

Loxahatchee River Management Coordinating Council

January 25, 2010 Meeting Minutes

I Call to Order

Meeting convened by Chairwoman Sarah Heard at the River Center at approximately 1:25, after the early completion of lunch and the morning field excursion to Cypress Creek and associated upstream watershed areas. Due to the early start, the agenda was re-organized to accommodate presentations and items requiring votes by the Council.

II Roll Call: Council Members present: Vince Arena, Albrey Arrington, Greg Braun, Rebecca Elliott, Gale English, Sarah Heard, Tom Howard, Lynn Kelley (alt for Ann Broadwell), Chad Kennedy, David Levy, Pat Magrogan, Jim Ostrander, Sam Payson, Sean Sculley, Rich Walesky and Herb Zebuth.

IV Items for Discussion and/or Action

IV.D Update on North Palm Beach CERP – Part 1

Beth Kacvinsky, SFWMD Project Mgr for Everglades Restoration and Capital Projects, provided a PowerPoint assisted presentation updating the Council on SFWMD activities. They have refined/finalized the alternative flow-ways, conducted model runs on Flow-way 3 & Grassy Waters, completed draft Habitat Unit calculations, begun NEPA-required evaluation of impacts and generated planning level costs for each alternative. Projected costs of various elements vary from \$42,000,000 to \$696,000,000, with cost/habitat unit varying from \$16,689 to \$257,668. It is SFWMD's intent to continue refining costs, benefits and impacts to lead to selection of a preferred alternative.

Ms. Kacvinsky also provided updated hydrographs for 9/1/09 thru 12/29/09 showing flows from G-160, G-161, and flow over Lainhart Dam in relation to the established MFL. Flows generally exceeded the MFL; with 3 of 4 fairly brief periods when the MFL was not met occurring when the G-92 structure was closed for construction.

It was suggested that the flow-way options be posted on the web and that the Council consider endorsing a specific alternative when further analysis has been completed.

III Approval of Minutes from September 28, 2009
Minutes unanimously approved without change.

IV.A Election of Officers

Chairman Heard indicated that term limits required the election of a new chairman, a new vice-chairman and a new secretary. After discussions, motions were made seconded and approved unanimously to elect Chad Kennedy as Chair, Tom Howard as Vice-Chair and Rich Walesky as Secretary. C. Kennedy accepted the gavel and chaired the remainder of the mtg.

IV.B Town of Jupiter Surface Water Recharge System

David Brown, Director of Jupiter Water Utilities provided a PowerPoint assisted presentation and a graphic showing the location of Surficial wells, existing and proposed recharge pipelines, surface water flow patterns and areas of potential saltwater intrusion threats. In the long term, the Town anticipates meeting the demand for potable water through a combination of continued withdrawal from the Surficial aquifer and use of water from the Floridan aquifer with reverse osmosis treatment.

IV.C Town of Jupiter Water Use Permit Renewal & Modification

David Brown, Director of Jupiter Water Utilities provided a PowerPoint assisted presentation summarizing the Town's systems for meeting the potable water demands of its residents. From 1973-88, the Town relied 100% on wells in the Surficial aquifer. Deeper wells went into production beginning in 1988 and now approx. 50% of the water is Floridan water with desalinization. The former lime-softening system is being replaced by a nano-filtration system. Brine from the reverse osmosis system is discharged to the C-18, and monitoring is performed to ensure there are no adverse environmental impacts outside an established mixing zone.

IV.E Wild and Scenic River Management Plan Status

Dianne Hughes (FDEP) indicated that the most recent update of the Mgmt Plan was transmitted to Council members recently and requested comments (particularly on Chapter 4) be provided to her electronically by Feb 28th. Tentative release date is 3/30/10. Discussion regarding publication costs led to general agreement to post the Plan on the www.

S. Sculley suggested the Council consider requesting presenting the updated plan to SFWMD at a Governing Board mtg.

There was agreement of the need to get back on the 5-year plan update schedule, which would result in scheduling a time line for re-updating the plan in 2015.

Ms. Hughes confirmed that information regarding carrying capacity provided by Dick Roberts (FL Park Service, retired) has been added to the current draft.

III.F Oyster Restoration in the Loxahatchee and St. Lucie Estuaries by NOAA, Martin County and the Loxahatchee River District

Bud Howard (Lox. River District Director of Water Resources) and Kathy Fitzpatrick (Martin County Coastal Engineer) summarized the \$4 million oyster reef restoration project being funded through the environmental enhancement portion of the federal government's economic stimulus initiative. The project involves the placement of approximately 23,000 yd³ of oyster shell substrate in portions of the St. Lucie and Loxahatchee Rivers where salinity studies indicate the likelihood of oyster establishment and continued existence if suitable substrate was available. Shell is to be placed in water depths of 3-7' in a 21 acre area in the St. Lucie River. Two potential sites in the NW Fork of the Loxahatchee (10.3 and 2.4 acres, respectively) are being considered. The Jupiter Inlet District has requested a public meeting to solicit comments from the public, and an open house has been scheduled to be held at the River Center from 6-8 PM on February 9. Discussion.

A Motion was made by A. Arrington "That the Council expresses its clear support of the NOAA-funded oyster Reef Restoration project in the Loxahatchee River". Discussion ensued regarding the need/benefit for the Council to take a position, whether or not to favor one site over the other and potential conflicts with positions of Council member's constituencies. Motion approved by majority; C. Kennedy abstaining and T. Howard opposed.

IV.H Update on Water Conditions

Sean Sculley (SFWMD Deputy Department Director, Intergovernmental Programs) showed and described updated salinity (measured at River Mile 9.1) and flow hydrographs (measured at Lainhart Dam = River Mile 14.6) in relation to the established MFL.

Flows generally exceeded the MFL since May, 2009; 3 of 4 fairly brief periods where the MFL was not met occurred when the G-92 structure was closed for construction.

IV.G Celebrating 25 years as a National Wild and Scenic River

A. Arrington advised the Council that a 25th Year celebration is being planned for 10 AM- noon on Saturday May 15, 2010 at Jonathan Dickinson State Park. To volunteer to help or for more info, call 561-743-7123 or visit rivercenter@loxahatcheeriver.org

V. Updates from Member Agency/Organization Activities

None

VI. Public Comments

Patrick Hayes (Martin County Commissioner) advised that the Bureau of Land Mgmt. is proposing to stabilize eroded shoreline areas at the Jupiter Lighthouse Outstanding Natural Area, and encouraged the Council to endorse the initiative, while allowing historic recreational use of the area. Discussion. Council member B. Dawson (BLM) not present to provide specifics of his agency's plans; further consideration tabled pending a presentation by B. Dawson at the March 2010 Council mtg.

VII. Council Comments

Appreciation was expressed to Gardenia Long for organizing the morning swamp buggy field excursion to visit the Cypress Creek tract and see first-hand the hydrologic and native ecosystem restoration activities being conducted by SFWMD and agency partners.

S. Sculley expressed appreciation on behalf of the Council to S. Heard for her leadership during her term as Chair.

V. Arena advised that construction of the Tequesta Rd. bridge over the North Fork of the Loxahatchee River has begun and that the bridge is closed to vehicular traffic until further notice.

G. Braun acknowledged his appreciation for being allowed to serve as Secretary for 3 years, and advised that he was relinquishing his position as the representative from a Martin County conservation organization to allow Dick Roberts to serve in that capacity. Mr. Braun will remain on the Council as an alternate for Dick Roberts.

VIII. Announcements

None

Next meeting - March 29, 2010.

IX. Adjournment

With no further action items, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:30

Respectfully Submitted,

Greg Braun, Secretary