas that will impact the coastal springs and rivers.

Public Input

- Mr. Duane Brooks, citizen, stated the people of the Citrus County and the state of Florida need to wake up. Mr. Brooks asked, "You heard of the 100 that was coming after our water and we went to Chiefland to stop it?" Mr. Brooks stated they are coming again. If we can stop all these minimum flows where they are at right now and not allow them to be lowered, keep the water and don't let anyone have it. There are over 13,000 people that live along the water in Citrus County

and probably over 13,000 that use it for boating, fishing and swimming. Mr. Brooks stated we need to keep the water we have.

- Mr. Dan Hilliard, citizen, requested to the Task Force members to be on the next agenda to discuss the restoration of the lower Withlacoochee River and Lake Rousseau.
- Ms. Hayes, citizen, stated when you design a study and measure the data, there are quantitative and qualitative data. Even though the opinions of the fisherman cannot be included in the study, it does not mean there are not ways to present qualitative data. This is why the public and the anglers need their own studies too, because they have merit. Ms. Hayes stated the reason she is able to get in and out of Lake Rousseau is because she hires someone with a cookie cutter about 2 times a year to clean out the area.

9. **Agenda Items for Next Meeting**

- Tussock Management – POWAR
- Restoration of the Lower Withlacoochee River – Dan Hilliard

10. **Public Input**

Public input was taken after each item on the agenda.

11. **Adjournment**

There being no further business or announcements presented before the Task Force, the meeting was adjourned at 4:47 p.m.

APPROVED