

| |
|--------------|
| FINAL |
|--------------|

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

January 6, 2012

The regular meeting of the Harris Chain of Lakes Restoration Council was held at 9:00am on January 6, 2012 at the Lake County Board of County Commissioner Chambers, 315 West Main Street, Tavares, Florida

Members Present

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

Members Absent

Don Nicholson

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Skip Goerner called the meeting to order at 9:04 am.

2. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Vice Chairman Davis gave an invocation. The Pledge of Allegiance followed.

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

Chairman Goerner called the roll. Councilman Nicholson was absent.

4. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Chairman Goerner called for the election of officers.

- A. Councilman Schlein nominated Hugh (Dave) Davis for Chairman; Approved by unanimous vote of the Council.
- B. Councilman Schlein nominated Skip Goerner for Vice Chairman; Approved by unanimous vote of the Council.
- C. Vice Chairman Goerner nominated Richard (Rick) Powers for Secretary; Approved by unanimous vote of the Council.

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- November 4, 2011 meeting minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

6. PRESENTATIONS / ACTION ITEMS

- 1) Chairman Davis called for a presentation by Nathalie Visscher, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC).
 - Nathalie Visscher, FWC, provided information on the past and present data of aquatic vegetation on Lake Harris; Little Lake Harris; Lake Griffin and Lake Eustis. Her presentation slides are viewable on the website at <http://harrischainoflakescouncil.com>. The current mapping survey was done in July 2011, and the mapping area of each lake was from the littoral zone to open water. She commented that Lake Apopka is too shallow now for the boats and for the sonar equipment to work properly and she is hopeful that sometime in the future they will be able to map Lake Apopka's aquatic vegetation.

Ms. Visscher informed the Council that the data from the survey taken in July 2011 documents the acreage and the percentage of aquatic vegetation growing in each lake. The percentage rate for the aquatic vegetation found in the lakes has increased from the 2003 and 2006 surveys. The current percentage of acres with aquatic vegetation present in Lake Harris is 24%; Little Lake Harris is 25%; Lake Eustis is 27%, and Lake Griffin is 27%. The presentation included data on the submersed and emergent species of different aquatic plants found in each lake. Nathalie will send the Council a booklet (from FWC) on identifying the aquatic plants. She spoke about how healthy the submersed native plants, and the emergent plants are in the lakes, and how their population has increased over the years. The vegetation is treated for navigational purposes for boats. Ms. Visscher stated the residential canals are treated by Lake County, and FWC treats the vegetation beyond the canals. She mentioned that the FWC is going to contact St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) to work on coordinating the vegetation surveys in the lakes. She commented that the SJRWMD focus is more on native plants, and her division in the FWC focuses more on invasive plants.

- Vice Chairman Goerner discussed: 1) his concerns with the present overgrowth of Hydrilla and Naiad in Lake Griffin's canals. He commented that boats are having problems with navigating out of the canals. Ms. Visscher said she would inspect the areas and evaluate for possibly treating them; 2) he requested separate data, all on the same page, showing the total acreage of each type of vegetation (submerged and emergent). Ms. Visscher stated that she has that information, and will send it to Vice Chairman Goerner.
 - Councilman Woosley commented that he would like to see a habitat management plan for the Harris Chain of Lakes (HCOL) happen between the agencies. He suggests the Harris Chain of Lakes Restoration Council make a recommendation on encouraging the FWC and SJRWMD to develop an aquatic plant assessment and management plan for the HCOL, and for the agencies to agree on using common methodologies, and base maps, to insure they can use the same data. He stated if the agencies agree on a common set of goals, and sharing the data, the Council can help make recommendations for trend analyses for aquatic habitat. He would like to see these aquatic vegetation surveys completed systematically, and replicated using the same methods, in the same seasons, and done every two to four years.
 - Dennis Renfro, FWC, informed the Council that in November 2011, the FWC and SJRWMD met to discuss working together to utilize each other's staff to help research and compile data to create a database. He said there will be interagency documents and data created for all to share.
 - Councilman Schlein commented that the commonality of goals should be shared with the community. He would like the community involved in discussing the 100,000 acres of water in the area, not just Lake Apopka.
 - Dan Canfield, University of Florida (UF), informed the Council that University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (UF/IFAS), The Center for Aquatic and Invasive Plants, has available on-line publications on identifying plant species.
- 2) Chairman Davis called for a presentation by Dan Canfield, UF.
- Dan Canfield, UF, provided information on the development of the Numeric Nutrient Criteria Rule by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). He explained that the rule was initially developed because of a lawsuit filed against the EPA. The EPA then determined that numeric nutrient standards were needed for Florida's water bodies, and they proposed the standards. He discussed how no lake in Florida could be eutrophic with EPA's ruling, versus the State of Florida's data stating that there are natural eutrophic lakes. After EPA studied the data, they agreed

there were some natural eutrophic lakes in the state, and they agreed that not all of Florida's water bodies are similar. Dr. Canfield informed the Council that on December 9, 2011 the Florida Environmental Regulation Commission (ERC) passed a recommendation to the Florida Legislature (with the EPA's acceptance) on amended rules for the numeric nutrient standards for Florida. He stated that if the Legislature passes it, then the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) would be setting the new standards for Florida. So instead of 60% of Florida lakes being verified as impaired by the EPA, only 2-3% will be considered impaired by DEP. Dr. Canfield believes there may be a problem though with one of the amendments. He explained that farmlands are under the authority of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), so the EPA has no authority over the water quality in farmlands, and an amendment was submitted stating that canals are exempt from EPA's rules. Dr. Canfield said the EPA wanted to set the criteria for canals but recognized that canals are artificial, and are not under their jurisdiction. Do to that amendment; the EPA can only set the criteria for the receiving waters into the canals.

- Kraig McLane, SJRWMD, presented to the Council a copy of a letter from Hans Tanzler, the Executive Director of SJRWMD, to Secretary Herschel Vineyard with the DEP. It can be viewed on the website at <http://harrischainoflakescouncil.com>. The letter expresses the District's support for the current proposed revisions to Florida's water quality standards (62-302, FAC).

3) Chairman Davis called for a presentation by Kraig McLane, SJRWMD.

- Kraig McLane, SJRWMD, discussed with the Council the Lake Apopka Summit that was held in December 2011. The presentations provided at the summit are viewable at <http://floridaswater.com/lakeapopka>. He explained that the SJRWMD is going to arrange a meeting of the Lake Apopka Restoration Team to develop a plan involving the different agencies. The team will consist of staff from the DEP, FWC, SJRWMD, and the Lake County Water Authority (LCWA), and the team will need to present their information by December 2012.
- Dan Canfield, UF, commented that the Chairperson of the Lake Apopka Restoration Team would be Secretary Herschel Vineyard, DEP. In addition, Dr. Canfield said that Secretary Vineyard wants him at the team meetings.

7. COUNCIL & AGENCY QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

- Vice Chairman Goerner would like David Walker, SJRWMD, to discuss Mr. Walker's comments on the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) water control manual that he spoke about at the November 4, 2011 meeting. Vice Chairman Goerner explained the comments are in the November 4 2011 minutes, on page one, item five, section one; *He (Mr. Walker) stated the only reference from the operating agreements is to the minimum and maximum desirable water level ranges that the lakes would be managed. The USACE water control manual for lake level regulation was published in 1993, and they have no final recommendation of required low flow releases in the system.* Vice Chairman Goerner does not agree with that statement, and he discussed how the flow manual and the contract between SJRWMD and the LCWA, mentions that the water would be managed at the highest possible level, in relation to the regulation schedule.
- Dennis Renfro, FWC, informed the Council on the upcoming public meeting hosted by FWC's Harris Chain of Lakes internal working group. It will take place on January 24, 2012, in Winter Garden at the Tanner building on the boat ramp, on Lake Apopka. The meeting will be on aquatic plant management on Lake Apopka. He commented that the FWC Executive Director Nick Wiley is also on the Lake Apopka Restoration Team that was created on December 2011 at the Lake Apopka Summit.

- Kraig McLane, SJRWMD, informed the Council: 1) he would be placing the advertisements for the volunteers needed to fill the three vacant council seats; 2) there was a typo on the January 2012 UORB monthly project status report on Shad Harvesting. The report stated Shad harvesting began on Lake Apopka on October 1, 2010, the year needs to be corrected to 2011. He will have it corrected before it is uploaded to the website; and 3) the SJRWMD water supply impact study on the St. Johns River will be finalized in February 2012. He stated that if the Council wants any more details on what the study found he could arrange that.

8. PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Linda Bystrak, citizen, spoke to the Council on information provided from a presentation made by District staff at a Technical Methodology Workshop on the Water Supply Plan 2010 held on July 9, 2009 by SJRWMD and the Suwannee River Water Management District. The excerpts of the presentation slides she showed the Council are viewable at <http://harrischainoflakescouncil.com>. She explained her concerns on the low water levels and that the source of the problem needs to be considered, not just the results of the low water levels. Ms Bystrak spoke about the serious problems with seepage lakes, and if the aquifer levels go down, they will take the potentiometric pressure level down with them, and that will create more seepage. She suggested to the Council that they ask SJRWMD to give a presentation on this. Ms. Bystrak urged the Council to use their influence to support water conservation.

9. COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENTS

A. Comments

- Vice Chairman Goerner commented that a written resignation from Councilman VanderLey was received, and he will forward it to Mr. McLane.
- Councilman Woosley would like to see a presentation from SJRWMD sometime in the future on groundwater and surface water interaction. Chairman Davis stated the presentation would be potentially set for March.
- Vice Chairman Goerner suggested having a presentation by: 1) Joe Branham (owner of Bugg Spring) on his survey of the past 100 years of data collected on the water levels in Lake Griffin; and 2) Sonny Hall, SJRWMD, on information about the aquifer. Chairman Davis agreed, and requested Vice Chairman Goerner contacts them.
- Chairman Davis requested from Kraig McLane to email the Council (before the meeting) the exhibits and documentation that will be used in the February 2012 presentation by SJRWMD. The Council wants to be able to review the items before the meeting.

B. Discussion of Next Scheduled Meeting: February 3, 2012

- Vice Chairman Goerner requested a presentation on what occurred from the Lake Griffin Restoration Task Force (back in 1999), including all the data with the water level graphs, water flow records, rain levels, and what the recommendations were from the Task Force meetings. He asked that Casey Fitzgerald, SJRWMD, to do the presentation.

10. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:25 am