

LAKE BELT MITIGATION COMMITTEE

Meeting Summary

South Florida Water Management District
3301 Gun Club Road, (Bldg. B-1, 3rd Floor, Storch Room)
West Palm Beach, Florida 33406

This meeting was conducted as a Zoom meeting

Thursday, August 18, 2022 9:30 AM

1. Call to Order by Jennifer Reynolds, Chair

- a) Meeting began at 9:30 AM

2. Attendees

a) Committee Members

1. Jennifer Reynolds, SFWMD
2. Miles Meyer, USFWS (Teleconference)
3. John Fellows, USACE (Teleconference)
4. Veronica Fasselt, USEPA (Teleconference)
5. Ed Smith, DEP (Teleconference)
6. Jason Hight, FWCC (Teleconference)
7. Craig Grossenbacher, DERM (Teleconference)
8. Matt Morrison, SFWMD Alternate
9. Jeff Rosenfeld, MDLPA (ex-officio)

b) Other meeting attendees

1. Steve Coughlin, SFWMD
2. Lourdes Elias, SFWMD
3. Rory Feeney, SFWMD
4. Emily Johnson, SFWMD
5. Lucine Dadrian, SFWMD
6. Tom MacVicar, MDLPA

c) Other teleconference attendees - Zoom registration list attached.

3. Approval of Minutes

Draft LBMC Meeting Minutes from March 3, 2022 were reviewed by the Committee members. No changes were requested. The minutes were moved for approval by Ed Smith, with a second by Veronica Fasselt. The minutes were approved by the Committee.

4. Committee Nomination of Vice Chair – Jennifer Reynolds

Miles Meyer was nominated to be Vice Chair. The nomination was moved for approval by Ed Smith, with a second by Craig Grossenbacher. The nomination was approved by the Committee.

5. Submittal of Invoices for Acceptance by LBMC – Karyn Allman / Jeff Rosenfeld

Jeff Rosenfeld discussed the invoices submitted since the last Committee meeting and Karyn Allman prepared a spreadsheet (copy attached) summarizing the invoices to be accepted by the Committee. Copies of the invoices were provided to the Committee members prior to the meeting. These invoices included: 1) two Dade-Broward Levee Construction/ Monitoring Phase III invoices totaling \$4,039.53 and 2) two Lake Belt Water Quality Monitoring invoices totaling \$164,295.19. The total for the invoices since the last Committee meeting was \$168,334.72. Craig Grossenbacher moved to accept the invoices and it was seconded by Ed Smith. The invoices were accepted by the Committee, with the USEPA abstaining.

6. FY 23 Funding Request: Dade-Broward Levee Structures Operations & Maintenance (O&M) – Jeff Rosenfeld

A motion was presented to “Approve the expenditure of \$14,453 for FY23 operation and maintenance of the two new Dade-Broward Levee water control structures.” These structures were constructed as part of the Committee-approved Dade-Broward Levee Phase 2 project. Under the Three-Party Agreement for the project that has been executed by SFWMD, Miami-Dade County, and MDLPA, SFWMD will operate and maintain the two new structures. Miles Meyer moved to approve the motion and it was seconded by Ed Smith. The motion to fund the Dade-Broward Levee structures O&M was approved by the Committee, with the USEPA abstaining.

7. Abiaki Prairie – Karyn Allman

Karyn Allman made a presentation summarizing the current status of construction and land management activities at the Abiaki Prairie project.

Phase 1 construction is almost completed and Phase 2 construction activities (clearing, leveling, and canal backfill) have started. In addition, construction of the boundary seepage canal, water control structures, and pump station are underway and expected to be completed by

the end of 2022. In terms of land management, over 2,300 acres of maidencane have already been planted and District staff are seeing significant native plant recruitment and expansion of previously planted wetland species. Monitoring results are indicating significant vegetation and wildlife utilization success.

SFWMD received approval for the release of 879 mitigation units in 2021 as a result of recording the permit and meeting Construction Level 1 and 2 and Biological Level 1 success criteria for a portion of Phase 1. This represents approximately 22% of the project's mitigation credit goal, with another 27% (1,076 units) anticipated in 2023-2025. The construction activities are anticipated to be completed by 2027-28.

8. FY 22 Funding Request: Abiaki Prairie restoration project – Jeff Rosenfeld

A motion was presented to “Approve the expenditure of \$7.0 million for FY23 Abiaki Prairie Restoration Project funding per the updated cost estimate. At an updated cost of \$35,300 per WRAP unit, this expenditure authorizes the award of 198.3 WRAP units (793.2 Pennsuco-equivalent mitigation acres) for 2022.” With this request, the project funding will total \$55 million since the initial funding approval by the Committee in 2012 (and nine subsequent annual funding approvals). The \$55 million represents almost 70% of the currently estimated \$80 million construction cost. Construction of Phase 1 of the project is almost complete and SFWMD's selected construction contractor for the remaining portions of the project (approximately 3,200 acres) has begun Phase 2 construction activities.

At the August 2022 LBMC meeting, it was discussed that the Corps has issued a permit in 2020 for the full updated project. The project footprint now includes 6,314 acres of restoration, with a mitigation award of 4,298 WRAP units subject to construction and biological success criteria. It is estimated by MDLPA that this number of mitigation credits is sufficient for the full Lake Belt Plan mine-out. DEP had previously issued a permit for the updated project. In addition, SFWMD's updated cost estimate and schedule were discussed. The updated estimated cost for the project is \$151.7 million, with construction completion in 2027-28. In addition to the construction activities, the estimated project cost also includes 20 years of long-term management following construction (\$21.4 million) and reimbursement of land costs (\$49.7 million).

Craig Grossenbacher asked about the status of any discussions on completing Pennsuco restoration and questioned spending mitigation funds on a project that was potentially supplying

more mitigation than was needed for Lake Belt mining impacts. Jeff Rosenfeld discussed that the MDLPA had estimated in 2012 (when the Committee first approved funding for the Abiaki project) that approximately 4,000 mitigation credits would be needed for the full Lake Belt mine-out included in the Lake Belt Plan approved by the Legislature. SFWMD had originally designed a project that would provide approximately 4,000 credits and that was still the goal of the updated project design. The slightly higher potential credit award identified in the Corps permit would only occur if the entire project fully met the permit construction and biological success criteria.

Jennifer Reynolds discussed that there was a lengthy discussion about the future of Pennsuco at the last Committee meeting. She reiterated SFWMD's desire (as well as the County's) to see the highly successful Pennsuco restoration project completed, but the lack of willing sellers has made that difficult. The SFWMD Real Estate group was still pursuing any potential acquisitions from willing sellers. She mentioned that at the last meeting, Terrie Bates had discussed that the Committee had evaluated different mitigation options (many of which would have resulted in small, fragmented mitigation) and decided to approve larger mitigation projects (Abiaki Prairie and L-31N Seepage Barrier) that would meet the full Lake Belt mine-out requirements. Jennifer said that the current lack of available mitigation credits in Miami-Dade County and how there could be other opportunities (such as a County sponsored ROMA) to complete Pennsuco restoration outside of the Lake Belt Mitigation Committee process were also discussed. She welcomed any ideas from the other agencies.

Ed Smith moved to approve the FY23 Abiaki funding motion and it was seconded by Miles Meyer. The motion to fund the Abiaki Prairie Restoration Project was approved by the Committee. Miami-Dade County voted against approval, USEPA abstained, and the remaining 5 Committee members voted in favor of the motion.

9. Public Comment

None.

10. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting date will be scheduled in March 2023.

11. Meeting Adjourned

**Zoom Registrants
Lake Belt Mitigation Committee Meeting
August 18, 2022**

First Name	Last Name	Email	Registration Time
Angela	Chelette	Angela.Chelette@fdacs.gov	8/12/2022 10:11
Carter	Rousch	croush@sfwmd.gov	8/18/2022 9:42
Craig	Grossenbacher	grossc@miamidade.gov	8/18/2022 9:18
Edward	Smith	edward.c.smith@floridadep.gov	8/18/2022 9:27
Ernie	Barnett	Barnett@floridawaterandland.com	8/18/2022 9:31
Ernie	Barnett	barnett@floridawaterandland.com	8/18/2022 9:45
Jason	Hight	Jason.Hight@MyFWC.com	8/18/2022 10:01
John	Fellows	john.p.fellows@usace.army.mil	8/18/2022 9:34
Julia	Jennison	jjennison@llw-law.com	8/10/2022 10:19
Karyn	Allman	kaallman@sfwmd.gov	8/18/2022 9:29
Kerri	Barsh	Barshk@gtlaw.com	8/18/2022 9:27
Lawrence	Glenn	lglen@sfwmd.gov	8/18/2022 10:02
Marisa	Rhian	Marisa.Rhian@floridadep.gov	8/18/2022 9:32
Matt	Morrison	mjmorris@sfwmd.gov	8/18/2022 9:48
Michael	Spinelli	spinem@miamidade.gov	8/18/2022 10:13
Michelle	Quigley	mquigley@sfwmd.gov	8/18/2022 9:29
Miles	Meyer	miles_meyer@fws.gov	8/18/2022 9:27
Nicole	Niemeyer	nniemeye@sfwmd.gov	8/18/2022 9:26
Ray	Palmer	rpalmer@sfwmd.gov	8/18/2022 9:26
Rebecca	Elliott	rebecca.elliott@fdacs.gov	8/18/2022 10:29
Rob	Hopper	rhopper@sfwmd.gov	8/18/2022 9:30
Shelby	Olsen	solsen@titanamerica.com	8/17/2022 19:44
sherry	mccorkle	smccorkl@sfwmd.gov	8/8/2022 9:34
Veronica	Fasselt	fasselt.veronica@epa.gov	8/18/2022 9:27
Virginia	Walsh	walshv@miamidade.gov	8/8/2022 11:14