LOXAHATCHEE RIVER MANAGEMENT COORDINATING COUNCIL
Monday, March 25, 2013
The River Center - 805 N. US Highway 1, Jupiter, FL 33477

Meeting Minutes

I. Call to Order
*Chairman Albrey Arrington called the meeting to order at 2:02 PM.

II. Roll Call (Within the Minutes an * denote a Council member)
Chad Kennedy – Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Peter Merritt – Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council
Deborah Drum – Martin County
Wendy Harrison – Town of Jupiter
Hal Valeche – Palm Beach County
Albrey Arrington – Loxahatchee River Environmental Control District
Michael Dillon – South Indian River Water Control District
Sam Payson – Northern Palm Beach County Improvement District
Herb Zebuth – PBC Environmental & Conservation Groups
Dick Roberts – Martin County Environmental & Conservation Groups
Pat Magrogan – Landowner Representatives
(A quorum was present.)

III. Approval of Minutes from January 28, 2013 meeting
*Secretary Herb Zebuth read to the Council the proposed changes to the draft minutes. *Chad Kennedy (FDEP) made a motion to accept the revised draft. *Wendy Harrison (Jupiter) seconded the motion, which was then unanimously approved.

IV. Watershed Status Updates

A. Loxahatchee River Dashboard, Albrey Arrington, LRECD
* Albrey Arrington (LRECD) announced that the "River Conditions Dashboard" would be posted as a PDF File on the Loxahatchee River Management Coordinating Council Web Page that is part of the Environmental Control District's web site. Rainfall was about average for this past January, slightly less than 2 inches, and February, slightly more than 2 inches. Flow over Lainhart Dam averaged 62 cubic feet per second (cfs) in January, and 60 cfs in February. If flow is more than the target restoration flow of 69 cfs, the dashboard color code is green, between 35 and 69 cfs the color is yellow, and less than the minimum flow level of 35 cfs, it is red. Having 60 cfs during the dry season is good. Salinity in the sea grass bed was 29 to 30 ppt. Fecal coliform bacteria were relatively low. If no supplemental flow has been released to the River because the River didn't need any additional flow, the dashboard supplemental flow indicator will have no color. The number of River Center visitors will be added to the dashboard tomorrow, which can be viewed on line at LoxahatcheeRiver.org/lrmcc.

Questions/Comments

*Herb Zebuth (PBCE&CG) asked at which structure or structures flow was measured to determine the amount of supplemental flow to the River. *Albrey Arrington (LRECD) explained that anytime flow in the River fell below 50 cfs, supplemental flow was needed. If the combined flow from Structures G-160 and G-161 was equal to or greater than 10 cfs for more than 90% of the time supplemental flow was needed, the dashboard indicator would be green; between 60% and 90% of the time it would be yellow; and less than 60% of the time it would be red. *Herb said that although flow through G-160 and G-161 could be used for River flow supplementation, it could also be used to maintain C-18 Canal water levels or for water supply wellfield recharge. Supplemental flow to the River had to be measured at the G-92 Structure that discharges directly to the River. *Albrey replied that G-160 and G-161 were intended to provide flow into the basin from the Grassy waters Preserve, the Loxahatchee Slough, and development along the C-18 Canal. You had to measure flow at G-161 to determine their contribution. * Chad Kennedy (FDEP) said he thought Herb has a point. *Chad suggested adding information about the operational status of the G-92 Structure. *Albrey replied that we don't always want the G-92 Structure open, or we may want it to backflow. Although the water could be used for other purposes or lost to evaporation or ground water flow, the G-160 and 161 Structure flow measurement documents flow provided by SFWMD system operation to the basin. These structures were built with taxpayer's money for that reason. If anyone has an idea for an alternate or replacement metric for any now being used, I would be happy to discuss them.

Public Comment: Pat Walker said she agreed with Albrey, but suggested adding information about the status of the G-92 structure. Information regarding whether the structure was opened or closed would determine a contribution to flow over Lainhart Dam. *Albrey stated that this is a summary metric. Instantaneous data regarding operation of G-92 for every minute of the year exists in dbHydro on the SFWMD web site. How do you summarize that information? Why wouldn't someone go to that site to get detailed G-92 information? Pat Walker replied that if you summarize the data you quickly know where the water originated. *Albrey insisted that you can't generalize like that because there isn't a month that G-92 isn't open for a few days. Sometimes there is reverse flow. How do you summarize that without getting into the details? All the dashboard is intended to do is give some a high level view and let them go explore the details elsewhere.

*Herb Zebuth (PBCE&CG) said he agreed that the metric measures flow into the basin. But to call it supplemental flow to the River is misleading. *Albrey again asked that if anyone has an idea for an alternate or replacement metric, please bring it up for discussion. If it is better, we will be glad to replace the old metric or add a new one.

B. Water Quality, Bud Howard, LRECD

Bud Howard told the Council that he had some encouraging new from our seagrass monitoring in the Loxahatchee Estuary. There was initial concern following the large scale freshwater discharges that resulted from Tropical Storm Isaac. Because new people were at the meeting Bud wanted to make sure everyone was familiar with LRECD's various seagrass projects. The power point presentation included pictures.

Bud said seagrass in the Estuary are typically sparse and patchy, but are very important as fish nursery areas and serve as a manatee food source. There are primarily four species, including; Johnson Seagrass, a threatened species; Turtle Grass that looks different than the large bladed, lush growths that occur in Biscayne Bay and the Florida Keys; Shoal Grass, a fine, thin bladed grass; and Manatee Grass that looks like spaghetti.

Bud explained that the LRECD has three seagrass monitoring programs. The first is a landscape scale monitoring program that maps the entire estuary for seagrass populations, mud depth, and is trying to develop a relationship between water depth and sediment type. Nine square meter quadrats that cover the entire estuary produce 1600 points of information on seagrass type and density. That information is used to develop seagrass maps that can be used to map specific species. It is a very intensive, time consuming program that is done every three to five years. It was last completed in 2007 and 2010. The second, a cooperative program with the St. Johns River Water Management District for the Indian River Lagoon, is a very long term consistent program that provides a very large number of snapshots that over a long period of time allows for the detection of important patterns and trends. This is needed in the Indian River Lagoon because of algal blooms occurring in the northern part. About 30,000 acres of seagrass have already been lost. Mapping has shown a regionalization pattern, with Johnson Seagrass very prevalent south of Ft. Pierce. We also have an ongoing patch scale program that monitors selected areas of seagrass every other month to determine the percent cover of the various species of seagrass. This provides high resolution information that allows the detection of short term trends and patterns. They are located along the salinity gradient because the seagrass community changes as the salinity varies from more of a freshwater influence upstream to primarily a marine water influence near the inlet.

Bud then discussed the impacts from Tropical Storm Isaac, and the huge amount of freshwater it dumped into the estuary. At its peak, S-46 was discharging freshwater at a daily average of about 2,000 cfs and continued to discharge about 250 cfs for about two months. Flow over Lainhart Dam peaked at about 500 cfs and remained high for a long period. There was much concerned about impacts to the seagrass, but during an incoming tide, a layer of marine water moved into the estuary under he freshwater, providing some protection to the seagrass.

Bud displayed data from three of the high resolution monitoring sites located in the north bay area, near the sandbar, and at Pennock Point. They provided a time series of data beginning in 2003, documenting the percent of bottom coverage for each species. In 2004 Johnson Seagrass populations greatly declined and took about two years to recover. After Isaac, density declined again and we were concerned that there was a major impact. However, recent monitoring has detected the beginning of a return of Johnson Seagrass. This means that the root system and underground portions of the plant survived the very large influx of freshwater from Isaac. We hope that the population will make a quick recovery.

After being involved in sea turtles work for many years, Bud said he stays in contact with colleagues at the Marine Life Center. They received a sub-adult Loggerhead Turtle in September that was accidently caught by a fisherman near the Juno Pier. Little is know about the activities of Loggerheads. Green Turtles are often seen feeding in the estuary; Loggerheads are seldom seen there. After removing a number of fish hooks and providing rehabilitation, the turtle was fitted with a tracking device and then released in the ocean. It immediately returned to the estuary and North Fork of the River where it was probably feeding on organisms growing on dock pilings. It also went into the Lake Worth Lagoon and is now on the Palm Beach County mitigation reef south of the Reef Club.

Questions/Comments

*Chad Kennedy (FDEP) told Bud that every weekend he sees the sandbar mentioned as one of the Johnson Seagrass sites, covered with recreational boats. Could that boat and human traffic be impacting the seagrass in the monitoring site? Bud replied that the monitoring site is in deeper water that should not be impacted. The pattern of changes in the Johnson Seagrass population is consistent with the pattern found at other sites. *Albrey Arrington (LRECD) told *Chad that the Shoal Grass population at that site is equally susceptible to damage from foot traffic remains consistently healthy. The sampling site is actually south of the heavy traffic area.

Public Comment: Jonathon Dickenson State Park (JDSP) Manager Mark Nelson asked Bud if they planned to do any monitoring of tape grass (Vallisneria) in the freshwater portion of the River. Bud told the Council that the Vallisneria population in the freshwater portion of the River was doing very well. The SFWMD was planning to do a study of that habitat to determine the organisms associated with Vallisneria. The LRECD take field notes of conditions when they take water quality samples. In addition, this summer we plan on establishing transects and mapping program for the tape grass and taking fish samples in that community. Agencies will cooperation on a program to sample the area once or twice a year.

*Deborah Drum (Martin County) stated that they had found a similar Johnson Seagrass die-off during the 2004 storm in the St. Lucie Estuary. She asked how freshwater flows into the estuary in 2004 compared with those flows after Isaac. Bud said that dark colored freshwater flows continued for a much longer time after Isaac. This leads him to suspect that the impacts to the seagrass in 2004 may have been caused primarily by the scouring effects of the hurricane winds and wave energy. *Albrey Arrington (LRECD) said the salinity also hadn't drop as low as they had expected. They have to go over all their data thoroughly and document their findings and conclusions. *Deborah suggested the consideration of additional factors such as storm duration and tidal height, and their affect on salinity. Bud said that the freshwater discharges from S-46 during Isaac were far greater suggesting a possible wind effect. Seagrasses are usually in shallower water and more susceptible to scouring. It is not unusual for seagrass including roots, to be deposited along the beach following summer storm events. *Deborah said that because Johnson Seagrass is a threatened species, it would be very useful to have data that can identify the threshold of salinity and duration

of exposure that is harmful to that seagrass. The St. Lucie Estuary is often exposed to large volume discharges from Lake Okeechobee and other areas. Bud agreed and said such information would be useful to the SFWMD in determining when future discharges become harmful.

Public Comment: JDSP Manager Mark Nelson remarked that there were three very strong wind events within 18 months during 2004 and 2005. Isaac produced a lot of rain but did not have very strong winds.

*Wendy Harrison (Jupiter) asked if seagrass mapping would occur this year. Bud said that since the oyster population's health and distribution had not been sampled since 2008, it would be done this summer. *Albrey Arrington (LRECD) told the Council that seagrass would be remapped in the summer of 2014.

*Pat Magrogan (Landowner Rep) asked if the conch population was recovering. Bud said the population of fighting conch had been decimated by low salinity caused by Isaac. He hadn't heard that recovery was occurring.

V. Project Updates

A. Loxahatchee River/Cypress Creek Management Area, Jim Schuette, SFWMD

Jim Schuette (SFWMD) told the Council he would update them on land management activities that have been occurring on the Cypress Creek and Loxahatchee River properties. In the last thirteen months, 275 hogs have been removed from these two properties; 128 of them from the river property. Hogs move around with changing environmental conditions. Some hogs are trapped, but most are caught with the help of trained dogs. In January we received complaints from Mr. Sears who lives near the Lainhart Dam. A number of hogs were caught in that area, including a 400 pound bar hog (castrated). Over the 13 month period, ten bar hogs were trapped. Bar hogs grow bigger, fatter, and have more tender meat than uncastrated hogs. This means someone is releasing hogs on these properties with the intent of harvesting them at a later date.

*Pat Magrogan (Landowner Rep) asked what the trappers do with the hogs they catch. Jim said that they probably eat them. The contract only requires that they kill the hogs and remove them. *Pat then asked about the damage done by hogs and if they were dangerous. Jim said they could be dangerous. In a search for food, they dig up the ground destroying endangered species and other plants. The disturbed soil can interfere with prescribed burns by blocking the spread of the fire.

Public Comment: JDSP Manager Mark Nelson said that hogs out compete all other animals except for panthers and bears. They eat snakes, lizards, and almost everything else. Sows can have three litters a year with eight piglets per litter. They will very aggressively protect their litter.

Jim told the Council that there was a law enforcement officer living on the property at Lainhart Dam and another one on the Cypress property. They provided a presence that helped to protect the property. Similarly, SFWMD was developing an agreement with the Florida Trails Association to allow them to use one of the other buildings on the Lainhart Dam property to store their equipment. This also would provide a trusted presence on the property.

Jim said that during the rainy season they have been concentrating the efforts of the prescribed burn program on the Cypress Creek property. Almost everything west of Gulf Stream has been burned. We try to burn only small portions of property during each burn; about 100 tp150 acres at a time. We hope to be able to burn along the River this rainy season. We try to keep the intensity of the fire down by burning under the wettest possible conditions. We try to start while the dew is still on the ground and finish about 2:00 PM. We work with local land owners, keeping everyone informed. Jim showed the Council a picture of a newly built house in the area to be burned in the future. It is in an area near saw palmettos that are five to seven feet tall. The fence is within twelve feet of the SFWMD fence. The palmettos will have to be cut down to reduce the fuel load and intensity of the fire so the radiant heat does not scorch the fence or building. *Wendy Harrison (Jupiter) said she believes that is a Realto Builders home that still belongs to the developer. It is in a development within the city. Jim Schuette (SFWMD) reassured her that they would be in contact with the owner.

Public Comment: JDSP Manager Mark Nelson told the Council that approval of the development required all buyers to sign a restrictive covenant informing them that burning would occur on the adjacent property.

Jim said the covenants seemed to get lost. SFWMD lawyers contacted the city but the paper trail could not be found. The 60 foot buffer required by the covenant would extend through the house's kitchen. The developer contacted the SFWMD wanting to place sod over the SFWMD's emergency access point to the public land. *Dick Roberts (MCE&CG) said that the restrictive covenants were a requirement of the Development of Regional Impact approval process. The terms were agreed to by the developer, the Town of Jupiter, and the SFWMD. A paper trail of that requirement exists through that process. Jim said through several bankruptcies and changes of ownership, the requirement got lost. The house exists and we are going to have to work with them. Terrie Bates (SFWMD) advised Jim to contact Mindy of the SFWMD regulatory staff to determine what requirements were included in the development's permit. *Dick Roberts (MCE&CG) commented that the covenants were required as protection for the home owners. Buffer requirements were included on a sliding scale based on fire-wise home construction.

Jim Schuette (SFWMD) stated that there were some dead tree snags along I-95 that would be knocked down and mulched to prevent smoke problems on the highway. *Albrey Arrington mentioned the habitat value of snags. Jim said they had planned to leave a few on site. Jim also said they had done a gopher tortoise survey using transects and found a population of about 250 tortoises. This is one reason that the burn rotation needs to be maintained. Jim also noted that SFWMD staff had been

making repairs to the Lainhart Dam. They replaced a loose board, and also removed some loose bolts that had been damaging some kayaks and canoes using the River.

Jim told the Council the SFWMD had $90,000 to treat Class 1 exotic plants on the Cypress Creek property and &75,000 to treat them along the Loxahatchee River. Work would begin near the end of April. Contractor crews would start on the west side of the Cypress Creek site and work eastward. Another crew would start just south of Indiantown Road and move north along the River. The contract requires a 95% exotic plant kill rate. GPS will be carried by the crews as they work. This allows us to know where they treated exotics and how much time was spent at each location. This information will be used during surveys for treatment effectiveness so that areas that need to be retreated can easily be found. *Dick Roberts (MCE&CG) mentioned that during JDSP's 10 year survey, the heaviest exotic infestation was from aquatic species. During a general discussion, a number of target species were mentioned as was the need for adequate training of the contractor's crews.

Jim Schuette (SFWMD) discussed the old orange grove portion of the Cypress property. He said he used 1952 and 1958 aerial photographs to identify the natural vegetation and water flow patterns at that time. We do want to hold as much water on the site as we can but also use this information to get as many benefits as possible. *Dick Roberts (MCE&CG) told Jim that JDSP had found 50 or 60 gopher tortoises on the portion of that property east of I-95. The tortoises concentrated in that area as surrounding land was developed. Jim said they were looking at the site to see what was there previous to development and determining what restoration was possible. Jim showed the Council some photographs of deer that were on the property. Unfortunately, he also found a headless deer carcass. He said destructive people who trespass are getting on the property. That is why they want a trusted human presence such as the off-duty deputies on the property to help deter such destruction.

Questions/Comments

There were no additional comments.

B. Loxahatchee River/I-95 Bridge Lane Addition Project, Ann Broadwell, FDOT

*Ann Broadwell (FDOT) could not attend the meeting so this item was deferred to the next meeting.

VI. Member Issues

*Herb Zebuth (PBCE&CG) said that after seven months of trying to get a copy of the Mecca Reservoir modeling results from others at the SFWMD, Terrie Bates said at the January 25th meeting she would make sure he received a copy. He said he wanted to thank Terrie because on February 1st he received the information in the mail. He also wanted to thank Laura Kuebler, a SFWMD staff person who was very helpful in providing additional modeling information.

*Herb said he wanted to provide the Council with a brief summary of modeling conditions, assumptions and results. The modeling included a 41 year period of rainfall data from 1965 to 2005. The existing "Base" conditions didn't include S-160, S-161, or additional wellfield recharge. It used 2006 permitted water supply demands but used present day demands for Jupiter and Seacoast Utilities to measure the reservoirs' benefit to wellfield recharge. The model provided an average additional 10,000 ac/ft per year for public water supply with the reservoir model runs. S-161 provided 20 cfs of supplemental flow in the reservoir model runs. Grassy Waters and the Loxahatchee Slough remained within 5% of desired inundation values with reservoir model runs. Benefits were modeled for both a 4 feet deep reservoir with a 7,200 acre-feet (ac-ft) capacity and a 10 feet deep reservoir with an 18,000 ac-ft capacity. It is important to remember that either of these reservoirs would be a replacement for the 42,000 ac-ft capacity of the L-8 Rock Pit Reservoir.

In the modeled 41 years using Base conditions, the "Minimum Flow and Level" (MFL) requirement of not less than 35 cfs of flow at Lainhart Dam for more than 20 days was not met during 41 events with up to three events occurring in one year. During 27 of those years there was at least one occurrence that did not meet MFL criteria. There were up to 129 continuous days of flow less than 35cfs. There were 25 MFL violations meaning the MFL requirement was not met more than once within 6 years.

In the model run with a 4 feet reservoir included, the MFL was not met during 7 years, with no more than one event each of those years. There were up to 38 continuous days of flow less than 35cfs. There were 4 violations of the MFL.

In the model run with a 10 feet reservoir included, the MFL was not met during 4 years, with no more than one event each of those years. There were up to 38 continuous days of flow less than 35cfs. There was 1 violation of the MFL.

It is important to remember that the Rock Pit Reservoir that we are trying to replace was intended to meet restoration flows, not just MFL compliance. The model considered restoration flows to be not less than 70 cfs from the beginning of December to the end of May (dry season), not less than 90 cfs during June and November (transition period), and not less than 110 cfs from the beginning of July to the end of October (wet season).

In the modeled 41 years using Base conditions, the dry season restoration flow target was met in 3 of the 41 years. Flows were at least 70 cfs only 43 % of the time. The transitional flow target was met in10 of the 41 years. Flows were at least 90 cfs 63% of the time. The wet season flow target was met in 8 of the 41 years. Flows were at least 110 cfs 64% of the time.

In the model run with a 4 feet reservoir, the dry season restoration flow target was met in 14 of the 41 years. Flows were at least 70 cfs an average 76 % of the time. The transitional flow target was met in 17 of the 41 years. Flows were at least 90 cfs an average 76% of the time. The wet season flow target was met in 12 of the 41 years. Flows were at least 110 cfs an average 73% of the time.

In the model run with a 10 feet reservoir, the restoration dry season flow target was met in 24 of the 41 years. Flows were at least 70 cfs an average of 87% of the time, but the driest year had 70 cfs only 17% of the time in the dry season. The transitional flow target was met in 19 of the 41 years. Flows were at least 90 cfs an average 79% of the time, but the driest year had 90 cfs only 2% of the time during the transitional months. The wet season flow target was met in 12 of the 41 years. Flows were at least 110 cfs an average 72% of the time, but the driest year had 110 cfs only 25% of the time in the wet season.

Modeling results showed that while both reservoirs met the target for frequency of water shortages, neither reservoir could meet the targets for the duration nor the severity of those shortages that did occur. In the model run with a 4 feet reservoir, there was a 41% reduction in the duration of public water supply demands not met compared to the base condition. The severity of public water supply shortages was reduced by 42% compared to the base condition. The frequency of water shortages was reduced by 64% compared to the base condition.

In the model run with a 10 feet reservoir, there was a 45% reduction in the duration of public water supply demands not met compared to the base condition. The severity of public water supply shortages was reduced by 46% compared to the base condition. The frequency of water shortages was reduced by 64% compared to the base condition.

The average annual discharge from the L-8 Canal to the C-51 Canal over the 41 years modeled was 82,000 ac-ft with base conditions; 81,000 ac-ft with a 4 feet reservoir; and 81,000 ac-ft with a 10 reservoir. These large volume discharges were originally intended to fill the Rock Pit Reservoir, which would have then supplied the River's needs and meet basin water supply demands. Current plans will fill the Rock Pit with polluted EAA farm drainage while the L-8 Canal discharges with go to fill other demands or impact the Lake Worth lagoon.

The average annual flood control discharge from the S-46 to the Loxahatchee Estuary over the 41 years modeled was 51,000 ac-ft with base conditions; 38,000 ac-ft with a 4 feet reservoir; and 36,000 ac-ft with a 10 reservoir. It is important to remember S-46 discharges to the estuary do not enter at a 41 year, yearly average flow. They can enter the estuary at much higher volume, shorter duration flows than can do significant damage.

* Albrey Arrington (LRECD) asked if *Herb could summarize his concerns. *Herb said that his main concern was that the original plan using the Rock Pit Reservoir was intended to provide restoration flows to the River. It has been replaced in the planning process with a reservoir on Mecca Farms. While such a reservoir at that site is needed, even a 10 feet deep Mecca reservoir does not completely meet MFL flow to the River, and certainly does not provide adequate restoration flows. Even though the River needs more water, large volume discharges would still occur from the L-8 Canal to the C-51 Canal and from the S-46 Structure to the Loxahatchee Estuary. It is also unclear why the 10 feet deep reservoir that has 2½ times the storage volume of the 4 foot

reservoir only provides a little more than ¼ more water than the 4 feet reservoir. Is the reservoir pump too small to capture the available water as it flows past? Does the water flow too quickly to be adequately captured? Is there insufficient water in the C-18W Basin to fill the 10 feet deep Reservoir? If so, how can we redirect some of the clean L-8 Canal water into the basin to meet the restoration goals as originally planned? Do we need a bigger reservoir, possibly on the Vavrus property to store adequate L-8 water? *Herb said he would like to see some alternatives developed that can accomplish that objective.

* Albrey Arrington (LRECD) said he didn't think we should be looking for more data now since the acquisition of Mecca Farms by the SFWMD from Palm Beach County is still uncertain. *Commissioner Hal Valeche (PBC) said that the exchange was far from being a "done deal". He added that he feels sure that regardless of who buys the Mecca property, a flow-way on the site would have to be part of development plans. *Albrey said he was encouraged by the commissioner's words. He said that since we were uncertain if Mecca would have a flow-way or a reservoir, we should not waste time with specific details. *Herb Zebuth (PBCE&CG) said that people concerned about water supply and flood control were already involved with this planning process. The Council needed to be involved, promoting the needs of the River or they could be left out of the process. * Chad Kennedy (FDEP) said that it was the role of the Council to comment on matters affecting the River. He asked *Herb if there was some specific action he wanted from the Council. *Herb said he wanted to provide the Council with the information he had gathered and determine if the Council agreed that addition action was needed. He said he would prepare a draft resolution for the June meeting. *Hal Valeche (PBC) said that by June there should be a decision regarding Mecca Farms.

*Terrie Bates (SFWMD) said the Loxahatchee River Restoration Plan was intended to determine the restoration needs of the River to use in the CERP process. We have 68 CERP Projects that are in various stages of the planning process. The process has been slowed significantly because of the economy. All money that has gone into the efforts to provide more water to the River has come from the agencies involved. We hope to be reimbursed in the future. There is no approved CERP Plan for the River. That process will take years to complete. That's why we have done everything we can to expedite River restoration outside of CERP. The L-8 Reservoir became part of the $880 million Everglades project to meet federally required water quality improvement and provide flow equalization. Only because of a commitment by our executive director was $160 million of the $880 million set aside for River restoration. Although this project may not provide restoration flows, the CERP Project contains other flow-ways that may provide additional flows in the future. There is no requirement that we move forward with any plan now. Loxahatchee River restoration is far ahead of other restoration projects except for the Kissimmee River, because of the shared support and commitment of all the stakeholders. Mecca Farms can be a key component in a final plan that reaches the goal of restoration. We'll be glad to give you an update on where we are now, but remember that we are moving forward in incremental steps.

*Deborah Drum (Martin County) asked Terrie Bates (SFWMD) if the SFWMD had an obligation to replace the water from the L-8 Basin that was going to go to the

Loxahatchee but will probably go elsewhere now. Terrie said they have an obligation to develop a MFL recovery strategy and to move forward to a restoration phase. If our only obligation was to meet the MFL, we could probably do that with our existing infrastructure through operational changes. But we have set money aside to move toward restoration. Until a CERP Project is fully approved through Congress, there is no legal obligation.

*Wendy Harrison (Jupiter) asked *Commissioner Valeche if a supportive letter from the Council would be helpful in moving the Mecca purchase forward. He said that it might. *Wendy made a motion to send a letter and *Pat Magrogan (Landowner Rep) provided a second. The Council discussed language to include in the letter.

Public Comment: Greg Braun (Martin Co. Conservation Alliance) told the Council that he believed that they had sent a similar about two years ago. *Chairman Arrington (LRECD) said that he would borrow language from the previous letter to the extent possible. Pat Walker said that conditions had changed over the last two years. Then Mecca Farms was an add-on to a bigger project; now it is all we have.

The Council vote unanimously to approve sending the letter to the Palm Beach County Commission.

*Dick Roberts (MCE&CG) told the Council that Greg Braun, Maggie Hurchalla, and he had been working a new Martin County Comprehensive Plan. He said that last Thursday night the Martin County LPA supported protection for the Loxahatchee River Watershed. He said they expected opposition from landowners on Bridge Road.

Public Comment: Greg Braun (MCCA) said that one of the items in the proposed new plan would require a super majority of commissioners to increase densities in the Loxahatchee watershed. It would be a strong reason for the Council to support the new plan.

*Dick Roberts (MCE&CG) read the plan amendment. The objective is to protect and restore the watershed of the Loxahatchee River, the State's first national Wild and Scenic River. The Purpose is to support the Loxahatchee restoration plan which is a component of CERP. The Policy states that any change to the Comprehensive Plan that results in an increase in intensity of land use in the watershed, the project will be required to restore water quality, and natural timing and distribution in the project area. The final Policy states that through its land use authority the county shall assure that water withdrawals do not diminish the water supply during the dry season for the Loxahatchee River and it's associated wetlands.

*Deborah Drum (Martin County) told the Council that Martin County will be attending a meeting on April 8th coordinated by the SFWMD to discuss potential ecological improvements on the Gulfstream properties in Cypress Creek, including exploring options for improving water retention on the property. Martin County is continuing to make progress on construction activities on the restoration work on the Ranch Colony berm immediately east of Culpepper Ranch. *Deborah distributed pictures of the work

to the Council. The contractor has mobilized on site and has proceeded with the 1.3 miles of clearing and grubbing of the berm area, and installation of silt fencing and turbidity barriers. Crews have started the construction of the headwall and installation. The footer for the headwall of the twin 84" diameter storm pipes was formed and poured on March 18th and the installation of the storm pipes is complete. The headwall for the twin 84" pipes is scheduled to be formed and pored this week. The 48" and 60" storm pipes and two smaller FDOT Modified Type H structures have been delivered to the site and are scheduled to be installed this week. Restoration of the berm is to start in early April, after the installation of the water control structures. *Deborah said they would be doing some erosion control work on the east side where the water discharges. There has been some erosion on the banks. She said the contractor has been doing great and they are on schedule.

VII. Public Comment

Mike Gorella (JID) provided an update for *Tom Howard (JID) who could not attend the meeting. Mike told the Council that the contractor just finished dredging the Jupiter inlet sand trap of 76,000 cubic yards of beach bound sand.

JDSP Manager Mark Nelson told the Council that this year is Florida's 500th anniversary. He invited everyone to come to the Park to commemorate the occasion. They've started a geo-cash program for the kids. This will be your last weekend to rent horses to ride. They will be leaving April 1st. He also said the Park had been able to accomplish some very good burns this year. He told the Council that Rob's wife just had a 6 pound 8 ounce baby girl.

*Chairman Arrington directed everyone's attention to a flyer they had been given regarding the River Center's April 6th fund raiser event called River to Reef – Night on the Loxahatchee. He said the event would be catered by the Food Shack and assured everyone that it would be a lot of fun. There would be several very entertaining presentations. He encouraged everyone to attend.

Meeting adjourned at 4:08 p.m.

Next meeting is June 24th.