

Loxahatchee River Management Coordinating Council
September 29, 2008 Meeting Minutes

I Call to Order

Chairwoman Sarah Heard called the meeting to order at the Jupiter Community Center.

II Roll Call: Council Members present: Vince Arena, Albrey Arrington, Ann Broadwell, Rebecca Elliott, Gale English, Sarah Heard, Tom Howard, Chad Kennedy, Marge Ketter, Pat Magrogan, Peter Merritt, Sam Payson, Karen Smith, Richard Walesky and Herb Zebuth.

III Approval of Minutes from June 30, 2008 Meeting and Administrative Items

The minutes were unanimously approved without change.

III.A Agenda

Item E from the previously distributed Agenda was replaced with a report on the Mecca Farms Wetland Restoration Project

III.B Status Update on the River Management

Rob Rossmann reported that not enough progress had been made to warrant re-distribution of the plan to the Council. It will be provided electronically when available.

III.C 2009 Meeting Schedule

The draft meeting schedule for 2009 was distributed for review and comment. No objections were raised, so the schedule was tentatively approved. Copy attached.

IV.A Administrative Discussion

G. Long advised of the availability of commemorative posters featuring the River.

K. Smith advised of her work to develop a reference binder containing a compilation of information of value to Council members, including By-Laws, the Wild & Scenic Rivers Act, and various pertinent legal findings. Copies were distributed to Council members present and it was noted that the updated version of the River Management Plan should be included when it is available. She also distributed a set of recommendations for Council consideration and asked that Council members review the recommendations and be prepared to discuss them at the next Council meeting. Suggestions were made regarding the potential need to more closely follow Roberts Rules of Order, protocols for putting items on meeting Agendas, opportunities for public input, level of detail necessary for the minutes, Council membership/participation, potential elimination of at-large members and other items of potential interest.

Discussion ensued; initial reactions varied.

IV.B Real-time On-line Permit Notification Process

Mindy Parrott (SFWMD) described the District's process to electronically notify Council members of permit applications that are received for projects within the Loxahatchee River Watershed. Hyperlinks are provided to allow access to permit-related documents. The system also allows individuals to be on an automatic distribution list for specific types (or locations) of projects as individually requested. Responses to Requests for Additional Information and other updates during the permitting process are posted and available on-line, but the process is not currently set up to automatically notify Council members when such new information is posted.

IV.C. Kitching Creek Restoration

Paul Millar (Martin County) and William Musser (Tetrattech – consultant to Martin Co.) presented information regarding the project to remove various obstructions to surface water flows into J. Dickinson State Park. Martin County is working with the Trust for Public Land and others to acquire additional land to restore three north-south flow-way corridors. The Loxahatchee River District has conducted water quality analyses in this drainage system. SFWMD is currently processing the permit application that will allow construction to begin.

IV.D CERP Project Updates

Beth Kacvinsky (SFWMD) provided updates on several elements of the N. Palm Beach County Project, including the L-8 reservoir and its constituent water quality. The test of Flow-way 1, which was completed in July and included monitoring of flows and analyses of water quality showed favorable flow results; water quality varied. Coordination with the City of West Palm Beach needs to continue regarding distribution of flow. Perimeter canal studies remain to be conducted.

Discussion regarding the G-92 structure replacement was inconclusive as to the extent that the replacement structure would result in reduced sediment loading into the River.

The effective depth of the L-8 reservoir is 53', which leads to elevated chloride levels, which are presently too high for discharge to the River. An additional pump station is necessary in order to make the L-8 reservoir fully functional, but fiscal limitations are likely to prevent such construction from occurring in the near future.

T. Bates re-affirmed the District's commitment to provide water to the River and their current focus on doing so as effectively as possible with the current infrastructure as an interim measure, recognizing that funding and construction elements are longer-duration tasks.

IV.E Mecca Farms Wetland Restoration

R. Walesky described Palm Beach County's efforts to restore wetlands on the 1920-acre site. The County has applied to enroll the property in the Wetland Reserve Program. Wetland restoration is projected to cost 9 million for 625 acres, which will include 303 acres of upland and wetland habitat restoration, 272 acres of reservoir and an additional 50-acre open-water refugium (based on a likely partnership with the Solid Waste Authority). The County Commission has selected a low-density (1 unit/10 acre) equestrian development that would be developed beginning in approximately 3 years. Development would involve 129 units (3 to 5 acre lot size) clustered on half of the property. Progress on the wetland restoration component is dependent on the success of the WRP grant application, which will not be known until after 1/1/09.

Issues of animal density and potential impacts on water quality would be evaluated when/if a SFWMD application is received for the equestrian development.

VI. Public Comments

Dick Roberts advised SFWMD staff of adverse impacts that have occurred in the River as a result of aquatic weeds being introduced via the G-92 Structure and requested that consideration be given to addressing this problem as part of G-92 replacement.

Regarding the Kitching Creek project, Mr. Roberts clarified that the project involves flow-ways leading into Kitching Creek, and stressed the need for inter-agency coordination.

VII. Council Comments

K. Smith clarified that the recommendations made in Item IV.A are suggestions she has made based on her \pm 5 years experience as a individual Council member, and are not an attempt by SFWMD to unilaterally change the standard operating procedures of the Council. The chair acknowledged her efforts and C. Kennedy expressed his support for the intent of the recommendations.

A. Arrington encourage Council members to visit the new River Center facility on US 1 in Jupiter. He also distributed a brochure and briefly described a River District project in collaboration with The Nature Conservancy and NOAA to introduce oyster reef habitats into the River.

H. Zebuth mentioned that, in addition to the legal opinion included in the handbook distributed earlier, a legal opinion had also been developed by Lisa Interlandi regarding the make-up of the Council, and suggested it should also be reviewed as a reference item.

Chairwoman Heard requested suggestions for topics for future Agenda Items.

C. Kennedy requested discussion of invasive exotic species and the extent of inter-agency cooperation regarding invasive species management.

K. Smith requested re-visiting of the Recommendations she offered in Agenda Item IV.A and discussion of Chapters 3 and 4 of the River Management Plan.

VIII. Announcements

None

IX. Adjournment

With no further action items, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Greg Braun, Secretary