

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

July 13, 2012

The regular meeting of the Harris Chain of Lakes Restoration Council was held at 9:00am on July 13, 2012 at the Lake County Board of County Commissioner Chambers, 315 West Main Street, Tavares, Florida

Members Present

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

Members Absent

Richard (Rick) Powers P.G., Secretary
Sid Grow
Edward Schlein, M.D
Lloyd Woosley

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Davis called the meeting to order at 9:07 am.

2. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

Chairman Davis called the roll Councilman Grow, Councilman Powers, Councilman Schlein and Councilman Woosley were absent.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Councilman Johnson and Vice Chairman Goerner noted corrections of the June 1, 2012 meeting.
- Councilman Johnson suggested edits to the minutes of June 1, 2012 be the following:
Councilman Johnson spoke of an executive summary written by Charles Tibbles when he worked with the USGS Orlando District Region that addressed water levels and possible causes of flows reduced in Haines Creek. He stated that the executive summary stated that since the early 1960's there has been approximately a 50% decline in aggregate surface outflow from the Ocklawaha Chain of Lakes from Haines Creek through Moss Bluff. Councilman Johnson added that he has read many articles about the Harris Chain soil types and their high phosphorus levels (Boyd, 1981 and other reports). He further added, the farmers have contributed, but the soils have always had this high amount of phosphorous since surveys have been done. Also, phosphorous came from many years of discharge from the City of Winter Garden and the Plymouth citrus plant, but the farmer is the last one standing and they are blamed. Councilman Johnson stated that there is a relatively new technique of introducing vegetation into lakes by using mats into which vegetation is transplanted, allowed to grow and multiply, and then anchored to the lake bottom.
- Vice Chairman Goerner requested that the motion include the specified amended language as follows:
Vice President Goerner recommended Scenario A1: raise "recession" and floor in summer; 8 of 12 years raised average levels; and greater duration of higher levels during 8 years with the slight chance of increased levels above Max with the caveat of good guidelines of a flowchart as to keeping the dynamic lake levels as high as possible and show when the locks will be opened due to fluctuating levels. Along with monitoring the NuRF project to maintain Lake Apopka at a manageable level. He

stated that Lake Apopka's flow amounts are critical and flooding must be maintained at levels safely. Councilman Nicholson seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

- Action will be taken at the August 2012 meeting.

5. **PRESENTATIONS / ACTION ITEMS**

Chairman Davis called for a presentation by Michael Coveney, St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD)

- Michael Coveney, Aquatic Scientist, SJRWMD, provided information on the ecological considerations in setting lake regulation targets for Lake Apopka and the Harris Chain. His presentation slides are viewable on the website at <http://harrischainoflakescouncil.com>. The presentation and discussion by the Council and Mr. Coveney included: 1) SJRWMD's primary ecological goal in setting targets for water levels in Lake Apopka and the Harris Chain is healthy lake and floodplain wetland plant communities for fish and wildlife; 2) SJRWMD's primary economic constraint is flood control; 3) SJRWMD's other important considerations are water quality, recreation, navigation and water storage & supply; 4) ecological value of Lake Littoral wetlands including aquatic plant production and diversity; habitat for fish, birds, mammals, reptiles, and prey species, fish spawning and juvenile nursery areas, protection of shorelines from erosion and water quality protection; 5) two sets of lake level targets a) minimum flows and levels b) lake level regulation; 6) lake level targets are defined statistically by magnitude, duration and return interval 7) target high water level; 8) target average water level; 9) target low water level 10) whether lake level targets are met is determined statistically; 11) data from 20 field wetland transects are used to set target levels; 12) ecological value of lake level fluctuation (1); and 13) ecological value of lake level fluctuation (2).

Mr. Coveney answered Vice Chairman Goerner's question by stating that Ariel photography has been done to trace the vegetation type on the North Shore, Emeralda, Sunny Hill and Lake Griffin. Mr. Coveney answered Councilman Nicholson's question by stating that the District is not working on variable climate changes in the modeling efforts looking ahead 20 or 30 years. Mr. Coveney answered Councilman Johnson's question by stating that he understands that there is not a lot of leakage in the barrier of the North Shore. Mr. Coveney stated that in order to move the restoration efforts forward, SJRWMD needs to re-flood new parcels on schedule so the fish and pesticide levels can be monitored for a year. Mr. Coveney confirmed that there has been some preliminary recommendations for the magnitude, duration and return interval that they would guide the water level targets. Mr. Coveney stated that the current regulation schedule is set by flood control requirements.

- Vice Chairman Goerner questioned if the District maintains any graph of different plant species in land management areas and percentage of plants on the North Shore, Emeralda, Sunny Hill and Lake Griffin and what the estimated evaporation rate versus the surface water evaporation rate. He continued and stated that it is important for SJRWMD to provide management vision of how water supply is going to effect this area during wet and dry periods. There is a lot of leakage in the dike from Lake Apopka into the North Shore, the council would like to be provided the information of how much leakage.
- Councilman Johnson heard that there is a leakage barrier being put up to stop some of the leakage to the North Shore.
- John Benter, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, stated that the FWC has done Ariel photography, but not sure if any has been done in this basin.

- Councilman Nicholson asked if the interface of the water and air temperature relate to each other as to the rate of evaporation and transpiration is affected by the high temperatures and would it be a factor due to the planting in this location?
- Dave Walker, SJRWMD, stated that a final Biological assessment has been provided to the US Fish and Wildlife Services to get approval to re-flood the remaining acres of the North Shore. In 2002, the Board did adopt a interim fluctuation schedule for Lake Griffin and established a series of precursor conditions that would trigger potential fluctuation of Lake Griffin & had also put in place the idea of having some water set back in the Super Pond to be able to fill the Lake to minimum desirable level. The concept of the Harris Bayou project was to let water go higher & longer periods of time potentially to have the ability to release more water out of the system.
- Chairman Davis asked is there a specialized set of data for flooding the swamps and marshes to have the three criteria height, duration and interval? Chairman Davis stated that SJRWMD stated that they would create criteria for enhanced lake level fluctuations.
- Dan Canfield, University of Florida (UF), waters of the United States is multiuse waters. There are water user & obligations to the downstream users. Model shows that the Suwannee River Water Management would never be flooded & it has been. Mr. Canfield stated that in his opinion SJRWMD focus is on wetlands. There is a broader multiple use of the waters. He continued and stated that he has not seen the Marsh being connected to the Lake. The legislature appropriated \$4 million with the goal of restoring fish in Lake Apopka in a very quick period of time. The major focus has become dredging and \$1 million was also appropriated to have dredging at Magnolia Park.

6. COUNCIL & AGENCY QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

- David Herbster, FDEP, updated the Council on: 1) the Tiger Team that was formed by Senator Hayes, is reviewing a number of project proposals. Project will include dredging. The committee is set to help improve water quality improvement of Lake Apopka including fishery & aquatic planting.
- Dan Canfield, UF, updated the Council on: 1) the University of Florida is in search of a new President, 2) the mechanical harvester that was purchased for the Lake County Water Authority area citizens needs some work in able to be usable.
- John Benton, FWC, updated the Council on: 1) some biologist have put out some test plots of bulrush to test aquatic plant planting, 2) a survey on Lake Harris is being tallied and will be brought to the Council next month.
- Mike Perry, LCWA, updated the Council on: 1) lake levels, 2) contractors have been cleaning out the Dora Canal, 3) Beau Clair dredging is about 60% complete, 4) Lake County is working on the budget and experiencing a 5.48% reduction for property evaluations.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Ms. Ann Griffin requested that the Council insist that the St. Johns River Water Management District does not let more water out of the Moss Bluff Dam than is coming in from the Haynes Creek Dam. Ms. Griffin also stated that the Council needs to follow the precursors set for the St. Johns for lowering a lake.

Vice Chairman Goerner stated that the Council recommended that the flows be dynamic and equalized so regardless of how much water is let in or out the levels should be maintained.

Ms. Ann Griffin stated that the precursors for lowering a lake are 1) an ecological need to do it, 2) if there was a previous drought year, 3) or if there is a current drought year.

- Ms. Diane Heitman, ACBS, Homeowners, Superpond Businesses, stated that she has concern based on the information of modeling SJRWMD is using. She continued and stated that the regulation scheduled has been maintained to prevent flooding & the models are lower which causes the droughts to be worse and flooding is never as sever because it is controlled.

8. COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENTS

A. Comments

Chairman Davis requested that the Public Comments portion of the agenda be moved to agenda item #5, so the members of the Public would not have to sit through the entire meeting.

Chairman Davis stated that the some members the Council requested to change dates and times of the meetings, but it will not work for a majority of members. He recommends that the Council meetings continue to meet on the first Friday of the Month. Chairman Davis stated that the Council will vote on it at the next meeting.

Councilman Johnson asked what can and can't be done for the minutes.

Chairman Davis stated that the minutes are a summarization of what is said in the meeting.

Vice Chairman Goerner stated that a Council member cannot change what you meant to say, but can correct the minutes to reflect what was actually said.

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

Nancy Christman, SJRWMD, will update Kraig of the meeting and have him arrange for Marcy Policastro to present the Council a draft of the annual report at the meeting in August. The report will be emailed to all Council members and the meeting will allow the Council members to be able to provide comments until the report is adopted at the November meeting. The August agenda will also include a SJRWMD representative to give a presentation on the North Shore and to vote on the date & time of the Harris Council meetings.

Vice Chairman Goerner requested that the Brandon Thompson of Fish & Wildlife provide his thesis of bass stocking and have someone give an update on hydrilla in Lake Apopka.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.