

Estero Bay Nutrient Management Partnership

A Partnership of Public and Private Entities Working Towards a Community Watershed Strategy to Improve the Resource

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Estero Bay At A Crossroads

On June 22, 1969 the unthinkable happened in Cleveland, Ohio when the Cuyahoga River caught fire. The river had become so polluted that an oil slick ignited. Incidents such as the Cuyahoga River fire became a rallying cry for those fighting to improve water quality.



By Matt Bixler, Excerpted from Expressions June 2004

In 2003, 31 years after the Clean Water Act first passed, Florida officially identified which waters in the Estero Bay watershed were polluted, and developed a deadline of 2007 for a remedial plan to be established.

The CWA was successful at addressing so-called "point source" pollution. This is pollution that comes from a fixed point, such as a pipe at a sewage treatment facility. To date, the CWA has been less successful addressing "non-point source" pollution. The main source of nonpoint pollution we have in Southwest Florida is stormwater runoff from agricultural fields and residential areas. This problem is more difficult to see, and often times, as the saying goes, "out of sight, out of mind."

The restoration of Estero Bay and its tributaries must be a priority of all of us who enjoy Southwest Florida's natural environment.

Despite efforts for protection, Estero Bay is at a crossroads. Water quality is continuing to decline and additional stormwater runoff is imminent. We have two options before us. The first option is to wait until 2007 when the State of Florida will develop a plan of action for cleaning up the bay's tributaries. The second option is to work on the issue now, and get a more than three-year head start on the issue.

A group called the Estero Bay Nutrient Management Partnership is already working on option two. Established by the Southwest Florida Watershed Council, the EBNMP includes government agencies, development interests and



At least a segment of all five tributaries of Estero Bay – Estero River, Imperial River, Spring Creek, Hendry Creek and Mullock Creek – are listed as polluted. A grassroots effort is currently underway to reverse this trend.

environmental organizations, among others. It is a non-regulatory, community-based partnership developed to address deteriorating water quality in Estero Bay and its tributaries and to achieve nutrient load reduction goals that will be consistent with the state's water quality regulations.

A solid commitment and a proactive attitude from all the region's stakeholders are essential for the restoration of Estero Bay and its tributaries. After years of environmental restoration, it is evident that avoiding environmental degradation is not only better from an environmental perspective but it also makes more economic sense that attempting to fix the natural environment after degradation occurs.

Estero Bay is an ecological treasure. For too long we have let water quality in the Estero Bay watershed deteriorate. But it is not too late to make a difference. Estero Bay is at a crossroads. For the benefit of all in Southwest Florida we must choose a path of restoration and protection and reverse our path of deterioration and degradation.

EBNMP: A Cooperative Approach

The Estero Bay watershed has undergone extensive urban development during the past 10 years. Estimates indicate that in 1995, about 11 percent of the watershed was comprised of urban land uses (residential, commercial, industrial) concentrated in the western developed corridor. Concurrently, agricultural land use was estimated at 26 percent. In 2000, the SWFRPC projected that urban land use would increase to 35 percent by 2020, while agricultural use would increase only an additional 2 percent by 2010.

Deteriorating water quality in the Bay and tributaries, all of which are classified as Outstanding Florida Waters, has occurred concurrently due to the rapid urbanization of the watershed. And, it's not getting any better.

The EBNMP was formed to address these issues of improving the watershed prior to the 2007 TMDL mandate being developed by the DEP. The public/private partnership will provide an opportunity for watershed stakeholders to better communicate and coordinate efforts and ultimately develop a nutrient management plan for Estero



Bay prior to the 2007 deadline.

Who are the stakeholders? Agriculture, developers, government agencies, homeowners, mining, environmentalists, golf courses, chambers, education – and any others that affect the quality of water in Estero Bay.

The Partnership's primary objective is to work cooperatively toward nutrient reduction goals in the watershed. Secondly, the Partnership should become a model for restoring other bays throughout coastal Southwest Florida.

Help us be in control of our future ... join the EBNMP today! For membership information or to schedule a speaker for your organization, contact Janet Strutzel at jstrutzel@msn.com.

San Carlos Estates Water Control District Capital Improvement Project

The San Carlos Estates Water Control District was established in the early 1960s as a Chapter 298 water control district. The district encompasses approximately 1,100 acres of land. SCEWCD is surrounded by a perimeter canal system which discharges to the headwaters of Spring Creek. Currently, there are no controls to mitigate the flow of stormwater or pollutants into Spring Creek.

The Capital Improvement Project, which has been permitted by the South Florida Water Management District, will retrofit a stormwater management system into the existing facilities. The CIP includes the following elements:

- Installation of two weirs to near the discharge points for the district. This will restore groundwater to its previous elevation and provide added detention volume.
- Roads in the district will be sealed. This will reduce erosion and the discharge of solids during storm events.
- Strike Lane will be reconfigured to include a swale along the south side of the road and a large detention area along the north side of the road. This will reduce the pollutants discharged to the perimeter canals.
- Roadside swales will be installed. This will increase detention volume and reduce the pollutant load discharged to the perimeter canals.
- Control structures will be installed at all discharge points to the perimeter canals. This will regulate the discharge of stormwater to the perimeter canals, thus reducing the pollutant loads.



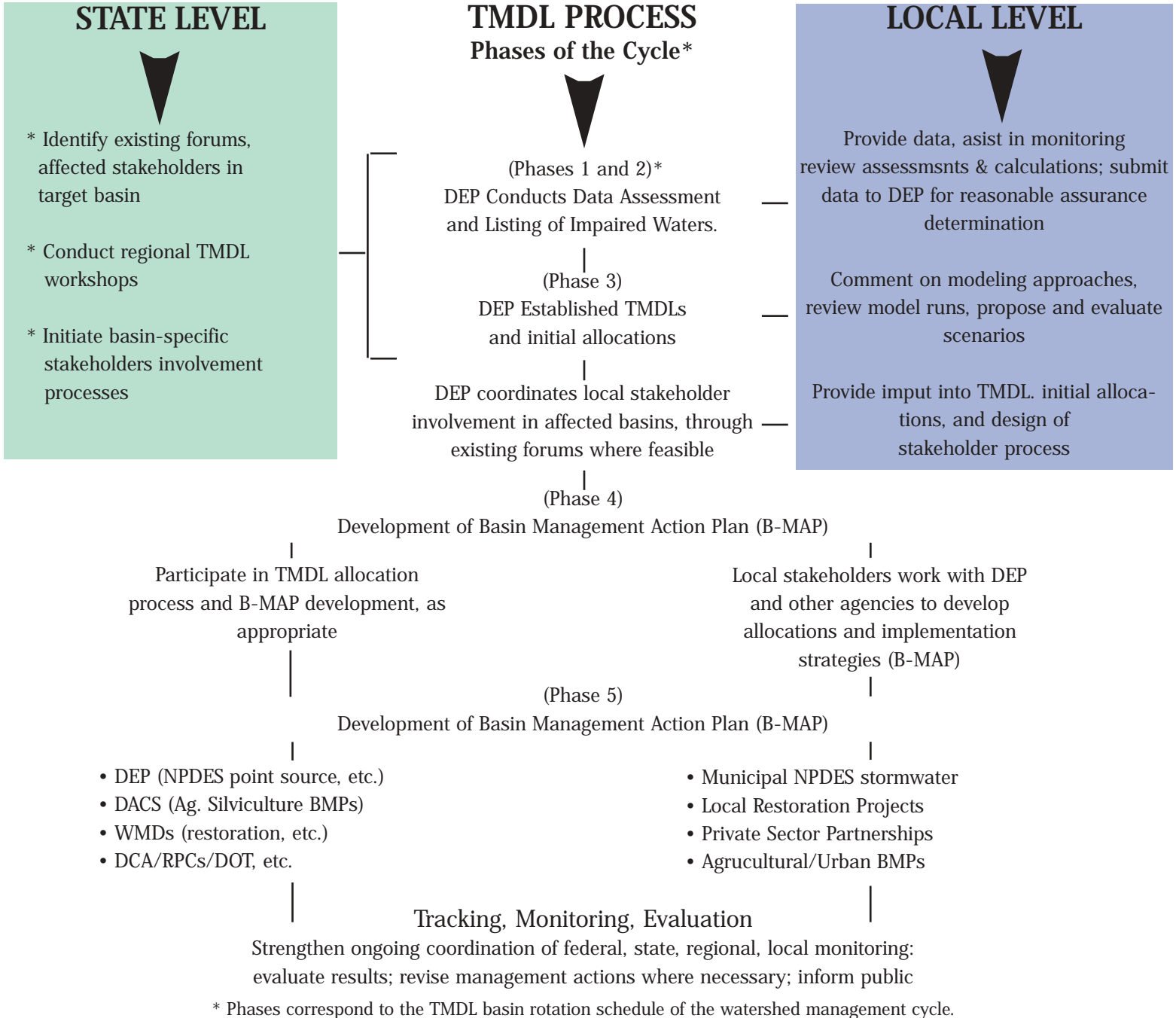
All of the above project elements will work to increase the storage in the basin and reduce the overall pollutant load to Spring Creek.

Bonds for the project are currently in the validation process. We anticipate that construction will begin around November 2004 and will require approximately one year to complete.

TOTAL MAXIMUM DAILY LOAD PROGRAM

STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT THROUGHOUT THE CYCLE*

A total maximum daily load is the maximum amount of a given pollutant that a water body can absorb and still maintain its designated uses (such as drinking, fishing, swimming, etc.). One body of water may have several TMDLs – one for each targeted pollutant. Under Section 303(d) of the federal Clean Water Act and the Florida Watershed Restoration Act, TMDLs must be developed for all waters that are not meeting their designated uses and, consequently, are defined as "impaired waters."



Partners in Progress

We want to hear from you. If you are interested in sharing your success stories regarding ongoing water quality improvement projects in a future newsletter, please contact Sharon Arnold at sarnold@gravinasmith.com.

Save the Dates

Wednesday, August 18, 3:30-5 p.m.
 Wednesday, September 22, 8 a.m.-noon
 October meeting, TBD
 Meeting locations, agendas and up-to-date information can be found at www.swfwc.org.

Partners and Partnerships

Thank you to the following organizations who have committed to making a difference. To join this growing list of partners dedicated to improving the water quality in Estero Bay and its tributaries, contact Janet Strutzel at (239) 225-0543 // jstrutzel@msn.com or visit www.swfwc.org on the Web.



Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program
CREW Land & Water Trust
Estero Bay Agency on Bay Management
Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Lee County
South Florida Water Management District
Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council
Southwest Florida Watershed Council
The Bonita Bay Group™
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Water Enhancement & Restoration Coalition

FYI: Links of Note

Be sure to check out these sites to stay up-to-date with what's going on in the industry:

- www.projectcleanwater.org
- www.sfwmd.gov
- www.swfrpc.org/ABM/StateoftheBay/2004.pdf
- www.dep.state.fl.us/water/tmdl/index.htm
- www.chattanooga.com (look for stormwater)
- www.ci.greensboro.nc.us/stormwater
- www.griffinstorm.com
- www.farmland.org
- www.americanforests.org

MISSION STATEMENT
Improve and maintain the water quality of Estero Bay and its associated watershed through a consensus and voluntary partnership.

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