

DRAFT

**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 9:02 a.m. on Apr. 5, 2019, 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 9:02 a.m.

2. INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Council Member Nicholson gave the invocation. The Pledge of Allegiance followed.

3. COUNCIL ROLL CALL

Chairman Grow called the roll.

Council Members present

Sid Grow, Chairman
Keith Truenow, Vice-Chairman
Stephanie Bishop
Joe Dunn
Skip Goerner
Don Nicholson
John Stump

Council Members absent

Robert Johnson, Secretary
Wade Boyette

Technical Advisory Group (TAG) Members present

Mike Perry, Lake County Water Authority (LCWA)
Ryan Hamm, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC)
Mark Hoyer, University of Florida (UF)
Mary Paulic, Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP)

TAG Members absent

Rolland Fulton, St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD)
Vacant, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT)
Vacant, Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE)

4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

A motion to approve the March 1, 2019, minutes was introduced by Council Member Don Nicholson, seconded by Council Member Joe Dunn. **THE MARCH 2019 COUNCIL MINUTES WERE UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.**

5. **FOR INFORMATION**

Update on FWC Hydrilla Control, Nathalie Visscher, FWC.

Nathalie Visscher, updated Council on the outcome of a series of workshops held throughout the state regarding aquatic plant management. FWC is now starting to develop habitat management plans for all lakes in Florida in an effort to improve the timing of herbicide application. FWC is also studying better ways to use mechanical harvesters, and is working to improve communication between FWC and stakeholders.

Ms. Visscher reviewed hydrilla treatments on Harris Chain lakes since July 1, 2018. In August 2018, 475 acres of Lake Harris were treated by boat with the herbicide Aquastrike, focusing on navigation areas and an area near Long Island. Ms. Visscher noted a major infestation throughout Little Lake Harris, with 640 acres treated by boat with Aquastrike in August 2018. The treatment focus was on navigation channels for temporary relief. Little Lake Harris was treated again in October 2018, with a whole lake treatment of Diquat covering 890 acres to reduce the biomass.

In November and December 2018, and January 2019, Little Lake Harris follow-up treatments were made using Sonar AS, covering 2,700 acres. A secondary treatment with SonarOne pellets was conducted on areas still containing high levels of hydrilla. Ms. Visscher noted the pellet treatment did have some transient impacts on Spadderdock but no impact on *Vallisneria*.

The north side of Lake Eustis, covering 470 acres was treated with Aquastrike in September and October 2018. Ms. Visscher reported the total treatment expenditures to date were over \$1.5 million.

Ms. Visscher discussed the proposed spring treatment schedule, facilitated through an additional \$1.5 million for this fiscal year provided by the Lake County Water Authority. Treatments are planned all along the north shore of Lake Dora, around the main access points and navigation areas of Lake Harris, navigation areas around the south side of Lake Eustis, and around the Herlong Park boat ramp and canal in Lake Griffin. On Lake Beauclair, the mouth of the Apopka canal will be treated for navigation use, and on Lake Yale, the south end by Marsh Park and East boat ramp will be treated. Once these treatments are completed all lakes will be re-mapped, and new stakeholder meetings will be held in the fall to develop the new treatment schedule.

Ms. Visscher shared a series of FWC web links that provide information available to the public on the weekly schedule of operations, as well as information on the status of individual lakes. Ms. Visscher presented several examples of individual lake web pages, noting it is a statewide system for all lakes undergoing aquatic plant management. Council Member Dunn inquired why there was no treatment of Lake Apopka. Ms. Visscher noted the south end and part of the north shore of Lake Apopka would be treated but that the funding comes from a separate budget dedicated to Lake Apopka.

Chairman Grow inquired about any additional information from the stakeholder meetings. Ms. Visscher noted a mix of responses from many user groups and reiterated FWC goals to improve communication and promote the expansion of native plant communities. Vice-Chairman Truenow inquired about a mechanical harvester on Lake Yale. Ms. Visscher reported it was not part of her program, but that she understood the harvester was being used for tussock removal. Vice-Chairman Truenow identified the contractor as Aquatic Environments Southeast out of South Carolina, and expressed concern over the apparently truncated contracting process.

6. AGENCY UPDATES

a. LCWA

Mike Perry, LCWA, reported no comments

b. SJRWMD

Jim Troiano, SJRWMD, updated Council on SJRWMD activities, reporting 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. Mr. Troiano discussed the upcoming SJRWMD Governing Board meeting and stated he would email the agenda to the Council when it is published. One item of interest was tentative approval of a work order for the Lake Apopka north shore. Mr. Troiano noted the District had also provided ten emails to Council on SJRWMD news releases. The complete SJRWMD update is included as backup material to the minutes.

Mr. Troiano provided a project update on dredging in Lake Apopka, noting dredging began April 1. Dredging was expected to take four weeks, with a goal to connect the sump to the mouth of the Apopka-Beauclair Canal.

c. Ryan Hamm, FWC, reported on the Lake Yale mechanical harvesting, noting floating tussocks impacting shoreline habitat and navigation will be removed to allow for more beneficial rooted native vegetation to grow.

Mr. Hamm noted that since December 1, 2018, the FWC trophy bass catch program has recorded nine from Lake Griffin, ten from Lake Harris, two from Lake Dora, seven from Lake Eustis, and one from Lake Yale.

Council Member Nicholson inquired about the economic value of the recreational fishery. Mr. Hamm reported FWC has a pilot project to study that economic impact in the Kissimmee River. Mike Perry noted Lake County, through the economic development council tracks those benefits to the community in Lake County.

Mr. Hamm reported the installation of underwater lights on the Hickory Point Pier were installed in partnership with LCWA. These are the first lights to be installed in freshwater in Florida

Council Member Goerner noted increased fishing action with striped bass. Mr. Hamm indicated it was probable these fish were moving from Lake Harris or Eustis to Lake Griffin. Council Member Goerner also noted some type of extensive hatch of shad in certain areas. Mr. Hamm could not say if they were shad, but that the timing was appropriate.

- d. Mark Hoyer, UF, reported, Dr. James Leary had been hired by UF to work on submerged aquatic vegetation. Mr. Hoyer provided a biography of Dr. Leary from the LAKEWATCH newsletter, and **requested it be forwarded to Council by Council administrative support.**

7. **REVIEW OF ACTION ITEMS* REQUESTED DURING MEETING**

*Action Items are highlighted in bold in the text

Provide link to “A Beginner’s Guide to Water Management-Aquatic Plants in Florida Lakes” to Council for review.

Provide LAKEWATCH newsletter with biography of Dr. Leary to Council.

Provide hard copies of the Action Item List to Council and next Council meeting.

Council Member Stump requested that the project spreadsheet be updated and provided to Council.

Mr. Troiano to resend dredge tailing constituent data provided to Annuvia to Council.

8. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Peter Tuite, Howey-in-the-Hills resident, expressed his concern regarding hydrilla in Little Lake Harris. Mr. Tuite wanted to make the case for using grass carp for control instead of spraying herbicides, citing success in South Carolina. Council Member Goerner noted Mark Hoyer could review the issue with him. Mr. Tuite reported he had read Mr. Hoyer’s papers.

Mark Hoyer noted the difficulty in finding the magic number for grass carp populations. If the number are too low, there is no effect. If they are too high, then all aquatic plants, including native plants, could be wiped out. With grass carp, if vegetation is completely eliminated, it takes a long time to recover. His recommendation was that if a recreational fishery is desired then grass carp should not be used.

Sal Gallelli, resident in Howey-in-the-Hills, reiterated comments from Peter Tuite. Mr. Galelli suggested a sweet spot for aquatic plant control should be found to minimize putting chemicals in the water.

9. **COUNCIL MEMBER COMMENTS**

a. **Chairman Grow**

The Chairman asked Jim who maintains District website and Mr. Troiano responded the SJRWMD managed the site for the Council. Chairman Grow discussed the Council website and requested Mr. Troiano to have Dr. Rolland Fulton's name removed as the SJRWMD TAG Member, as he was not attending Council meetings. Mr. Troiano noted Dr. Fulton is the TAG Member assigned by SJRWMD. Chairman Grow also asked to have Dr. Fulton's name be stricken from the monthly agenda.

Lisa Kelley, Assistant Executive Director, SJRWMD, requested clarification from the Council as to whether this was an individual request or from the whole Council. Ms. Kelley noted Dr. Fulton was a duly assigned TAG Member from SJRWMD as stipulated in the statues. Ms. Kelley suggested the Council should consider as a whole whether to remove all of the names or as a Council come to another decision. Ms. Kelley tried to verify if this was an individual request or a collective request from the Council.

Council Member Goerner expressed concern over the lack of immediate access to TAG Members if they did not attend Council meetings. Ms. Kelley noted SJRWMD has consistently provided the appropriate staff Member at Council meetings to address relevant issues on the Council agenda. Ms. Kelley noted there was nothing on the April agenda that required Dr. Fulton to be in attendance.

Council Member Bishop suggested adding the term varies rather than naming a particular person. Ms. Kelley noted SJRWMD has named a particular individual per state statute. Council Member Bishop recommended the SJRWMD reassess the last six months and reassign the name with someone who attends the meeting. Ms. Kelley offered to discuss the issue with SJRWMD staff.

Council Member Goerner suggested discussing the issue with the state attorney general for an opinion. Chairman Grow suggested waiting until next month to hear back from SJRWMD before proceeding further. **This item was tabled until next month.**

Chairman Grow inquired about the status of Council Member name tags. Mr. Perry reported he has now been tasked with procuring the name tags.

b. **Vice-chairman Truenow**

No comments

c. **Council Member Nicholson**

Council Member Nicholson inquired if FDEP is involved in prescribed burns. Ms. Paulic reported she did not have direct knowledge of FDEP involvement. Mr. Perry noted Perry noted many agencies have properties managed through controlled burns, and the Division of Forestry is the agency that regulates controlled burns.

d. Council Member Bishop

Council Member Bishop suggested clarifying information on TAG representation when Ms. Kelley reports back to Council. Specifically, does it need to be the same person at every meeting?

e. Council Member Dunn

No comments.

f. Council Member Goerner

Council Member Goerner expressed his thanks to Jim Troiano for monthly updates he is providing. Council Member Goerner expressed concern about raising the Lake Apopka dikes by 18” and whether it will increase leakage between the lake and the north shore. **Council Member Goerner** requested someone to discuss the effects of raising Lake Apopka and how citizens are protected. Chairman Grow noted Dr. Marzolf had discussed with Council and the Friends of Lake Apopka the gating system to control water. However, Council Member Goerner still wanted to understand the relationship about where the water is being placed over time. Ms. Kelley suggested the video presentations previously made to the SJRWMD Governing Board, as well as the Harris Council could be provided. Ms. Kelley also offered to make another full presentation to the Council, or if it was an individual request, SJRWMD could meet individually. If two or more members wished to meet, we could do so after properly noticing the meeting.

Ms. Kelley observed that there seems to be many questions after the project has already started. Ms. Kelley noted Mr. Troiano, as part of his monthly update, informs Council of projects up for the review and approval from the SJRWMD’s Governing Board. This is the opportunity for both the public and Council to comment on projects before they are approved. Council Member Goerner stated there have been many questions that he has that have never been answered for him in the past as well as this being a real threat to the public.

Council Member Goerner inquired about a project along the Beauclair Canal. Ms. Kelley reported this was not an SJRWMD project and we are not the ones to give the details about the project. This is a project that the SJRWMD has not permitted. Ms. Kelley stated the SJRWMD was not currently reviewing projects related to the Double Run Swamp. **Chairman Grow suggested having the SJRWMD Governing Board presentation on the levee repair be emailed back to the Council for review.**

g. Council Member Stump

Council Member Stump requested that the Council project spreadsheet be updated and provided to Council. Council Member Stump inquired whether the request for dredge tailing constituent data from SJRWMD was provided to Annuvia. Mr. Troiano noted SJRWMD had responded back through email. **Mr. Troiano agreed to resend the information Council.**

10. DISCUSSION OF NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING.

Chairman Grow presented an overhead requesting a TAG presentation on phosphorus removal associated with septic systems along the Harris Chain of Lakes. The request is attached as a supporting document to the minutes. Mike Perry is the point person on this effort.

Chairman Grow also requested an update on an SJRWMD contract with Phosphorus Free Solutions to remove phosphorus from Lake Apopka that was approved by the SJRWMD Governing Board in November 2018.

Chairman Grow requested the SJRWMD Governing Board presentation on the levee repair be emailed to the Council for review.

Mary Paulic requested clarification on the TAG presentation. Chairman Grow noted Kevin Coyne had previously agreed to discuss the distribution of septic tanks in the Harris Chain of Lakes. Ms. Paulic noted septic systems are regulated by the Department of Health (DOH). FDEP only regulates package facilities processing more the 10,000 gallons of wastewater. Chairman Grow requested FDEP to possibly engage with DOH about septic systems. Chairman Grow wants to know what the Sustainable Water Investment Group "SWIG" is going to do about reducing the phosphorous going into Lake Apopka.

11. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 10:49 a.m.