

Final

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
Of the
HARRIS CHAIN OF LAKES RESTORATION COUNCIL**

August 6, 2010

The regular meeting of the Harris Chain of Lakes Restoration Council was held at 9:00am on August 6, 2010 at the Lake County Board of County Commissioner Chambers, 315 West Main Street, Tavares, Florida

Members Present

Skip Goerner, Chairman
Keith Farner
Jon VanderLey
Don Nicholson
Richard Royal

Members Absent

Hugh (Dave) Davis II, Vice Chairman
Richard (Rick) Powers P.G., Secretary
Edward Schlein, M.D

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Skip Goerner called the meeting to order at 9:00am.

2. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilman Jon VanderLey gave an invocation. The Pledge of Allegiance followed.

3. COUNCIL ROLL CALL; REMINDER FOR OTHERS TO SIGN IN

Chairman Goerner called the roll. Vice Chairman Davis, Secretary Powers and Councilman Schlein were absent.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

April 2, 2010 meeting minutes, May 7, 2010 Tour Summary and June 4, 2010 meeting minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

5. PRESENTATIONS / ACTION ITEMS

Chairman Goerner called for a presentation by Bill Johnson, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWCC) and Marty Hale (FWCC).

- Bill Johnson, FWCC filled in for Jason Dotson (FWCC) and provided information on FWCC's findings and recommendations for regulating fishing of black crappie in Lake Griffin to prevent over-harvesting. The presentation data can be viewed on the website at <http://sfrc.ifas.ufl.edu/harrischaincouncil/Minutes.htm>. The presentation and discussion by the Council and Mr. Johnson included: 1) angler survey of black crappie; 2) graphs of studies done by Jason Dotson (FWCC) for evaluation of a regulation size limit; and, 3) recommendations for a regulation size limit. Mr. Johnson stated the survey showed most anglers are receptive to a regulation in Lake Griffin for a minimum size limit of 10-inches for black crappie. He mentioned the growth for a 10-inch (250 millimeter) size fish takes about 4 years and the yield of black crappie goes down when fish are caught at a smaller size and not able to reproduce quickly enough to replenish the population. Mr. Johnson stated that Mr. Dotson's recommendation, after evaluating the data and studies, is to implement a black crappie regulation size limit of 10-inches and a 25-bag limit for Lake Griffin. The new regulation will take at least a year to process and go before the Commission before it can go into effect and Mr. Johnson believes once the size regulation is implemented it will take approximately 2 years for anglers to see the growth results. He commented that the survivability rate is good for small black crappie that have been caught and thrown back. Enforcement of the regulation in just Lake Griffin and not the other lakes in the chain (for now) will be an issue they will work on, but signs will be placed at the lake when the regulation begins.
- Bill Johnson, FWCC, continued the meeting with information on the large mouth bass stocking in Lake Griffin and Lake Carlton. Lake Carlton is a smaller lake so it is used as an experimental lake for the bass. The FWCC

stocked 180,000 4-inch bass into Lake Griffin and 11,000 into Lake Carlton. The bass in Lake Carlton are tagged with a micro-wire for immediate identification (and they are genetically marked as well). Lake Griffin bass are only genetically marked and would have a sample of their fin sent to the lab for DNA identification. The FWCC lab technician can process 500 DNA samples per day. Population estimates in Lake Carlton have been completed, and 3600 bass over 10-inches have been counted. Last year there were 1600 bass. They are marked with small fin clips after counting so they are not counted twice. Bass stocked in March 2010 from the hatchery were 4-inches long and they are able at that size to eat more small fish, including shad fish in the lake. Telemetry radio tags are being used for tracking and mortality rates, and being released at that size gives them a better survival rate. He mentioned that the survival rate for spawned eggs in lakes is less than 1%. The survival rate (per 30-day study) of the 4-inch hatchery fish released is 38% versus the 4-inch wild fish at 81%. They plan to stock Lake Griffin with 200,000 large mouth bass in the next 2 years. Mr. Johnson stated that because staff with St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) kept the lake levels higher this year than the regulation schedule, the fish population is doing much better, and after all the data is evaluated he will create a report. Mr. Johnson will also give the Council Members a copy of his current report as requested by Chairman Goerner.

- Councilman Farner asked Mr. Johnson if he had any news on the recent fish kill that was reported. Mr. Johnson commented the dead fish were reported in Lake Dora, Dora Canal and Lake Apopka and it seems to be mostly 10-inch catfish, but the FWCC is currently investigating it.
- Marty Hale, FWCC, presented the Council with information on: 1) the criteria and timeframes involved for the regulation of black crappie; 2) hydrilla control in the Harris Chain of Lakes (HCOL); 3) sunshine bass stocking; and, 4) artificial reef habitat construction. He stated the Division of Fresh Water Fisheries Management (DFFM), which is a division within the FWCC, needs to obtain approval and authorization to implement the new regulation of a 10-inch minimum size rule for black crappie. They must send the proposal, data collected and the reports to the DFFM Rule Regulation Committee, the Regional Leadership Team and the Agency Rule Review Committee. Once it has been approved, the earliest it could possibly go into effect is July 2011, but most likely will be July 2012. Mr. Hale provided the Council with some hydrilla control information and a brief history of the entities involved in the treatment and management of aquatic plants before it was transferred (by the Legislature) to FWCC in 2009. Recently the FWCC put a team together to develop a policy for controlling hydrilla statewide, and this month will be the first meeting. Mr. Hale will keep the Council updated on their findings. He and the Council discussed whether hydrilla management was previously a state law, a state rule or a state policy; He will find out and let them know at the next meeting. Mr. Hale and Mr. Johnson spoke about sunshine bass not being stocked in Lake Apopka since 1990, and that other lakes in the chain were only stocked if anglers requested it. In 2008, they started re-establishing the sunshine bass in Lake Apopka, but they did not survive the 2008 fish kill. In 2009, FWCC stocked 300,000 sunshine bass in Lake Apopka and 120,000 in Lake Harris, and they did well according to the 2010 survey. This year they stocked Lake Eustis with 35,000 sunshine bass, and next year they plan to put approximately 400,000 in Lake Apopka and re-stock Lake Harris. All the sunshine bass used for stocking are 1-inch fingerlings (and growing well). They cost about a nickel each to raise, and anglers are excited about re-establishing the sunshine bass into the lakes. Mr. Johnson, FWCC, explained they do train the hatchery fish to catch their own food before releasing them into the lakes. Mr. Hale, FWCC, commented that fish do have the ability to learn how to survive. Mr. Hale continued his presentation and his information on artificial reefs is viewable on the website at <http://sfrc.ifas.ufl.edu/harrischaincouncil/Minutes.htm>. He explained most of the artificial reefs are concrete blocks dropped into the lakes by pontoon boats. There is no vegetation now, but nuphar will be planted later. The Harris Chain of Lakes Restoration Council is providing funding for the project. The material is being donated and delivered by Dura- Stress, Inc. at no charge, and FWCC will be recognizing everyone for their contributions. They will have a news release on the project when it is completed.
- Councilman Farner suggested the Council write a thank you letter to Dura-Stress, Inc. for their generous donation to the artificial reef project. The other Council members agreed.
- Nancy Christman, SJRWMD, introduced the consultants with Wildwood Consulting Inc., Tiffany Busby, Senior Project Manager and Marcy Policastro, Project Manager. They will be preparing the 2010 annual report to the Legislature for the Harris Chain of Lakes Restoration Council. It will include information from November 2009 through October 2010.

- Tiffany Busby, Wildwood Consulting Inc., gave a presentation to the Council on the background of the company and the preparation of the Council's annual report. The presentation slides can be viewed on the website at <http://sfrc.ifas.ufl.edu/harrischaincouncil/Minutes.htm>. She included her company's contact phone numbers for the Council Members to call if they have any suggestions for the draft report. At the next meeting, the council will need to review and approve any changes made. Ms. Busby and the Council Members discussed recommendations for the 2010 annual report.
 - Chairman Goerner stated for the 2010 annual report to be 10-12 pages in length and in the same format as last year; the presentations (with findings and recommendations) will be placed on a cd. He requested Technical Advisory Group (TAG) members to provide at the next Council meeting a condensed presentation to include their activities, accomplishments (in the HCOL) for the past year, and their recommendations for future projects. In addition, they should provide information on their legislative priorities, projects, funding, what direction they want to go with the Council, and input on HCOL current projects.
 - Nancy Christman, SJRWMD, stated that Wildwood Consultants had put a statement into the draft to dedicate the report in memory of Robert Kaiser. The Council Members agreed.

6. COUNCIL & AGENCY QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Chairman Goerner called for updates from Marty Hale, FWCC.

- Mr. Hale, FWCC, requested a letter from the Council stating their support for the black crappie regulation of a 10-inch minimum size limit and a 25-bag limit. He will inform the Council when he will need the letter. Chairman Goerner agreed, and stated that a recommendation from the Council will be included in the annual report also.
- Mike Perry, Lake County Water Authority (LCWA), commented to the Council about: 1) laying of the concrete block for the artificial reefs at Hickory Point. He explained they first place a large PVC pipe in the water and then tie spatterdock (nuphar) to the concrete block. The concrete block is placed on top of the pipe and slides down to rest at the bottom of the lake. Survival of the plant is better with this technique and it has a chance to root; 2) he worked with Tiffany Busby in the past and the Council will be very pleased with her work; 3) lake levels are at or around regulation schedule and the NuRF was operating close to peak capacity for 2½ weeks. The total phosphorous (TP) leaving the NuRF facility is at 32 ppb, meeting the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL). When water is running at high flow it creates micro-floc from the alum which settles into the settling ponds, with some going into the Apopka-Beauclair Canal (A-B Canal). It does not do any harm other than slightly reducing the clarity of the water. They recently discovered some bacteria during the summer months in the settling ponds, causing some of the settled floc to float and work its way out into the A-B Canal. They will be working to fix those problems by moving the alum dosing point closer to the settling ponds during high-flow conditions; 4) Lake Beauclair's recent TP water quality data is the lowest it's been, and the highest Secci Disc reading; 5) Lake Beauclair restoration project's permit was challenged and there will be an administrative hearing the week of August 9th. To begin the project this year it must be resolved quickly; 6) this year the LCWA has a budget of \$5,000 for the Harris Council Chain of Lakes Restoration Council; and 7) Mr. Perry presented the Council with a NuRF wish list for funding. Chairman Goerner suggested giving a presentation on it at the next meeting and Mr. Perry agreed. The wish list is viewable on the website at <http://sfrc.ifas.ufl.edu/harrischaincouncil/Minutes.htm>.
 - Councilman Royal asked what are the percentages of phosphorous dissolved or particulates that are being removed by the alum treatment. Mr. Perry will research that and bring to the next meeting.
- Walt Godwin, SJRWMD, provided written reports with the agenda package on updates of the Emerald Marsh, Upper Oklawaha River Basin (UORB) lake level management, Lake Apopka Marsh Flow-Way Project and Lake Apopka North Shore Restoration. These reports can be viewed on the website at <http://sfrc.ifas.ufl.edu/harrischaincouncil/Agenda.htm>. Mr. Godwin provided additional information on: 1) 19,000 cypress trees were planted at Lowery Brown Farm. It will create a cypress forest to connect the natural trees in the north and south; 2) nuphar planting in Area 3 at Lake Apopka is being done; and, 3) UORB water quality information. Mr. Godwin's information is viewable on the website at

<http://sfrc.ifas.ufl.edu/harrischaincouncil/Minutes.htm> . His report showed the TP for Lake Apopka is 58-66 µg/L, Lake Beauclair is 42 µg/L, Lake Carlton is 25 µg/L, Lake Dora is 35- 37 µg/L, Lake Eustis is 32 µg/L, Lake Griffin is 26 µg/L, Lake Harris is 30 µg/L, and Lake Yale is 27 µg/L. Mr. Godwin commented the lakes are approaching their TMDLs and look good. He stated Long Farms, called Area 5, is the next project they will be working on and will be the most difficult.

- Nancy Christman, SJRWMD, informed the Council the letter of intent from the University of Florida has been received to maintain the Council's website, and the website contract with them will be renewed for another year.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS

No Public comments

8. COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENTS

A. Comments

- The Council Members discussed their recommendation to support FWCC to establish a regulation of a minimum size limit for catching black crappie.

B. Motions

- Councilman Farnier made a motion for the Council to support the efforts of the FWCC to establish a minimum size fish limit, and that the size limit will be positive for the fisheries of the HCOL.
- Councilman Nicholson seconded the motion.
- All Council Members approved and the motion carried unanimously.

C. Discussion of Next Scheduled Meeting: September 10, 2010

- Chairman Goerner called on Nancy Christman, SJRWMD, to include on the agenda for September that all of the TAG members are requested to present their annual report of activities in the basin, upcoming project recommendations and legislative priorities for inclusion in the annual report.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:40am

Respectfully submitted by:

Chairman Skip Goerner

Secretary Rick Powers, P.G.