

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

The regular meeting of the Harris Chain of Lakes Restoration Council (Council) was held at 9:05 a.m. on September 14, 2018 at the Lake County Board of County Commissioner Chambers, 315 West Main Street, Tavares, Florida.

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

3. COUNCIL ROLL CALL

Chairman Grow called the roll.

Council members present

Sid Grow, Chairman
Keith Truenow, Vice-Chairman
Don Nicholson
Stephanie Bishop
Wade Boyette
Skip Goerner
Robert Johnson
John Stump

Council members absent

Joe Dunn

TAG Member present

Kevin Coyne
Ryan Hamm
Mark Hoyer
Rolland Fulton
Mike Perry

TAG Members absent

Ryan Hamm
FDOT
ACOE

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

August 3, 2018 were unanimously approved.

5. **PRESENTATION**

Water depth and water quality in Lake Apopka, Karl Havens, PhD., Director, Florida Sea Grant Program, Professor, University of Florida/IFAS

Dr. Havens provided an overview of his research, noting the intent of his study was to determine if variation in depth can affect limnology of shallow Florida lakes. The study was not a test of the efficacy of restoration; it was a case study of climate variability effects. Dr. Havens used data developed by SJRWMD from 1999-2016 on the Harris Chain of Lakes. The dataset was originally used to examine zooplankton and phytoplankton.

Dr. Havens noted he was interested in climatic change and needed 3 wet and 3 dry periods of data for analyses. The data showed correlations with transparency (light penetration) and depth and inverse correlations between chlorophyll, total nitrogen (TN), and total phosphorus (TP) and depth. Dr. Havens concluded this relationship occurred in all Harris lakes tested, though it was strongest in Lake Apopka. Droughts and extreme low water resulted in markedly reduced water quality in Lake Apopka during 1999-2017, as well as in the other Harris Chain of Lakes. Similar results have been obtained in other shallow lakes world-wide.

In general, Dr. Havens suggested that during drought, depth and volume decline, fish, nutrients and algae are concentrated, and blooms become more severe. Dr. Havens then expanded his study to include additional data extending from 1985 to 2018. Mann-Kendall non-parametric trends tests showed overall significant decreases in TP, TN and chlorophyll, and a significant increase in transparency (secchi depth) despite short-term increases in those parameters during drought.

Dr. Havens concluded there were statistically-significant long-term declines in TP, TN and chlorophyll in the 1985-2018 dataset, and increased secchi depth. Comparing high water periods only, Dr. Havens noted improved water quality during last three high water periods compared to an earlier high-water period. Dr. Havens reiterated droughts are a problem, therefore water managers should consider drought in shallow lakes as plans are developed.

Council member Goerner queried Dr. Havens about what would be a good average coverage for submerged aquatic vegetation in the lake. Dr. Havens responded he did not have that information, However, he noted other research has showed Vallisneria will grow even in turbid water. Dr. Havens suggested sediment composition is an important consideration be he did not have an answer to what would be a healthy lake.

Council member Johnson indicated he believed any changes in nutrients were just due to dilution. Dr. Havens reiterated his conclusions that there were statistically significant decreases in nutrients and chlorophyll and significant increases in light penetration over the long term despite short term fluctuations in lake level.

6. **FOR INFORMATION**

Harris Chain of Lakes Restoration Council First Draft of 2018 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 reviewed all sections of the draft report, including major comments provided by Council on the initial draft. Mr. Frazel noted the first draft included the previous year's cover and solicited suggestions or photos for the new report. Council member Bishop suggested a bass photo and inquired whether SJRWMD had new photos that could be placed on the cover.

Mr. Frazel noted he had received no comments on the first draft from Council but had made some revisions based on input from TAG members. Under Section 3. Meetings and Presentations, the meetings information narrative was converted to a tabular format to include meeting date, attendees, presentations and Council actions.

Council member Goerner, Council member Stump, and Mike Perry, Lake County Water Authority (LCWA) discussed Double Run swamp as an alternative conveyance during storm events. Council member Goerner suggested revising the recommendation under Lake Leve Management to include Double Run as an alternative to be investigated. The revised recommendation is as follows:

- Investigate or study the feasibility of creating a secondary form of conveyance for water from Lake Apopka, to include the Double Run swamp.

Mr. Frazel noted comments from the second draft of the Annual Report would be accepted until October 2. Comments received by then would be added in tracked changes for review at the October 5 Council meeting.

7. AGENCY UPDATES

a. Lake County Water Authority

Mike Perry reviewed Lake Apopka water levels and spillway discharges, which are approaching regulation schedule. Mr. Perry also showed Lake Eustis, Lake Harris and Lake Dora water level noting both Lakes Eustis and Harris were below regulation schedule with Lake Dora levels decreasing closer to regulation schedule.

Mr. Perry reported on or about September 6, District staff were exercising the gates on the east pond of the nutrient reduction facility (NuRF) when a gate came off the guides. This resulted in a loss of ability to regulate discharge from the ponds into the Apopka Beauclair Canal. LCWA closed off all inflow to the facility and are drawing down the east pond to sheetpile to be installed. Any water that has to be discharge from Lake Apopka will have to go over the spillway, not through the NuRF until repairs are made.

Council member Johnson queried Mr. Perry about the cost of NuRF material removal. Mr. Perry reported the cost at several hundred dollars per pound as compared to the nearly \$500 per pound for a traditional stormwater system. Council discussed with Mr. Perry costs and options for nutrient removal.

b. St. Johns River Water Management District

Susan Davis, SJRWMD, provided a brief update on SJRWMD activities. Ms. Davis reported Harris Council-related expenses for the previous month, including Florida Administrative

Register notification, website staff support, posting agenda and meeting documents, and administrative support expenses. Ms. Davis noted the agenda and meeting documents are online, and the Harris Council website received 471 page views, and the SJRWMD meeting site received 28 page views in the previous month. Monthly page views are averaging 450.

On September 11 SJRWMD provided data to Council in response to a Council action item request. Ms. Davis reported the next SJRWMD Governing Board budget hearing was scheduled for September 25, and the next regular Governing Board meeting was scheduled October 9. Four news releases related to the Harris Chain of Lakes were provided to Council. The SJRWMD agency report was provided by Ms. Davis and is attached to these minutes.

Council member Bishop questioned how completed projects on the list that appear to be overbudget are funded. Ms. Lisa Kelley, Assistant Executive Director, SJRWMD, reported budget transfers are used to cover projects that are over budget with funds from projects that are completed under budget.

Chairman Grow noted he had sent SJRWMD an excel spread sheet of projects listed from the 2017 Annual Report and some projects were missing from the report. Ms. Kelley reported the list from the 2017 Annual Report included projects from other agencies that are not within the budget responsibility of SJRWMD. Ms. Kelley suggested Council query those agencies directly.

- c. Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Kevin Coyne reported he would provide relevant project information to Council administrative support.
- d. University of Florida
No comments

8. **PUBLIC COMMENTS (fill out speaker card and hand to a staff member prior to public comment period)**

Linda Moss, Venetian Village, discussed issues about muck and flocculent material in the waterways surrounding Venetian Village. Ms. Moss noted a boat trip on the Apopka-Beauclair Canal with elected and appointed officials to discuss sediment coming into and out the canals.

9. **COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENTS**

Chairman Grow showed copies of the advertisements placed in the Leesburg paper on Sunday and Thursday. Chairman Grow reported he would remove the Council vacancy information as the seats had been filled. Chairman Grow also noted he attended a review of the SJRWMD Doctors Lake Stormwater Improvement Projects and provided summaries, including funding for the three projects. He requested to be kept up to date as it would apply to the Harris Chain of Lakes.

Vice Chairman Truenow had no comments.

Secretary Nicholson had no comments.

Council member Goerner noted in the August meeting under Council comments he had stated the Council had no authority to resolve public issues. Council member Goerner suggested because of controversy with the Venetian Village canals a plan to address the muck should be developed, including sampling from inside the canal. Council member Goerner queried whether SJRWMD or LCWA could do that to identify where the material is coming from.

Council member Goerner expressed support for additional conveyance which would alleviate too much water being discharged through the AB Canal. Council member Goerner noted there seems to be a question and an argument about where the material is coming from; whether it is coming directly from the canal itself, or is it coming out of Lake Apopka. Council Member Goerner stated no one wants to take responsibility, and it should be resolved.

Mr. John Miklos, Chairman of the SJRWMD Governing Board stated determining hydrologically why the sediment is moving into the canals is more important than determining the source of the material. Mr. Miklos advised that Lake County, where the canals reside, needs to be part of the conversation. Mr. Miklos noted he is reaching out to Lake County officials and noted the initial fix and long-term management of the residential canals needs to be addressed, but the responsibility does not fall specifically to any of the regional agencies identified.

Council member Stump inquired as to who would have responsibility for any engineered structure in the AB Canal. Mr. Miklos suggested it would be a sovereign submerged land permitting issue with FDEP, and possibly the Army Corps of Engineers. Chairman Grow reported he had received a letter from the Army Corps of Engineers Tampa Office about the Venetian Village area and read the letter into the record. Chairman Grow also noted he had spoken with John Peres from the civil works division and agreed to talk by phone to Council about Corps of Engineers jurisdictions.

Council member Stump suggested before a feasibility study could be initiated one would need some prior testing, including the AB Canal hydrography. Mr. Miklos noted he is looking for more money for Lake Apopka, but as for the AB Canal issue, Lake County must be involved. Chairman Grow indicated he would like to be involved in those meetings.

Council member Johnson noted at LCWA there was a budget request for raising taxes, including \$1.5 million for supplemental hydrilla management and 2\$ million for alum purchases. Mr. Perry reported the LCWA Board has included funds for \$1.5 million for hydrilla management in the Harris Chain, and \$2.5 million to address Lake Yale loading.

Council member Johnson commented about Dr. Haller visiting the Harris Council to discuss herbicides and noted Mark Hoyer was also qualified to speak. Mr. Hoyer reported he had historically looked at hydrilla and impacts to fish and waterfowl. Mr. Hoyer noted he had also done much work on grass carp. He cautioned that while grass carp are effective at controlling hydrilla, bad consequences are possible.

Council member Bishop noted project lists were not included in the first draft annual report. Denis Frazel reported the projects listed in the 2017 report were discussed by Council during the course of the year. The projects discussed so far this year were included under Section 3. Meetings and Presentations. Council member Bishop suggested there should be a priority project

list and queried Chairman Grow as to how Council should proceed. Council member Bishop indicated support for priority projects is an effective use of the Annual Report. Chairman Grow noted projects in the 2017 Annual Report were fiscal year 2016 and 2017. Council member Bishop asked if Council is going to make just general statements or recommend specific projects.

Council member Goerner noted a discussion as to what is a viable project needs to be completed. Then perhaps a include a couple of paragraphs in support of projects that are still important. Council member Bishop supported recommendations on specific projects rather than general statements of support.

Council member Stump expressed an interest in revisiting the conveyance through the Double Run swamp. Council member Stump suggested there is a need to have a cursory look at conveyance and he and Council member Goerner could perhaps meet separately to discuss.

10. REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS REQUESTED DURING MEETING

Ms. Davis noted three action items from the previous meeting which had all been completed. Chairman Grow noted nametags had been requested by approved motion in May 2017. Ms. Davis noted there was some confusion as the source of funds for the nametags and requested clarification by motion that the name tags would be funded through the Harris Council budget. Chairman Grow moved that nametags be provided to Council with funding from the Council budget. The motion was seconded by Council member Stump. Motion was carried by a vote of 7-1. Council member Goerner was opposed.

11. DISCUSSION OF NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING.

Chairman Grow requested Nathalie Visscher be contacted to discuss hydrilla management. Council member Johnson suggested inviting Professor William Haller to discuss new herbicides and methods of control of hydrilla.

Chairman Grow noted there would be a conversation with the Corps of Engineers at 10 am, and Denis Frazel would present the next draft of the Annual Report. Chairman Grow requested Council to identify other items for the November meeting.

Council members- do you anticipate attending the next Harris Council meeting?

Council member Boyette would not be in attendance. Council member Goerner also indicated he may not be at the meeting.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 11:22 a.m.