

**FINAL**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
of the  
HARRIS CHAIN OF LAKES RESTORATION COUNCIL  
February 7, 2014**

The regular meeting of the Harris Chain of Lakes Restoration Council (Council) was held at 9:03 a.m. on February 7, 2014, at the Lake County Board of County Commissioner Chambers, 315 West Main Street, Tavares, Florida.

**Members Present**

Don Nicholson  
Lloyd Woosley  
Skip Goerner, Vice Chairman  
Hugh (Dave) Davis II, Chairman  
Robert (Bob) Johnson  
Keith Truenow

**Members Absent**

Edward Schlein, M.D.  
Sid Grow

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Davis called the meeting to order at 9:03 a.m.

2. **INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Councilman Davis gave an invocation. The Pledge of Allegiance followed.

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

Chairman Davis called the roll. Council members Schlein and Grow (with advance notice) were absent.

4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The Council considered November 1, 2013, meeting minutes and agreed to revisit them at their March meeting. Councilman Nicholson suggested that he might have some changes and Vice Chairman Goerner asked to review the minutes with the DVD. The secretary was asked to mail copy of the DVD to Vice Chairman Goerner.

5. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no comments from the public.

6. **PRESENTATIONS / ACTIONS**

**A. Presentations and discussion regarding the cost of largemouth bass stocking**

A presentation was given by Mr. Dennis Renfro, Fisheries Resource Coordinator, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC). Mr. Renfro introduced Rick Stout, Hatchery Manager, Florida Bass Conservation Center, FWC, and credited him with overseeing the day-to-day operations of the hatchery, providing specific numbers, and managing the budget.

Mr. Stout presented that the hatchery provides tested genetics of brood stock, certified pure Florida Bass, and brood stock from correct genetic zone; the parents are often from same system. The hatchery also has the ability to produce and supply large numbers and a person on staff for health check certification.

The use of a risk-based decision-making process provides consistency for fishery managers. The FWC developed a position statement for special use permits dealing with the relocation of wild bass and hatchery fish. One of FWC's newest programs is "TrophyCatch" and information is available at <http://www.myfwc.com/TrophyCatch>.

The fish rearing process includes spawning, pond grow-out, fry culture, and raceway grow out. The total cost of rearing and stocking a Phase II Large Mouth Bass (LMB) is \$0.368 (feed cost \$0.055, facility overhead \$.0154, labor, staff, and all costs associated with labor hatchery \$.0159). Based on production rates in 2012, a Phase II LMB is approximately 80 millimeters (roughly three-four inches) in length. The transportation cost of stocking is \$0.0009/fish or \$0.88/1,000 fish. The use of high capacity oxygenated hauling rigs ensures survival and stocked size "match the hatch." Mr. Renfro discussed the scenario for stocking Lake Apopka based on a \$0.368 (cost/fish) x 150,000 LMB = \$55,200.

Vice Chairman Goerner questioned the survival rate of stocked fish and asked Mr. Renfro if there has been a positive return on the investment for Lake Apopka and the Harris Chain of Lakes (HCOL). Mr. Renfro referenced the positive return on Lake Talquin and Vice Chairman Goerner questioned the comparison of Lake Talquin to Lake Apopka, noting differences in depth and bottom structures.

Vice Chairman Goerner asked Mike Allen, Ph.D., Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences, University of Florida (UF), to speak. Mr. Allen agreed that Lake Talquin and Lake Apopka are different systems but noted similar spawning mechanisms. Mr. Allen commented on the use of a stocking mechanism in Lake Apopka similar to that in Lake Talquin, cannibalism when raising hatchery bass, and the pros and cons of pellet-raised fish. Vice Chairman Goerner recalled the limited and poor survival rate of the Sunshine Bass in Lake Apopka due to the conditions of the lake and emphasized that improving the habitat at Lake Apopka is the most important priority.

Councilman Woosley expressed concern regarding the use of the allocated funding to accelerate restoration at Lake Apopka for fish stocking prior to habitat restoration or improved accessibility. Mr. Renfro reported on the allocation of funds in a contract between FWC and St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD). The Council and Mr. Allen concur that the priority is restoration in Lake Apopka.

Councilman Nicholson welcomed Dan Canfield, Ph.D., Limnology, UF. Mr. Canfield recalled that the Legislature had appropriated \$4 million for Apopka restoration. He said the tiger team setup by Senator Hayes came up with access, habitat, and three years later — bass stocking. FWC transferred funds to SJRWMD for dredging at Magnolia Park in Orange County, but various problems emerged and no dredging resulted. FWC transferred the balance of funding for Apopka, less the money used for planting, back to SJRWMD for the Apopka-Beauclair Canal (A-B Canal) project. FWC has \$2 million from last year's appropriation for planting; FWC has contracted for additional planting this spring in the North Shore at Apopka.

Vice Chairman Goerner and Councilman Woosley, in accordance with the statute, asked Mr. Kraig McLane, SJRWMD, to ask the Technical Advisory Group members to attend Council meetings.

Chairman Davis asked if the cost of tracking the fish in the future was included in the cost estimate. Mr. Renfro explained that “tracking” costs were not included and the injection of a coded micro wire tag (approximately 1mm/size of pencil lead) in the cheek of the bass at the hatchery. The use of micro wire is less expensive than the radio tags; the cost would include 10 staff working five to 10 days, tags @ \$3,000 for 100,000 tags, and shared use of expensive machinery at FWC’s saltwater hatchery (~ six machines for scanning).

Councilman Truenow asked if FWC is tracking the survival of vegetation on Lake Apopka. Mr. Renfro reported the purchase and transfer of plants from other lakes and the use of only two plant species (Spatterdock and Bulrush). The location of the plants protects them from northern winds and there have been no wind incidents. The use of mats at Lake Jesup has been successful; Mr. Renfro noted that mats deteriorate over time, hold eelgrass, and assist in getting submerged vegetation to the shoreline. FWC is considering a project on the north shore involving the use of mats (eelgrass). Councilman Truenow suggested comparing the cost of transplanting to the use of mats to see if there is any advantage and inquired on the use of sand at Apopka to provide the proper water depth for eelgrass. Mr. Renfro explained that the use of sand at Lake Apopka has been postponed.

Councilman Nicholson emphasized the importance of water clarity and asked Charles Clark, Lake County Water Authority (LCWA), to speak. Mr. Clark who lives near Lake Griffin, reported poor water clarity, stagnant-like conditions, the “deplorable condition” of the bottom of Lake Griffin, and no rainfall during the past six months.

Councilman Woosley requested updates from SJRWMD and FWC on the use of appropriated funding. Mr. Renfro noted that agency directors at Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), SJRWMD, and FWC are meeting weekly to discuss the funds and the funding process. Vice Chairman Goerner, Councilmen Woosley and Truenow emphasized the importance of the Council staying informed and being aware of current happenings. Councilman Nicholson asked Kraig McLane, SJRWMD, for an update on the water budget, and springs.

Mr. Canfield believes that bass is big business, hatcheries and stocking are advertisement, and economic vitality is a key factor. He advised the Council to think as a business community, noted the advantage of stocking with big fish as a tool, and attributed some of the success of stocking to “angler psychology.”

Councilman Nicholson commented on seeing increased numbers at boat ramps. Vice Chairman Goerner read the Council’s mission statement from 2001, and recalled the successes. The Council recognized and thanked Mike Perry (LCWA) and Mr. Canfield for their leadership and invaluable scientific expertise. Councilman Woosley asked Mr. Canfield how the current TMDLs (listings of water quality impairment) for the HCOL would compare to the recently enacted water quality criteria, for lakes approved by EPA, if they were applied. Mr. Canfield explained that they would be in violation, and that EPA does not want any lakes to be eutrophic (naturally enriched). He believes the issue to be the amount and placement of allowable aquatic plants in our system.

**B. Election of Council officers**

Chairman Davis called for election of the officers.

- (1) Councilman Nicholson nominated Vice Chairman Goerner as Chairman; approved by unanimous vote.
- (2) Councilman Truenow nominated Councilman Johnson as Vice Chairman; approved by unanimous vote.
- (3) Chairman Goerner nominated Councilman Truenow as Secretary; approved by unanimous vote.

7. **COUNCIL & AGENCY QUESTIONS & ANSWERS**

Chairman Goerner asked Lisa Prather, FDEP, to address the Council. He asked if there had been a permit issued for the Harris Bayou project and for a report on the water quality. Ms. Prather did not have that information but agreed to check. Chairman Goerner commented on the high amount of nutrients discharged during the Bayou's brief operation and improper monitoring of future discharges.

Councilman Woosley requested Ms. Prather to report on why FDEP is not using FWC's vegetative information (shared protocols) in the development of the total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) and encouraged use of shared protocols. Councilman Nicholson mentioned flood control and the potential impact on insurance rates.

Secretary Truenow reiterated the need for updates from the respective agencies on projects planned for 2014. Chairman Goerner asked Kraig McLane, SJRWMD, for a directive to the agencies regarding 2014 updates and their attendance to Council meetings.

Dennis Renfro returned to the podium. He reported having met with Montverde Town officials to discuss deep-water access and widening on the boat ramp. FWC scheduled a presentation to the Town Council for Tuesday. Benefits would be the return of funds to the town from boats that launch in that area and a west entrance to the 30,000-acre lake.

FWC is part of a team comprised of a commissioner from Orange County, members of the Audubon and SJRWMD for the Lake Apopka Wildlife and Birdapalooza event. The FWC has planned airboat and land tours for the Commissioner and the media and UF's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) has events and activities planned for the children.

An updated press release from the FWC appeared on the front page of the Orlando Sentinel about the rule change to Black Crappie on Lake Griffin. The collection of carcasses from fish camps for age and growth determinations continues to be a success.

The U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) permitted FWC to do research on the use of woody brush versus plastic fish attractors on Lake Griffin to examine deterioration, concentration of fish, and long-term cost-effectiveness. Councilman Woosley encouraged Mr. Renfro to pursue long-term leachability studies with the manufacturer on the use of petroleum-based attractors in acidic versus alkaline lakes.

Mike Perry, LCWA, reported that the public, especially children are increasingly interested in use of the lakes; more than 100 children have registered in an upcoming fishing tournament. There continue to be dry conditions and low lake levels. Lake Apopka is at 64.1 feet. The minimum desirable level is 65.4 feet. The Super Pond is at 60.9 feet, the regulatory schedule is 62.21 feet, and the minimum desirable level is 61 feet. Lake Griffin is at 56.5 feet, the regulatory schedule is 58.21 feet, and the minimum desirable level is 57 feet. Mr. Perry noted no flows through the structures have occurred since April 27, 2012, and that minimum flows and levels (MFLs) have been rescheduled for 2014. The use of an inexpensive bathymetry method on Lake Harris revealed more detailed and current results. A request for proposals is being prepared for nutrient issues in Lakes Yale, Denham, and Trout to see if nutrients are being recycled back from the sediment and alum application/treatment. Seaplane issues are a concern and to be discussed at LCWA.

Chairman Goerner asked why the water level in Apopka appears to drop quicker than the other lakes in the HCOL; a specific cause was not identified. Chairman Goerner wants a speaker to talk to the Council about leakage from the dikes into the North Shore.

Councilman Davis asked Mr. Perry to contact the Sheriff's Department regarding use of a helicopter, if available, for thermo-imaging; he mentioned taking thermo-graphic pictures of Lake Harris to overlay on a map to detect hot and cold spots/springs.

Chairman Goerner asked Mr. Canfield speak to the Council. Mr. Canfield who was the director of Florida Lake watch, gave examples of the cost-effectiveness of volunteers and requested members of the Council to speak to their legislative officials about continued funding of the program.

## 8. COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENTS

### C) Comments

Councilman Woosley plans to stay involved with the basin management action plan (BMAP) and believes there is a lot to do in the next five years. Chairman Goerner is concerned with water quality, quantity, monitoring and the condition of the marshes. He mentioned having a workshop/meeting for the Council to discuss these issues. Councilman Davis had no comment. Vice Chairman Johnson commented on the absenteeism of Councilman Schlein. Chairman Goerner stated that Rick Powers had resigned, that the Council will notify the legislative delegation that appoints members, and will advertise for a replacement. Kraig McLane is going to contact Dr. Schlein. Secretary Truenow commented on the Council starting plans and never finishing them; he wants this group to become more goal oriented so they can move forward in a timely fashion.

### D) Discussion of Next Scheduled Meeting: March 7, 2014

Kraig McLane, SJRWMD, reported that the next round of presentations could include updates on legislative funds, springs, MFLs and lake level schedule (including a water budget), Harris Bayou project, leakage on Lake Apopka levees, and review of the November 1, 2013, meeting minutes.

Councilman Nicholson requested a presentation on the breakdown of the aquatic species, both plant and animal, in the lakes. Nathalie Visscher, Invasive Plant Management Section, FWC,

reported seeing many native apple snails in Lakes Griffin and Harris and briefly compared the scopes of the Lake Vegetation Index (LVI) surveys by FWC and FDEP in the HCOL. Councilman Nicholson and Chairman Goerner noted a reduction in the number of frogs along the HCOL and attributed this to the habitat; there is an increased number of birds and birds eat frogs. The next scheduled meeting is on March 7, 2014.

9. **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 12:22 p.m.