

**FINAL**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
of the  
HARRIS CHAIN OF LAKES RESTORATION COUNCIL  
October 30, 2014**

The regular meeting of the Harris Chain of Lakes Restoration Council (Council) was held at 9:10 a.m. on October 30, 2014 at the Tavares City Hall, 201 East Main Street, Tavares, Florida.

**Members Present**

Skip Goerner, Chairman  
Robert (Bob) Johnson, Vice Chairman  
Keith Truenow, Secretary  
Don Nicholson  
Sid Grow  
John Stump, ex officio member

**Members Absent**

Hugh (Dave) Davis II  
Dr. Ed Schlein

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Goerner called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m.

**2. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Council member Nicholson gave the invocation. The Pledge of Allegiance followed.

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

Chairman Goerner called the roll. Council members Davis and Schlein were absent.

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The Council approved the September 5, 2014 and October 3, 2014 meeting minutes.

**5. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no comments from the public.

**6. PRESENTATIONS / ACTIONS**

- A.** Steve Fitzgibbons, St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) provided pictures for the cover of the annual report and the Council selected three. Council member Nicholson and Chairman Goerner want to consider having a picture for each heading in future annual reports.

Vice Chairman Johnson recommended edits to the Lake Water Level Management section of the annual report. The paragraphs that contain details of the ground water flow models, data analyses, wetland transects, and regulation schedules will be removed from the report and the NuRF will be identified on the Map of the Harris Chain of Lakes (Figure 1). Chairman Goerner stated that the annual report is a summary and that meeting details are available to the public in the meeting minutes.

Leakage of the levees at the Lake Apopka north shore was revised to “1,500-acre feet per year” of water leaks into the north shore due to the dikes. Chairman Goerner and Secretary Truenow want the annual report to include definitions for recharge and discharge, and a map with the areas of recharge and discharge, the location of the dike, and the areas of the dike that caused the most leakage.

Vice Chairman Johnson discussed the bird mortality event at Lake Apopka. He stated that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) threatened officials with jail if they did not return bird carcasses. He noted that the bird deaths were likely due to disease, not poisoning. Rolland Fulton, SJRWMD, stated that the Exponent report could not reach a conclusion on the cause of the mortality, and that SJRWMD subsequently determined that pesticides caused the majority of the deaths. Chairman Goerner expressed concern regarding the peer review by Exponent. The Council wants their discussion of the study that linked the pelican deaths to New Castle disease, and time delays in the flooding of Lake Apopka north shore due to USFWS’s determination of the bird mortalities in the annual report. They recommend that Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) reopen the bird kill investigation to evaluate future disease risks for the lake and impacts to the establishment of future fisheries. The Council supports FWC’s aquatic planting program, but wants a plan for wind abatement and root anchorage given extreme wind fetches.

In response to council member Nicholson, Mike Perry, Lake County Water Authority confirmed no litigation between the parties of the Magnolia Park project. The Council approved of the recommendation in the annual report regarding dredging projects and related activities.

The Council reviewed sport fish stocking and removed FWC’s proposed regulation for largemouth bass. They added the length (3 to 4 inches) of Phase II bass to the recommendation and support stocking of wild adult bass for the Harris Chain of Lakes and Lake Apopka, as appropriate.

The Council supported the establishment of artificial reefs using concrete materials for longevity and placement of the reefs in the Harris Chain. They recommend FWC’s use of the established long-term reefs in their assessment since the use of brush piles and plastic attractors were not as long-term or cost-effective.

The Council supports efforts to improve public access to Lake Apopka and is very concerned about the delay in SJRWMD’s efforts to connect the Lake Apopka north shore to Lake Apopka. Emphasizing that SJRWMD purchased the land to restore the “kidney” of Lake Apopka, they recommend that the Florida Legislature and SJRWMD’s Governing Board determine if or when the marsh is reconnected.

Chairman Goerner shared discussions that he had with Dan Canfield, University of Florida (UF), regarding nutrient criteria and removal of lakes from the impaired list. He reiterated significant problems with discharges from the Harris Bayou. The Council recommends Florida Department of Environmental Protection’s determination of impaired lakes in the Harris Chain of Lakes (HCOL) and required change(s) for removal of lake(s) from the impaired list. They further advise that SJRWMD prohibit discharge from the Harris Bayou except for emergency flooding.

The Council removed a detailed discussion of water lettuce from the report, but kept a brief summation based on a presentation by William Haller, UF. The Council recommends funding by the Florida Legislature for the purchase of a new mechanical harvester, repair of the existing mechanical harvester, and operational costs to FWC for planting and managing of aquatic plants in the HCOL. The Council believes their designation as the authority for determination of use of the harvester is necessary. The Council requested that the repair cost (\$275,000) of the existing harvester not be included in the report.

Vice Chairman Johnson made a motion to approve the changes to the draft of the Harris Chain of Lakes Restoration Council 2014 Report. Council member Nicholson seconded the motion and the motion passed with a unanimous vote.

- B. Kraig McLane, SJRWMD presented the 2015 meeting schedule and it was approved. Chairman Goerner emphasized the importance of member attendance to the August September, October, and November meetings for preparation of the 2015 Annual Report. Mr. McLane verified advertising for the engineer and environmental engineer vacancies. Chairman Goerner asked Mr. McLane for updates on the vacancy applicants.

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

There was no discussion under this agenda section.

## **8. COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENTS**

### **A. Comments**

Council member Grow thanked the council members and agency representatives for their attendance and requested a presentation by SJRWMD next year on levels and flow through the Harris Bayou.

Council member Truenow requested an update on the status of Lake Apopka's dredging project; Dennis Renfro, FWC, verified that the respective contract for the dredging project has been awarded.

Mr. McLane, SJRWMD, agreed to provide the Council with the Final 2014 Annual Report prior to submittal to the Florida Legislature. Council member Nicholson made a motion that Chairman Goerner has the authority to resolve any conflict(s) with the Final 2014 Annual Report. Vice Chairman Johnson seconded the motion and the motion passed with a unanimous vote.

### **B. Discussion of Next Scheduled Meeting:**

The Council agreed that their next meeting would be on January 9, 2014. Vice Chairman Johnson requested a presentation by Michael Coveney, SJRWMD, on mesocosms at their next meeting.

## **9. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 12:30 p.m.