

FINAL

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

May 2, 2003

The regular meeting of the Harris Chain of Lakes Restoration Council (Council) was held at 9:00 AM on May 2, 2003 at the Lake County Board of County Commissioners' Chambers, 315 West Main Street, Tavares, Florida.

Members Present

Charles C. Clark
Thomas A. Cook, MD
Skip Goerner, Chairman
Hugh Davis II, Secretary
Keith Farner
Don Nicholson

Members Absent

Thomas Brooks
Rick Powers

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Goerner called the meeting to order at 9:03 AM.

2. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Invocation was given by Mr. Robert Kaiser (Ex-Officio), followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL

Chairman Goerner called roll. All members were present except Thomas Brooks and Rick Powers. Don Nicholson arrived late.

4. WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS

Chairman Goerner (Council) welcomed all Council members and members of the audience. He also welcomed Barbara Bess of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), Eric Cotsenmoyer - Director of Lake County Aquatic Plant Management, and Ann Griffin of the Lake County Water Authority (LCWA).

5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Comments were made on the Meeting Minutes from April 4, 2003:

Mr. Charles Clark questioned the wording of the second line of Item 4 of the Draft April Meeting Minutes; and it was requested the wording for the line be changed to: “He mentioned the he did not travel to Tallahassee this month...” Additionally, it was requested that the term “budget” used in the fourth line of Item 6 be changed to “funding allocation”, the term “validity” in line 9 of the same section be changed to “advisability”, and that the statement in second line of Item 8 be changed from “...emphasized that there should be more research on access dredging...” to read “...there should be more emphasis on implementing access dredging...” Council members had no additional comments or corrections for the April meeting minutes and they were unanimously approved with the corrections. The Council also requested that Robert Kaiser be referred to as “Ex-Officio.”

6. DISCUSSION ITEMS

Status of Council Website

Chairman Goerner discussed information about a website for the Council. His research indicated that it could cost up to \$2,200 for the initial setup and maintaining the website for the first year. Chairman Goerner felt that the University of Florida (UF) could possibly assist with putting together the website. Mr. Keith Farner requested to have the number of “hits” (visitors) to the website monitored to determine if it would be worth maintaining the site beyond the first year. Chairman Goerner agreed.

Dr. Dan Canfield of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) suggested that the Council examine the Florida Lake Watch website as an example of some of the things that they could do with theirs. Dr. Thomas Cook made a motion to utilize the assistance of UF, and Chairman Goerner opened the panel for discussion. Mr. Clark expressed the implication that the Council may be perceived to be affiliated with UF, if it were hosted by the university. He felt that if the website makes it clear that the Council is independent of the university, that should be satisfactory. A brief discussion was held with respect to using a disclaimer on the Council website. The motion to move forward with the website at a cost not to exceed \$2,200 was put before the Council. The motion passed.

East Central Florida Water Supply Planning Initiative

Mr. Gene Caputo (SJRWMD) reported on the status of the East Central Florida Water Supply Initiative. The effort includes a water conservation program and the development of a model landscape code. He also said that Ms. Linda Shelley, a consultant for the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD), is working with other local government agencies on that program.

Chairman Goerner then discussed computer models and various impacts that were covered in a recent presentation by the U. S. Geological Survey (USGS). His greatest concern is for the effects of lowering of the water table of the Floridan Aquifer by recent droughts and how that would impact surface waters.

Mr. Don Nicholson arrived at 9:32 AM.

A general discussion as to whether the Harris Chain of Lakes would ever be utilized as a potable water source followed. The general consensus was that it would not be likely.

Mr. Farner then discussed his concerns with “spring flow” as a result of recent droughts and whether there has been a decrease in flow. He requested flow data for the various springs in the area. Mr. Mike Perry (LCWA) discussed the frequency of monitoring of springs and the fact that there is limited historical flow data. Other concerns expressed included the changing levels in the springs and the potential effects on surface water.

Mr. Caputo briefly discussed the quarterly budget report he provided to the Council, which has not yet been approved by the SJRWMD. The allocation from the LCWA to the Council had recently been approved and will be included in the next budget report.

Chairman Goerner then read an email that he had received from Gail Bass regarding State funding. Ms. Bass appeared concerned with the apparent difficulty that the Florida State Legislature is having in finding funding for water projects of this nature.

7. PRESENTATIONS

Lake County – Eric Cotsenmoyer, Director of Lake County Aquatic Plant Management, Herbicides and Process

Mr. Eric Cotsenmoyer discussed various activities of aquatic plant control in the county, which are primarily funded through FDEP. He said that Lake County manages a variety of aquatic plants with only a few choices of chemicals, including:

FDEP funded management

Water hyacinth (*Eichhornia crassipes*) managed with 2,4-D,
Hydrilla (*Hydrilla verticillata*) managed with Fluridone or Endothal,
Water lettuce (*Pistia stratiotes*) managed with Diquat,

Lake County funded management

Pennywort or Dollar weed (*Hydrophylla umbellata*) managed with 2,4-D,
Water fern (*Salvinia miniata*) managed with Diquat,
Torpedo grass (*Panicum repens*) managed with Glasosate,
Cattail (*Typha latifolia*) managed with Glasosate,
Para grass (*Urochloa mutica*) managed with Glasosate, and
5 – 7 species of duck weed managed with Diquat.

Mr. Cotsenmoyer said that the species of duck weed he works with are becoming resistant to Diquat, making it more difficult to control. He also discussed the difference between “maintenance” and “eradication”, in addition to the goals and objectives of his department.

Mr. Clark expressed his concerns with the herbicide 2,4-D, particularly when used in canals and mentioned that studies have shown incidences of Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma that are linked to the chemical. Mr. Clark asked Mr. Cotsenmoyer if they have looked at utilizing other chemicals or lesser amounts of 2,4-D in the canals that they manage. Mr. Cotsenmoyer explained that there are only five chemicals currently used, so the choices are limited. He also stated that only a very small amount is used in the canals.

Dr. Canfield defended the use of 2,4-D explaining that there is an extremely minimal risk to humans associated with the chemical. He explained the 2,4-D is a growth hormone that works on certain species of plants to induce uncontrolled growth to the point of death. Dr. Canfield indicated that it would take misuse of the product to cause damage to humans.

Chairman Goerner inquired about the persistence of the chemical in nature and of any resistant strains of plants. Dr. Canfield explained that in Florida, it may persist for a period of three days to a week and said that less is being used and that sometimes there is not enough applied to kill the plants. He does not know of any resistant plants.

Chairman Goerner expressed his concerns that after a drawdown of a lake there would be more plant growth and wondered if that would result in the use of greater volumes of the herbicides. Mr. Cotsenmoyer stated that after a drawdown, the terrestrial plants that inhabited the exposed lakebed would be killed when the area was reflooded. He also said that duck weed, para grass, torpedo grass, hydrilla, and water fern would need to be managed within the lakes after drawdown.

Mr. Nicholson commended Mr. Cotsenmoyer for his efforts. Mr. Nicholson then suggested that an active approach would be needed to manage hydrilla, which provides habitat for several species of fish including bass. Mr. Cotsenmoyer explained that the best way to manage hydrilla is to maintain it at a very low level of density (plant count) to reduce its reproductive capability.

Technical Advisory Group Report – Lakes Plan of Action

Mr. John Benton of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWCC) and Chairman Goerner discussed the Ocklawaha Basin Initiative for Aquatic Habitat enhancement that is going before the SJRWMD Board of Directors at the June meeting. Chairman Goerner said that there should be another discussion about the initiative before it goes before the Board.

Mr. Clark commended Mike Perry (LCWA), John Benton (FWCC) and David Walker (SJRWMD) on their efforts in putting together the initiative and says that now is the time "to take the bull by the horns" and move forward. He would like to see greater clarification of their plan made to the LCWA, so that they may more clearly understand all the various elements of the plan.

Mr. Perry defended the plan and the interagency cooperation. He felt that they should prepare to move forward with implementation of the plan. Dr. Canfield questioned the

timeline for the plan while Mr. Benton explained that the LCWA is moving forward with the full implementation of the plan. Mr. Benton also explained that the plan does include information regarding the planned drawdowns of the lakes. He said that he would provide a copy of the initiative and the figures to the Council members.

Agency Updates

Chairman Goerner then called for agency updates.

Dr. Larry Battoe (SJRWMD) provided handouts and discussed the Field Survey of submerged aquatic vegetation for Lake Griffin completed 4/28/03 and the “conceptual” plan. The survey only included a small portion of the western shore of the Lake.

Mr. Clark briefly discussed the issue of drawdown vs decreased water quality.

Dr. Battoe explained that extreme drawdowns would only be used in “extreme” cases where water quality had already been greatly diminished. He said that he would like to present the draft Pollution Load Reduction Goals (PLRGs) at the June Council Meeting. Dr. Battoe encouraged the Council to attend the Southeast Regional Chapter of the North American Lake Management Society (NALMS), hosted by the Florida Lake Management Society (FLMS) on June 2 - 5. He also suggested that the Council visit the NALMS website in order to get more information and said that he will email the address to the site to the council members next week.

Mr. Perry said that the LCWA had provided all the necessary information (via Requests for Additional Information) to the FDEP in order to obtain the dredging permit. He believes that the next effort required would be to begin mailing out releases (“hold harmless”) to the lakefront owners and asked if the Council would assist him in this task.

8. COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENTS

Chairman Goerner offered his appreciation for all the efforts of the LCWA and Ann Griffin for providing \$30,000 for the Bass Masters Tournament and \$109,000 for Lake Watch. Chairman Goerner went on to discuss the desire to learn more about the health hazards of resuspended dredge material. He asked the Council to consider allocating funding to have Dr. Shoemaker give a presentation of the research that he has conducted on this issue. Chairman Goerner said that the cost would be \$1,500 for Dr. Shoemaker to give a presentation and to attend a Council meeting. He suggested that possibly the presentation could be given in the evening to make it available to a greater number of people. A motion to fund \$2,000 for his presentation and attendance at a Council meeting (\$1,500 to be paid to Dr. Shoemaker and \$500 to cover the cost of incidentals) was made and passed. Chairman Goerner believed that this may occur in the July – August timeframe and went on to explain the Dr. Shoemaker is a medical expert in biotoxic exposure that includes the microbes and other matter that could be resuspended by in-lake dredging.

Chairman Goerner then called for any additional comments from the Council members. There were none.

9. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chairman Goerner then asked for Public Comment.

Ms. Ann Griffin (speaking as a private citizen) expressed her concerns with the water quality and volume of flow from Gourd Neck Springs that are the headwaters for the Harris Chain of Lakes. She said that she had learned that 2,4-D has been associated with Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma which is a form of cancer. She elaborated that if the water level in the spring is low enough, the lake could drain back into the spring according to information found in a USGS report. Ms. Griffin also said that she is thrilled about the prospects of Dr. Shoemaker's presentation.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Goerner called for meeting adjournment. A motion was made, seconded, and passed. The meeting was adjourned at 11:35 AM.

Respectfully submitted by:

Skip Goerner, Chairman

Hugh Davis II, Secretary