

Report on the South Florida Water Management District's
October 6th Water Resources Advisory Commission Meeting

The meeting was held at the John Boy Auditorium in Clewiston. Southwest Floridians who participated included WRAC members Rob Barton, Mike Bauer, Beverly Grady and Howard Wegis, as well as Governing Board member Bubba Wade.

Member issues included:

- ◆ John Adornato (National Parks Conservation Association): the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers plan for ModWaters proposes two small bridge sections - a one-mile section and a two-mile section - among an 11-mile expanse, leaving eight miles of the dam in place. He believes this falls far short of what is needed to truly restore flow through the park to the Bay.
- ◆ I'm not sure who said this: Owners of property in the footprint of the IRL project should be notified about the project by the Corps. There is a feeling that these properties are "under a cloud" because they are slated for acquisition. The Corps representative did not indicate that such notification would occur.
- ◆ Mike Bauer (City of Naples) reported on a successful day of oyster planting in Naples Bay – the project was funded, in part, by the District.
- ◆ Patrick Hayes (Loxahatchee River Coalition) distributed a new video about the Loxahatchee River (now in the library at the Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council).
- ◆ I asked about the status of the work to develop water reservations. Mike Collins indicated that the rule challenge has not yet been resolved. I failed to follow up with a question about how the staff is proceeding with its data collection and analysis for the establishment of reservations, so I'll write Dave Swift to ask him, and I'll bring this up again at the November WRAC meeting.
- ◆ Walter Carson (Custom Living Space Builders) reported on the meeting to improve Stormwater Management which he led last month. This group has decided to focus primarily on stormwater management in the existing urban setting – they will explore what can be done to enhance water quality and wastewater as redevelopment occurs. The next meeting of this group will take place on Thursday, October 13th at 1:00 p.m. at District Headquarters.

Agenda items included:

- ◆ Lake Okeechobee Committee Report and Governing Board Resolution
 - Bubba Wade reported on the September 28th Lake O Committee Meeting (see <http://www.swfwc.org/WRAC/092805LOReport.pdf> [my report] and http://www.sfwmd.gov/newsr/lonew/loc_report_9_28_05.pdf [the District's report])
 - Bubba Wade reported that deep well injection was discussed at the Lake O Committee meeting as an option for storage of excess Lake O water, but I have no recollection of that, and neither does Beverly Grady.
 - The proposed resolution was the main topic of conversation. The inclusion of the words "through installation and operation of forward pumps" was troubling for a number of WRAC members, who felt other options would not be explored if forward pumps were explicitly stated as the only mechanism for achieving lower Lake levels. Ultimately the group agreed to change the words to "through the consideration of installation and operation of forward pumps." Also troubling was the omission of the greater Everglades ecosystem from Section 1 of the document, so those words were added. Kelly Clark (Miccosukee Tribe) stated that the Tribe would not support the resolution, but all others present supported it, and it will be forwarded to the Governing Board for consideration at its meeting on October 12th.
 - Mike Collins expressed great frustration over the fact that many people are calling for the District to send more Lake water south. He said that a technical analysis of the

possibility of storing water in the EAA was done as a part of the Governor's Commission on a Sustainable South Florida a decade or so ago, and it was clear that this was not viable. I've requested the paper.

- No information was forthcoming regarding the Governor's planned announcement on October 10th – the event on the north shore of the Lake was described as something the Governor is overseeing in totality.
- Dennis Duke (Corps) announced that a Scoping Meeting for the Lake O Regulation Schedule Study will take place at 7:00 p.m. at the John Boy Auditorium in Clewiston on Tuesday, October 11th.

◆ Alternative Water Supply Grants

- Carlyn Kowalsky presented a list of projects throughout the District that are being recommended for funding under the new program. She explained the factors that were considered when evaluating each project. She also provided a list of proposed projects that are not being recommended for funding (and she explained that most of these projects are not ready or do not meet the program's requirements).
- 81 proposals are being recommended for funding (out of 119 submitted). The numbers by planning basin follow:
 - Kissimmee Basin 7
 - Upper East Coast 8
 - Lower West Coast 30 (it was a disappointment to Naples and Collier County residents that all projects in the Big Cypress Basin will be funded by that Basin's budget, rather than through the new program)
 - Lower East Coast 36

◆ Aquifer Storage and Recovery Update

- This was the same presentation that was given to the WRAC Lake O Committee the previous week.
- There are a number of near-term issues that need to be resolved
 - Corps approval of the Pilot Project Design Report and Environmental Impact Statement
 - Federal funding for construction of pilot projects (lack of timely funding will result in schedule slippage, but the projects are in the federal budget proposal)
 - Arsenic has been encountered in some existing ARS systems
 - Sand has been encountered at the Berry Groves site (deep borings will be taken to determine the lateral extent of the sand lens later this year or in 2006 – if it is present across the footprint, a screen would be required, but it would hydraulically limit the pumping and the site may therefore not be a viable one)
- At full capacity (300 wells), ASR could take 2 feet of water out of Lake Okeechobee
- Even after the funding is secured for the pilot projects, it will be the fall of 2009 before any Technical Data Reports are generated.

◆ Acceler8 Update

- Agnes Ramsey provided this update. She described the lessons that the District and the Corps have learned during the first year of the Acceler8 program (they fell in the areas of permitting requirements, environmental site investigations, test cell investigations and design requirements). She also explained the difference between a dam and a levee:
 - Dam: "Any artificial barrier which impounds or diverts water, and which has an impounding capacity at maximum water storage elevation of 50 acre-feet or more. This does not apply to any such barrier which is not in excess of 6 ft in

height or has a storage capacity less than 15 acre-feet at max storage.” National Dam Safety Act (FEMA 93, April 2004)

- Levee: “Embankment whose primary purpose is to furnish flood protection from seasonal high water and is to furnish flood protection from seasonal high water and is therefore subject to water loading for periods of only a few days or weeks a year.” USACE EM 1110-2-1913, 30 Apr 2000
- Acceler8 projects include both dams and levees.

◆ CERP Projects Update

- Updates were provide on the following
 - Broward County Water Preserve Areas: The Selected Plan consists of 2 impoundments (one covering 1,739 acres to a depth of 4 feet, and one with two compartments – the first covering 1,4980 acres to a depth of 4 feet and the second covering 205 acres to a depth of 2 feet). The Draft PIR will be noted in the Federal Register in November, with the Public Review to be completed in January of 2006.
 - Everglades Agricultural Area Storage Reservoir: The Tentatively Selected Plan covers a footprint of 30,000 acres with a storage volume of 360,000 acre feet in two cells. The Draft PIR is available for review, and public review will be completed in November.
 - Acme Basin B: The Tentatively Selected Plan and the Locally Preferred Plan differ. The Draft PIR LPP is the project to built under Acceler8. The Draft PIR will be noted in the Federal Register in October, with the Public Review to be completed in December.

◆ Preferred Restoration Flow Scenario for the Northwest Fork of the Loxahatchee River

- Patricia Walker described the plan which has been established, noting that many people thought there would never be consensus. She expressed thanks to all the people from varying backgrounds and viewpoints who participated in this work. The scenario is expected to be approved by both the Governing Board and the Secretary of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection in December.

◆ North Palm Beach County CERP Project Update

- Michael Voich Presented this update. He described the background and purpose of the project, as well as a status report on each phase (planning, design and construction) of it.