

FINAL

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

June 3, 2011

The regular meeting of the Harris Chain of Lakes Restoration Council was held at 9:00am on June 3, 2011 at the Lake County Board of County Commissioner Chambers, 315 West Main Street, Tavares, Florida

Members Present

Skip Goerner, Chairman
Richard (Rick) Powers P.G., Secretary
Richard Royal
Lloyd Woosley
Jon VanderLey (left at 10:45am)
Don Nicholson (left at 11:30am)

Members Absent

Hugh (Dave) Davis II, Vice Chairman
Edward Schlein, M.D
Keith Farnar

1. CALL TO ORDER

Councilman Powers called the meeting to order at 9:07am.

2. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

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

Councilman Powers called the roll. Vice Chairman Davis and Councilman Schlein were absent. Councilman Farnar tendered his resignation on May 30, 2011. Chairman Goerner arrived at 9:22 am after roll call and the approval of the minutes.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

May 6, 2011 meeting minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

5. PRESENTATIONS / ACTION ITEMS

Councilman Powers called for a presentation by Dan Canfield, University of FL (UF).

- Dan Canfield, UF, provided information on the United States Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) setting of numeric nutrient criteria for Florida water bodies. The presentation slides are viewable on the website at <http://sfrc.ifas.ufl.edu/harrischaincouncil/Minutes>. The presentation and discussion by the Council and Dr. Canfield included: 1) trophic classifications of lakes; 2) information on EPA's numeric nutrient criteria; and 3) Dr. Canfield's conclusion. He explained that lakes are classified as being in one of three classes: oligotrophic, mesotrophic, or eutrophic (lakes with extreme trophic indices may also be considered hyperoligotrophic or hypereutrophic). A lake's trophic state is a measure of its biological productivity. Oligotrophic lakes generally have very little or no aquatic vegetation, low nutrient concentrations, and are relatively clear. Eutrophic lakes tend to have large quantities of plant growth and nutrients. A natural aging process occurs in all lakes, causing them to change from oligotrophic to eutrophic over time, but people can accelerate the eutrophication process by allowing point source nutrients to enter the lakes, such as sewage, organic waste, phosphate mining operations and pumping ground water (which Dr. Canfield states for Florida lakes is no longer a major problem). He explained that non-point sources (no specific source location) of nutrients into lakes occur from land surface runoff that contains phosphorus and/or nitrogen. He discussed the current designation for most Florida lakes is for recreation. Dr. Canfield

explained that low alkalinity is EPA's criteria for lakes (which would put the Total Phosphorus (TP) range at 0.01-0.03), and he commented that it does not describe a eutrophic state. He reported the major component for the EPA's numeric nutrient criteria for Florida lakes is that any lake with sufficient concentrations of phosphorus and nitrogen to support an algal population and with a concentration of chlorophyll *a* of 20µg/L or more is considered to be in violation. He commented that the EPA has said that a waiver could be given for site-specific work for Florida lakes. The problem is that it would involve a lot more work and cost more money. He stated the EPA wants lakes to be Oligotrophic, which will put Florida lakes in violation (even ones that have been restored) and it would be too costly to try to meet that criteria. Dr. Canfield mentioned that the EPA has failed to recognize that there are natural eutrophic waters in Florida. In addition, Florida has many lake regions; all have diverse geographical differences and the soils are not the same. He informed the Council that the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) sent a petition to the EPA to rescind its determination that federally imposed numeric nutrient criteria are necessary in the State of Florida. Dr. Canfield's presentation concluded that the proposed numeric nutrient criteria for Florida lakes will wrongly designate several naturally eutrophic lakes as impaired and many resources will be wasted in trying to reduce the nutrient concentrations in such lakes. He suggests it would be better to investigate the smaller number of lakes that might be subject to nutrient pollution and to apply the law if there is documented evidence that they have changed due to human activities. Dr. Canfield commented that the Florida Legislature does not want numeric nutrient criteria; instead, they want a narrative statement.

- Dave Herbster, FDEP, stated that there will be a public workshop on June 16, 2011 on the EPA's numeric nutrient criteria, at the Leesburg Community Center, 109 East Dixie Avenue.

6. COUNCIL & AGENCY QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

- Dennis Renfro, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC), provided a paper to the Council on the FWC's position statement on Hydrilla Management. The handout can be viewed on the website at <http://sfrc.ifas.ufl.edu/harrischaincouncil/Minutes>. Mr. Renfro updated the Council on: 1) the FWC's working group that is being formed for the Harris Chain of Lakes (HCOL) which will be made up of experts from multiple divisions within FWC. Their first meeting will be held this month; 2) He is still waiting on the data for the large mouth bass that were stocked in 2009-2010. Mr. Renfro stated that the Creel data should be in soon and he will give a presentation on the data he receives; 3) He is in the process of creating an organizational chart of how all the agencies work together on the HCOL. It will be presented to the Council when he completes it; 4) the 2011 Bassmaster Elite Series tournament was held in Tavares from March 10-13 and it brought in over 1.5 million dollars (estimated amount) to the local community. He wants to bring in more fishing tournaments as they would increase the economics and the jobs in the area; 5) he will give an update on the Florida Black Bass Management Plan at the next meeting. In addition, he will give a presentation on the bass plan at the September meeting; and 6) Mr. Renfro introduced Dale Jones, FWC, Fisheries Management Leader.
- Dale Jones, FWC, spoke about the importance of the interaction of FWC and the Council. Moreover, he is looking forward to FWC being proactive on issues with the HCOL. He commented that Mr. Renfro would still be the point person for the Council.
 - Councilman Woosley asked Mr. Jones what input the FWC has on FDEP's biennial 305(b) report. Since EPA is quantitatively (numerical) driven rather than qualitatively (descriptive) driven, he would like to know if the FWC looks at numerics on trends and fisheries that would be used in a 305(b) process.

- Mr. Jones explained the FWC does comment to FDEP on the 305(b) report and he would find out about the numeric data.

- Mike Perry, Lake County Water Authority (LCWA), updated the Council on: 1) the lake levels in the HCOL; 2) the Nutrient Reduction Facility (NuRF); 3) the Lake Beauclair dredging project; and 4) the LCWA budget for the next fiscal year. Mr. Perry stated the current water level in Lake Apopka is 65¼ feet (ft.) which is slightly below the minimum desirable level. The Superpond is at 61¼ ft. and is slightly above minimum desirable. Lake Griffin is at 56.45 ft. and is below the minimum desirable level. The Apopka, Burrell, and Moss Bluff Locks and Dams are all discharging since they were re-opened in May. Mr. Perry told the Council the NuRF area was hit by lightening a couple of weeks ago and the voltage spike burned out most of the electrical power supplies and they had to replace them. He commented they now have a generator and a redundant pump in place in case of a power failure, but another lightening strike could take a couple days to fix if any power supplies are burned out. He mentioned it might be possible to have St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) reduce the discharges from Lake Apopka during low flow conditions should the NuRF have a power failure and be down for a few days. Mr. Perry continued his update with the Lake Beauclair dredging project. He stated the LCWA has awarded the bid to Jahna Dredging, Inc. and they will be signing the contract today. The project should be moving forward now. Mr. Perry discussed that the LCWA budget for 2011-2012 fiscal year will have a reduction of \$400,000 in funding but they do have about \$5,000 for the Harris Chain of Lakes Restoration Council (HCOLRC).
 - Chairman Goerner asked Mr. Perry for information on the phosphorus levels of the Superpond and Lake Griffin. Mr. Perry stated he would get the information and send it to the Council.

- Chairman Goerner requested that Dave Fisk, SJRWMD, report on the District's upcoming budget for the Ocklawaha Basin. Nancy Christman, SJRWMD, explained to the Council some of the budget cuts for the coming years: 1) the budget for SJRWMD will be reduced by about 30 million dollars for the next fiscal year, and an ongoing cap on the ad valorem tax dollars was set by the legislature at \$85 million. By the August HCOLRC meeting, SJRWMD will have the draft budget ready, and we can have Dave Walker report to the Council on the progress of the new budget. 2) With regard to the annual report, the process has begun to award a contract for a consultant to prepare the annual report. The consultant will come to the August meeting to take direction from the Council on the report, and will present the first draft at the September meeting. She stated this year there will be only one draft per meeting (September, October, and November) with the final draft in November. The Council will review the comments to the draft, which have been suggested by the Council Members and others, and then review those comments at each meeting. The updated draft will then be prepared for the next meeting.

- Dan Canfield, UF, gave his updates to the Council on: 1) the mechanical harvester is being utilized a lot. He mentioned the need for another two harvesters in this area; 2) forty-seven artificial reefs (cement blocks) have been installed, along with the planting of nuphar (cow lily) and nymphaea (water lily) within areas of the HCOL. He mentioned Hickory Point and other lake bottoms have very hard sand bottoms where plants will not grow, but in the softer lake bottoms, the plants grow well. The number one issue for fish is habitat and he suggests the council needs to look at using the nuphar and other native aquatic plants as a source. He wants the Council to see what can be done with FWC on the fish attractor program and with FDEP to enhance the fish habitat with using these native aquatic plants in soft bottom areas of the lakes.

7. PUBLIC COMMENTS

- Ann Griffin, citizen, spoke about her concerns regarding the NuRF and the Lake Beauclair Aquatic Enhancement Project by the LCWA. She wrote her concerns and comments on paper, which is viewable on the website at <http://sfrc.ifas.ufl.edu/harrischaincouncil/Minutes>. Ms. Griffin stated to the Council that she agrees with Dr. Canfield that the HCOL are naturally eutrophic lakes. She believes the NuRF, which is using alum to remove phosphorus from the lakes, is ruining the natural conditions of the HCOL and it should be shut down. She commented that man-made contaminates need to be stopped from polluting the waters, and this includes dumping alum into the lakes. Ms. Griffin spoke about that she is also against the Lake Beauclair dredging project due to the disposal site of the dredged material (cells F&G within the Lake Apopka North Shore Restoration Area), and she is concerned over the possibility of fish and bird kills and the harm it could cause the environment. Ms. Griffin said that she agrees dredging of Lake Beauclair needs to be done, but an alternative method should be used that will clean the dredged material before disposing of it. She requests the Council go to the legislature to have both projects stopped.
 - Mike Perry, LCWA, stated the SJRWMD went to the extreme to make sure the dredging project (conducted by the LCWA) will not cause any undue risks, and all concerns were addressed.
 - Chairman Goerner suggested David Walker, SJRWMD, discuss this issue at the next HCOLRC meeting in August.

8. COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENTS

A. Comments

- Councilman Powers commented that the Council received the resignation message from Councilman Farner from an e-mail that he sent to Nancy Christman, SJRWMD. Councilman Powers said the Council will miss him. He stated they would need to get another Council Member appointed.
- Councilman Nicholson commented that they need to get a plaque for Councilman Farner's service and commitment to the HCOLRC. The other Council Members agreed.
- Chairman Goerner stated that the July meeting is canceled, and the next meeting will be held on August 5, 2011.

B. Discussion of Next Scheduled Meeting: August 5, 2011

- Chairman Goerner discussed with Nancy Christman, SJRWMD, to have a presentation by:
 - 1) David Walker, SJRWMD, on the next fiscal year's budget for the Oklawaha River Basin; and
 - 2) the Council will provide direction on the November 2011 annual report to the contractor.

9. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:53 am