

**FINAL**

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

**April 2, 2010**

The regular meeting of the Harris Chain of Lakes Restoration Council was held at 9:00am on April 2, 2010 at the Lake County Board of County Commissioner Chambers, 315 West Main Street, Tavares, Florida

**Members Present**

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

**Members Absent**

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

**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, Councilman Schlein, and Councilman Powers were absent.

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Chairman Goerner called for a discussion of the February 5, 2010 and March 5, 2010 meeting minutes.

- February 5, 2010 minutes were approved by unanimous vote.
- March 5, 2010 minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

**5. PRESENTATIONS / ACTION ITEMS**

Chairman Goerner called for a presentation by Dave Fisk, St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) and David Walker, SJRWMD.

- Dave Fisk, SJRWMD, and David Walker, SJRWMD provided information on the vegetation and habitat restoration of Lake Apopka. The presentation slides and a report by Mike Coveney, SJRWMD, and titled "Water Quality Changes in Lake Apopka, Florida" are viewable on the website at <http://harrischaincouncil.ifas.ufl.edu/Minutes.htm>. The presentation and discussion by the Council, Mr. Fisk and Mr. Walker included: 1) historical vegetation, reversing eutrophication and the continuation of improving the water quality & habitat enhancement on Lake Apopka; 2) flooding of the North Shore Restoration Area (NSRA); 3) phosphorous loading from 1968- 2009; and 4) total phosphorous (TP) and lake stages from 1986-2010 in Lake Apopka. Mr. Fisk stated that assumptions were made by the District that in these central Florida lakes, much of the vegetation and habitat were gone by the mid 1960's. Models show Phosphorous must be reduced before there will be a return of submerged vegetation and game fish. He commented that SJRWMD staff and other collaborators have noticed improved water clarity, some increase in submerged aquatic vegetation and a small increase in game fish between 1997 and 2007, but the vegetation coverage is not as much as they believed there would have been by 2007. The District is looking into cost effective options for the acceleration of the enhancement of vegetation and habitat in Lake

Apopka, including selective (not whole lake) dredging and large scale re-planting of non-invasive native vegetation. SJRWMD is currently controlling the hydrilla in the lake but as the water clarity improves, the invasive hydrilla will be much more difficult to control. Mr. Fisk and Mr. Walker discussed the reduction of the pesticide levels in the NSRA and the progress that has been made. The schedule for flooding in the NSRA will take place between 2010 and 2012 pending approval from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).

- Councilman Farner asked Dave Fisk what the Council could do to accelerate the process for the water clarity and the return of the native vegetation. Mr. Fisk suggested that the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) or another group could investigate if it is economically and technically feasible to do a large scale replanting over natural regeneration and look for desirable locations. Mr. Fisk mentioned the per acre cost of large-scale replanting is in the range of \$1,000-\$2,000, and with the budget cuts, it could take about 3 more years before this project gets underway. Councilman Farner believes once the water clarity improves the lake's native vegetation will improve naturally without having the expense of replanting. He asked if SJRWMD can recommend areas for selective dredging so the Council could make a recommendation to the Legislature and look for funding for the project. Mr. Fisk agreed and suggested the TAG and other groups should explore the possibilities and to move forward to identify potential funding by this November to be ready for the next session of the Legislature. Chairman Goerner agreed. Chairman Goerner would like to hear from the TAG and Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWCC) if they have any ideas on this.
  - Councilman Royal agreed with SJRWMD on not reconnecting the NSRA to Lake Apopka. He suggested the TAG needs to look at the pros and cons of letting hydrilla grow in Lake Apopka.
  - Councilman Farner asked Dave Walker if the decision has been made yet to raise the lake level to help with the distribution of the resuspended material. Mr. Walker said they would be examining that over the next four years before a decision is made. Dave Fisk mentioned that there is a lot of study that needs to be completed first.
  - Dan Canfield, University of Florida (UF), asked Mr. Fisk that if the marsh is not going to be reconnected, how would the District view FWCC's differing position on controlling hydrilla. Chairman Goerner requested Bill Johnson (FWCC) to contact a manager from his agency and have that person come to a meeting to discuss the issue along with the District. Mr. Fisk agreed that the District will participate but he will not be able to attend the May, June and possibly July Council meetings. He asked that the Council not hold up the meeting on his behalf. Bill Johnson commented that Dan Canfield (TAG) would not be able to attend the May 7, 2010 meeting. Council Members agreed to wait until the June 4, 2010 meeting to have the discussion with FWCC.
  - Chairman Goerner suggested if the meeting with the Council, SJRWMD and the FWCC is not going to take place next month, the Council should take a tour of the Nutrient Reduction Facility (NuRF) instead. The Council Members agreed.
- Nancy Christman, SJRWMD, discussed the Annual Report contract and schedule that was included with this month's agenda package. The consultant schedule can be viewed at <http://harrischaincouncil.ifas.ufl.edu/Agenda.htm>

## 6. COUNCIL & PUBLIC QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

### Agency Updates, including reports received with agenda package

- Bill Johnson, FWCC, updated the Council on the stocking of bass in the lakes and discussed the radio implants in the body cavities of the fish to track their movement. He commented that the recently-released, hatchery-raised fingerling bass will be large enough to eat this year's shad fish spawn. Mr. Johnson also spoke about his sighting of the large amount of eelgrass growing in Lake Griffin.
- Councilman Don Nicholson mentioned he recently observed a lot of Nuphar growth on the northeast side of Lake Griffin, in the canal, and in Haines Creek area.

- Marty Hale, FWCC, spoke about working with the University of Florida staff on fish attractors. They are identifying locations and the various materials to use for the different fish habitats.
- Christianne Ferraro, FL. Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) gave an update on: 1) the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) numeric nutrient criteria. She stated the EPA has scheduled three more public hearings that will be held on April 13<sup>th</sup> in Fort Myers, April 14<sup>th</sup> in Tampa, and April 15<sup>th</sup> in Jacksonville. Ms. Ferraro reminded the Council the extension date for the comment deadline is April 28, 2010 and if you do not have comments that are on public record, you will not be able to challenge the new rule later; 2) the EPA temporarily withdrew the downstream protective values that apply to estuaries. The rule making for the criteria on estuaries will be in January 2011. The State of Florida will have public workshops at each of the estuaries to obtain site-specific criteria from people with water quality experience; and 3) the DEP recently had a semi-annual meeting with local Governments to discuss projects in the Upper Oklawaha River Basin (UORB) for the Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP). They will be scheduling a technical working group meeting to check that there is no duplication done on the sites. Chairman Goerner asked her to forward the dates of the EPA's public hearings to Nancy Christman.
- Dave Walker, SJRWMD, provided written reports on Lake Apopka and the UORB in the agenda package. These are on the website at: <http://harrischaincouncil.ifas.ufl.edu/Agenda.htm>. Mr. Walker discussed the opening of the gates at the Harris Bayou structure and releasing water periodically, but plans are not to operate the Bayou structure except in cases of emergency. Councilman Nicholson mentioned there is trash on the discharge side of the Bayou from the people fishing. Dave Walker will check with SJRWMD Land Management on it. Councilman Farner suggested contacting the City of Leesburg to put a trash receptacle out there. Jon VanderLey will contact the Leesburg City Manager.
- Dan Canfield, (UF), updated the Council on: 1) the issues related to the EPA's numeric nutrient criteria. The two major issues are the use of the lakes and the attainability of the new standard values. The EPA's proposal is a standard chlorophyll level of 20 micrograms per liter ( $\mu\text{g/L}$ ) and a phosphorous concentration of  $15\mu\text{L}$  (the TAG's goal for phosphorous is  $55\mu\text{L}$ ) and he stated the EPA's new standard cannot be met in Florida lakes. He strongly suggests to the Council, SJRWMD and others, to write a letter to the EPA asking for a more reasonable approach. The concern is Florida's fishing lakes becoming impacted by their new standards. Chairman Goerner agreed to write the letter on behalf of the Council before the deadline on April 28, 2010; 2) Mr. Canfield updated the Council on the use of the Harvester, which he mentions will soon be in high demand as the weather warms up; and 3) the bass placed in Lake Dora are moving into other lakes.
- Mike Perry, Lake County Water Authority (LCWA), had information on lake water levels and the effect on NuRF. The NuRF was operational for one year in March and has removed 63 % of the Total Phosphorous (TP) from Lake Apopka discharge, 31% TP reduction to Lake Beauclair. The Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for Lake Beauclair has been achieved and the facility has treated six billion gallons of water in the past year. Downstream from the NuRF, the Vallisneria and Nuphar are growing, and in the year that NuRF has been in operation, there has been improvement in the water quality, vegetation and fish life. The money spent on Alum the past year was \$900,000 plus the cost of the polymer. When operating at 280 cubic feet per second (cfs) the NuRF uses 25 gallons of Alum per minute at  $.50^{\text{c}}$  per gallon, which is still half the cost of a stormwater removal system. Mr. Perry reminded everyone that on April 22, 2010 there will be an open house at the NuRF.

## 7. OTHER PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Ann Griffin (citizen) spoke about her concerns for the wildlife and environment due to the disposal of the dredged toxic sediments from Lake Beauclair into the West Marsh. She handed out to the Council Members sections of a report written in September 2009 by staff from the SJRWMD with her hand-written comments on it. Her handout can be viewed on the website at <http://harrischaincouncil.ifas.ufl.edu/Minutes.htm>. Chairman Goerner reminded Ms. Griffin there is going to be an opportunity for companies to bid on decontaminating the dredged toxic sediment. Mike Perry commented the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) requires an archeologist to be on-site during the Lake Beauclair dredging.

**8. COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENTS**

**A. Comments**

- Chairman Goerner showed the plaque and letter of recommendation which will be presented to Patrick Hunter, the previous Recording Secretary.

**B. Motions**

- Councilman Royal made a motion to send a letter to the EPA to modify the proposed 'numeric nutrient criteria' standards for Florida lakes and Councilman Nicholson seconded the motion. All Council Members approved and the motion carried unanimously.

**C. Discussion of Next Scheduled Meeting: May 7, 2010**

- Chairman Goerner announced that next month's meeting would be at the NuRF project.

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 11:47 pm

Respectfully submitted by:

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Chairman Skip Goerner

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Secretary Rick Powers, P.G.