



**Wekiva River Basin
Commission**

**Wekiva River Basin Commission
Meeting Minutes
July 28 2006
1:30PM – 5:00 PM**

Embassy Suites Hotel
225 East Altamonte Drive
Altamonte Springs, FL 32701

The meeting was called to order by Senator Lee Constantine at 1:46 p.m. Roll was taken and the following members were in attendance. A quorum was present.

Senator Lee Constantine, Chair – Senator, Florida Senate District 22
Mayor James Yatsuk – City of Mount Dora Mayor
Mr. William Battaglia – Battaglia Fruit Company
Ms. Lynette Jacobs for Commissioner Teresa Jacobs – Orange County Commissioner
Commissioner Catherine Hanson – Lake County Commissioner
Commissioner Brenda Carey – Seminole County Commissioner
Mayor John Land – City of Apopka Mayor
Commissioner Steve Wolfram – City of Altamonte Springs Commissioner
Mr. Allan Keen – Chairman, Orlando/Orange County Expressway Authority
Mr. Jerry McCollum for Mr. Gary Johnson – Executive Director, Seminole County Expressway Authority
Mr. Jody Lee for Mr. Charles Aller – Director, Office of Agricultural Water Policy, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Dr. Bonita Sorensen – Deputy State Health Officer, Florida Department of Health
Mr. Kevin Thibault – District Secretary, Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Ms. Vivian Garfein – District Director, Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Mr. Kirby Green – Executive Director, St. Johns River Water Management District
Mr. Harold Barley – Executive Director, METROPLAN ORLANDO

ON A MOTION MADE AND SECONDED, the December 15, 2005 minutes were accepted.

The status report for the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services was presented by Mr. Jody Lee. It was noted that programs are in place to cover row crops. The statewide vegetable and agronomical crop manual has been adopted, still awaiting the nursery manual. They are expecting it to go to rule making in the next month and have it adopted by the end of the year. The Agricultural Department is working on a statewide sod manual that will cover any sod operations that should also be adopted by the end of the year. The Department is in the early stages of an equine manual to cover any horse operations in the basin. This is a growing industry in the state. The presentation was concluded and the floor was opened for discussion.

The status report for the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) was presented by Mr. Kevin Thibault. It was noted an environmental study is being partnered with the Expressway Authority. Public meetings are being held to get public input on what potential corridors could work through the river basin. So far, meetings have been held in Sanford and Apopka and one is scheduled next week in Tavares.

The Orlando/Orange County Expressway Authority status report was given. Mr. Allen Keen noted that the two public meetings in Lake County and Mount Dora were very well attended with over 700 people in attendance. Good discussion was held and a lot of comment cards were received. A workshop is scheduled next Tuesday night in Mount Dora to hear the Lake County comments. The Orlando/Orange County Expressway Authority has coordinated heavily with the stakeholders in advance of the workshops. The PD&E process is moving along well.

Mr. Mike Snyder, Executive Director, gave a presentation on the alternative alignments being done in Orange, Lake and Seminole Counties. It was noted the Expressway Authority has not made a decision regarding the alignments in their particular area; nor has Lake County or Orange County.

An update was given regarding the alignment concepts. The presentation was divided into four segments, Wekiva Parkway, Lake County West, Lake County East and Seminole County. Points of summary were covered dealing with alignment concepts, the increased traffic in these areas, alternative alignments, landscaping, alignment differential in the system interchange and the next steps to be taken. It was noted this is a wide-open process and the Expressway Authority has not yet made decisions regarding the alignments in these counties.

It was reported they have acquired the new garden cold parcel (inaudible on tape) that has turned into a mitigation bank. The Orlando/Orange County Expressway Authority has also acquired 200 acres of scrub. The Neighborhood Lakes parcel is still being discussed. The Seminole Springs parcel is still in limbo; the property owners of this parcel maintain the position that they are not going to do anything with it at this time.

Chairman Constantine, thanked Mr. Snyder for his excellent presentation and his collaboration with the FDOT and various agencies and individuals on this project.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission update was given. Members were asked to review the handout packets. No one was available to speak on behalf of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. The floor was opened for discussion.

A presentation was given by Mr. Rob Mattson, Environmental Scientist, St. John's River Water Management District (SJRWMD). The committee was advised that a PLRG (Pollution Load Reduction Goal) is how much you have to reduce the in-flow of a pollutant to make the water body healthy. The PLRG provides guidance to the Department of Health as they work on septic tanks. It provides guidance to Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) as they work on the waste water rule and to local governments as they work on their storm water plans. The Wekiva River has been a river of great conservation concern for this area for many years. St. John's River Water Management District needed to do a PLRG for the Rock Springs Run and the Wekiva River. Like the Wekiva River, the Rock Springs Run is a spring-fed stream and has some of the same water quality issues affecting it. Results showed both bodies of water were hard-water, bicarbonate streams, high mineral content, high alkaline, usually low color, and very clear water streams. High algae and nitrate content were also present.

The levels are close to being high enough to be toxic to the catsflies, frogs, toads and mosquito fish. The high phosphorus content affects the level of algae. People can have reactions to it. It floats on top of the water. There is some ecosystem dysfunction due to it. Orange County data revealed a problem with total coliform impairment. Nitrate targets for the PLRG (Pollution Load Reduction Goal), need to be 200-300mg/L. The threshold is 250mg/L, if you go above 250mg/L you will run into problems. 60mg/L for phosphorus is the threshold. With the new nitrate threshold St.John's River Water Management District would like to achieve 216mg/L for Wekiva River and 221mg/L for Rock Springs Run, this is based on keeping nitrate under 250mg/L ninety percent of the time. For Phosphorus, SJRWMD is targeting 59mg/L for Wekiva and 61mg/L for Rock Springs Run. The target for coliform is 2400 colonies per 100m/L 100 percent of the time. We felt these were good targets as both the Wekiva River and the Rock Springs Run are part of a very important aquatic preserve, both state parks and state park reserve. Both are outstanding waters that get extra protection under water quality rules. Wekiva River is one of the 3 national wild and scenic rivers in Florida. The Wekiva River System has been the subject of two special legislative acts: The Protection Act of 1988 and the Parkway and Protection Act of 2004. For the past several years Florida has been investing \$2.5 million a year in spring's protection efforts under the Florida Springs Protection Act.

Ms. Marlene Conaway gave a report for the Florida Department of Community Affairs. It was noted there are five jurisdictions to work through the Wekiva plans. The model should be able to help jurisdictions with implementations. Mapping is critical in completing the report and some jurisdictions have not yet completed their maps. Grants need to be provided to assist some smaller jurisdictions with technical assistance support.

Ms. Christianne Ferraro gave a report for the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. A rulemaking schedule is in place regarding primary, secondary and tertiary protection zones. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection is in sync with the St. John's River Management Project. Work is being done to finalize the total maximum daily load.

Ms. Bonita Sorensen gave an update for the Florida Department of Health. The Department of Health has been charged to conduct an in-house study. Research Review and Advisory Committee (RRAC) provided objectives and specific appropriation language. The study will begin soon and will have less than 12 months to be completed. The Florida Department of Health will work with various agencies and the public, in an effort to protect the Wekiva River. It was reported that Jennifer Fitzwater, Florida Department of Environmental Protection, appropriated \$250,000 to conduct a study to determine nitrate impacts to the Wekiva River Basin. Nitrate sources and percentages will be looked at. This study will provide accurate information regarding nitrates in the study area. The need to look at different areas within the Basin during the study was noted. Public members will possibly need assistance and grants to replace septic tanks when these studies are completed. Grants used for impact fees were mentioned, as a possible funding source. The need to look at the entire area, size and impact of various subdivisions was noted. The Research Review & Advisory Committee (RRAC) will meet often during this process to make sure it is getting the best product and discussing the issues that arise. Chairman Constantine requested that the RRAC not limit their study to 3 subdivisions and provide the commission with an update at the next meeting. It was stated that additional funding may be necessary if more than 3 subdivisions are studied. Any concerns will be carried to the RRAC.

Mr. Phil Laurien, Executive Director, East Central Florida Regional Planning Commission reported his staff would like to create a map of all development in the basin. The objective of the Wekiva Report was to achieve clustering of housing. He noted Conservation subdivisions preserve open space and protect natural resources without increasing density. Traditional neighborhood designs create communities like Mt. Dora, Eustis and downtown Apopka. Cities should be cities and countryside should be countryside. Conservation Subdivisions

and Traditional Neighborhood designs are two compact design alternatives. Conservation subdivisions typically save 50% open space, and are normally used for densities of one (1) unit per acre, or less. The six-step process was summarized for creating a Conservation subdivision. The use of open space for willow trees as an energy source, water recycling and fertilizer was mentioned. Conservation subdivisions should be an equal opportunity alternative to large lots in the Wekiva study area. The ECFRPC will draft model language for the City of Eustis that other governments can use.

Mrs. Nesler mentioned her concern regarding the Wekiva Parkway and how it affects her 62 acres of land with artesian springs flowing to the north and south where they plan to put the interchange. This interchange would interfere with the aquifer. She said, no one came and looked at the land or contacted them to question whether or not this parcel of land should be used. They found out when two men came to the property taking core samples that they were using this parcel for the interchange. Three of the four choices presented today for the interchange will negatively impact the artesian springs. Mrs. Nesler was advised she had presented this information to the correct people and they would be addressing this issue. Kevin Thibault, of the DOT, responded to Mrs. Nesler's concerns.

The next meeting with transportation issues and septic issues would be best to be slated for mid- to late November or early December. Chairman Constantine will begin working with the Regional Planning Council regarding appropriate times.

In conclusion, it was noted agencies are aware of and responding to the Wekiva Study. The Research Review & Advisory Committee (RRAC) is planning to review the effects of septic tanks from three subdivisions at their September 14th meeting. The meeting is open to the public. Representative Hayes noted the Commission will have the opportunity to go on a tour of the Wekiva River on Monday, August 7th at 10:00am. It was also announced a 28-person commercial boat trip, down the Wekiva River, is in the plans. The ECFRPC is working on the available dates and will get back to the committee regarding the date and time.

ON A MOTION MADE AND SECONDED, the meeting was adjourned at 4:37 p.m.

Respectively submitted,

Diane Davis for Andrea Fant
Recording Secretary