

**FINAL**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
of the  
HARRIS CHAIN OF LAKES RESTORATION COUNCIL  
September 22, 2017**

The regular meeting of the Harris Chain of Lakes Restoration Council (Council) was held at 9:00 a.m. on August 11, 2017 at the Lake County Board of County Commissioner Chambers, 315 West Main Street, Tavares, Florida.

**Council Members Present**

Robert Johnson, Chairman  
Skip Goerner, Vice-Chairman  
Keith Truenow

**Council Members Absent**

Don Nicholson, Secretary  
John Stump  
Stephanie Bishop  
Sid Grow  
Vacant, Attorney  
Vacant, Physician

**TAG Members Present**

Ryan Hamm for Dennis Renfro (Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, FWC)  
Mike Perry (Lake County Water Authority, LCWA)  
Kevin Coyne (Florida Department of Environmental Protection, DEP)

**TAG Members Absent**

Mark Hoyer (University of Florida, UF)  
Rolland Fulton (St. Johns River Water Management District, SJRWMD)

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Johnson called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

**2. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chairman Johnson called for a moment silence. The Pledge of Allegiance followed.

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

Chairman Johnson called the roll.

**4. REMINDER FOR OTHERS TO SIGN IN & FILL OUT SPEAKER CARDS**

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Minutes from August 11, 2017 were tabled for no quorum.

**6. PRESENTATIONS / ACTION ITEMS**

\* Action items requested by councilmembers are in bold.

**A. Review of First Draft of 2017 Annual Report, Denis Frazel, Harris Council Administrative Support**

Denis Frazel, Harris Council Administrative Support, presented the first draft of the Harris Council Annual Report. Mr. Frazel noted that since there was no quorum Council could not vote on any changes, but could make recommendations for inclusion in the next draft of the Annual Report. Mr. Frazel reviewed all sections of the draft report, including major comments provided by Council on the initial draft.

Specific comments are as follows:

**Under Section 4.1 Harris Chain of Lakes Restoration**, Council requested a table, and discussion of agency expenditures on Lake Apopka and the Harris Chain of Lakes.

Chairman Johnson requested letters to Senator Baxley from SJRWMD, LCWA, and FWCC be removed from the report. Vice-chairman Goerner supported including the letters in the report.

**Under Section 4.2. Lake Level Water Management**, 2017 recommendations, Council made a new recommendation, to closely maintain the Harris Chain of Lakes regulation schedule hurricane season.

Councilman Grow recommended deleting Council recommendation connecting Lake Apopka to the north shore, and replacing it with text from the Harris Council Plan letter of 2016.

**Under Section 4.3. Aquatic Vegetation**, Council prepared a new recommendation to support expanded efforts and funding for invasive aquatic plant management.

**Under Section 5, Funded Project by Partners**, Councilman Grow, in written comments, requested the SJRWMD to make clearer the Enclosure 2 “Funded Lake Apopka and Upper Ocklawaha River Basin Projects October 2017-September 2018” information that the Council received at the 8/11/17 Council meeting. This Enclosure 2 project list shows approx. \$17,208,000 in funding with the term “Legislative” as the funding source. It is very unclear what is Legislative funding and what is Ad Valorem funding thru SJRWMD.

In addition, Councilman Grow noted in the July 8, 2016 Council meeting minutes there was a request to provide a list of the projects for Lake Apopka the District was to fund from the \$5,000,000 the Legislature approved for the 2016-2017 FY. The Council was told at 8/11/17 Council meeting the Legislature provided an additional \$3,000,000 for Lake Apopka project for the 2017-2018 FY budget.

Finally, at the March 3, 2017 Council meeting SJRWMD distributed an action item list with item number 8 requesting a listing of Legislative funding vs. Ad Valorem funding for Lake Apopka projects. This action item #8 disappeared from the list. As of the Oct. 2017 Council meeting this request is 15 mos. old and the Council has no information on how the Legislative money for any Fiscal Year is to be spent.

Under Section 6, Non-funded Projects by Partners, Mr. Frazel reported he was going to expand the project descriptions, if possible, with assistance from TAG.

Mr. Frazel discussed the Executive Summary noting bulleted recommendations would be updated with comments provided during the meeting and presented in the second draft in October. Mr. Frazel also suggested using a photo overlay of the Harris Chain of Lakes for the cover of the Annual Report.

## **B. Discussion of Hurricane Irma, Harris Council Members**

Councilman Truenow discussed the impacts to his agricultural operation from Hurricane Irma, noting the amount of water with this event had not been seen in over 40 years. The hurricane was personally catastrophic to Councilman Truenow, as a levee breach completely inundated his property, ruining an estimated \$4 million worth of production. Councilman Truenow reported that when the levee breached, it took 3 days to fill up his property, and he now has a nutrient problem in addition to the flooding. Councilman Truenow was disappointed that no one from SJRWMD had contacted him about the levee breach.

Chairman Johnson questioned whether any water had been pumped out of the north shore. Mr. Perry noted he had spoken with John Richmond, SJRWMD, who confirmed moving water from the north shore into Lake Apopka, but did not know the exact volumes of water pumped. Mr. Perry discussed problems associated with the storm, including limited supplies of alum, which in turn limited how much water could be treated in the NuRF. Vice-chairman Goerner indicated he had many questions about water movements but that no one was available to answer them from SJRWMD. Mr. Perry discussed other impacts from the storm, including masses of vegetation and sediment coming down the waterways. Low dissolved oxygen also created a fish kill condition.

Mr. Perry showed water level graphs of Lakes Eustis, Harris and Dora indicating the lakes were near or below regulation schedule prior to the storm. Councilman Truenow suggested July flows should have been adjusted prior to the storm. Vice-chairman Goerner suggested if more water was released sooner it would have been less damaging.

Vice-chairman Goerner noted about 30 trees had fallen across his canal, and that it will be difficult and expensive to remove them. Chairman Johnson expressed concern over how much sediment and nutrients flowed from north shore to Lake Apopka. Councilman Truenow questioned how much material, if any, moved from cells F and G back into Lake Apopka. Mr. Perry reported nutrient levels of over 600 in waters moving through the NuRF.

Chairman Johnson queried Vice-chairman Goerner about the schedule in the 4 Rivers Manual (Master Water Control Manual of the Four Rivers Basin Project produced by the Corps of Engineers in 1993) and whether SJRWMD changed the schedule in the manual. Vice-chairman Goerner noted the manual's stated priority is flood control, indicating he believed SJRWMD put Lake County at risk by not following the plan. Mr. Perry noted when water did exceed regulation levels prior to the storm SJRWMD appeared to do everything it could. **Vice-chairman Goerner requested to see data on any pumping from the north shore associated with the hurricane.**

Mr. Perry reported LCWA was in the process of removing trees from the Apopka Beauclair Canal. The goal with tree removal is to make sure there is both navigation and conveyance. Chairman Johnson asked what effect the Silver River had on the Harris Chain of Lakes. Mr. Perry noted

conveyance is the issue, and the US Army Corps of Engineers is responsible for Silver River and Ocklawaha River maintenance.

## **COUNCIL & AGENCY QUESTIONS & ANSWERS**

### **A. Agency Updates**

Kevin Coyne, FDEP, had no updates for the month.

### **7. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Carey Baker, Lake County property appraiser, discussed the Harris Chain of Lakes Restoration Council noting it was an independent voice for what occurs in the Harris Chain of Lakes, and that it was important for the legislature to know what is going on. Mr. Baker expressed his disappointment that SJRWMD technical staff were not at the Council meeting. Mr. Baker queried Council and TAG on the operation of the LCWA nutrient reduction facility (NuRF), and whether anything could be done to mitigate flows in Lake Beauclair, including treating with alum. Mr. Perry noted the lake could be treated with alum at a cost of approximately \$100,000.

Mr. Baker queried Council on the regulatory releases in the Harris Chain of Lakes and how they compared to previous years. Mr. Perry provided graphs of lake levels, noting regulatory releases were made in response to rainfall events, but that the 10-12 inches of rainfall that occurred statewide during Hurricane Irma overwhelmed the system. Council discussed whether more water should have been released sooner. Mr. Perry noted lake levels had been dropped below the regulatory schedule prior to the storm.

Mr. Baker discussed the Lake County legislative delegation and the importance of having the delegation made aware of current activities on Lake Apopka and recommendations on the future of Lake Apopka. Vice-chairman Goerner indicated restoration priorities had changed, yet he viewed the connection of the north shore marsh to Lake Apopka as essential.

### **8. COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENTS**

Vice-chairman Goerner queried Mike Perry about the LCWA response letter to the Harris Council's Senator Baxley OPPAGA request letter. Mr. Perry reported he drafted the letter that was presented to the LCWA Board before final submission. Vice-chairman Goerner questioned the expense of funds discussed in the letter. Mr. Perry noted he could provide a table specifically detailing all expenditures discussed in the letter. Mr. Perry was confident the letter was factual and could provide the necessary documents to support his statements.

Chairman Johnson discussed a letter from University of Florida Vice-president Payne to SJRWMD Executive Director Dr. Ann Shortelle regarding Dr. Dan Canfield's presentation at the August 2017 Council meeting. Chairman Johnson noted he had submitted a letter to Vice-president Payne requesting clarification on his statements.

Vice-chairman Goerner, Chairman Johnson, and Councilman Truenow discussed the OPPAGA request letter, and their interaction with Dr. Canfield, noting their decisions to sign the letter were their own and were not coerced by anyone.

### **9. REQUESTS FOR ACTION**

- **Vice-chairman Goerner requested to see data on any pumping from the north shore associated with the hurricane.**
- **Vice-chairman Goerner requested personal addresses of council members be removed from the Harris Chain of Lakes Restoration Council website.**

**10. ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 11:44 AM.