Caloosahatchee River Community Forums
Interagency Coordination Meeting Summary

September 2, 2014

Lee County Public Works Building
1500 Monroe Street, Fort Myers, FL

Attendees: A list of meeting attendees can be found in Appendix A.

I. Overview
This document summarizes the fourth interagency coordination meeting held between the key government parties involved in implementation efforts to improve the Caloosahatchee River's health related to both water quality and quantity. This meeting served primarily to review feedback from the August 8 Community Forum meeting and begin prioritizing among regional and local projects focused on improving the Caloosahatchee watershed.

II. Action Items
For the Consensus Building Institute:
- Work with SFWMD to prepare an updated list of prioritized projects based on rankings and categories discussed by participating agencies.
- Canvas participating agencies to identify a late September/early October timing for the next interagency coordination meeting
- Develop draft agenda for the next interagency coordination meeting.
- Create draft meeting summary of September 2 interagency meeting.

For the South Florida Water Management District:
- Update project descriptions based on participant feedback (additional project description, more detail on water quality benefit methodologies used across projects, factual corrections, etc.)
- Work with CBI to prepare an updated list of prioritized projects – regional and local – based on rankings and categories discussed by participating agencies.
- Seek additional information from implementing agencies to develop, if possible, basic cost/benefit data that can then be used by the implementing agencies to further prioritize among projects.

The next interagency meeting is to be held in late September or early October.

III. Community Forum Review
Bennett Brooks with CBI reviewed key feedback from the August 8 Community Forum, with key stakeholder input centering on: (1) additional candidate projects; (2) additional information needs and ranking criteria considerations; (3) potential priority projects; and (4) other related issues. Key points highlighted by Mr. Brooks and implementing agency representatives in

attendance at the Forum included the following:

- Stakeholders identified a handful of candidate water quality and water supply-related projects (e.g., several Cape Coral sewer projects) not included in the project list developed by the implementing agencies, as well as proposed policy changes and projects beyond the scope of the current dialogue (e.g., LORS, oxbow restoration). Stakeholders also noted several details in the table requiring correction.
- Additional information needs cited by stakeholders centered on (1) cost-benefit analyses to foster cross-project evaluations; (2) more complete data on water quality and quantity benefits, as well as detail on data methodology and sources; and (3) greater detail on implementation-related factors such as location and benefit timing. Several stakeholders also sought more information on potential climate change impacts.
- Stakeholder comments suggested expanding evaluation criteria to incorporate the following additional criteria (among others): ability to bundle/sequence projects; relative cost-benefit; ability to deliver multiple benefits related to habitat and/or recreation; and link with a legislative or regulatory mandate.
- Priority projects cited most frequently in the small-group discussions during the Community Forum were C-43 West Basin Storage Reservoir Project; Lake Hicpochee North and South; C-43 Water Quality Treatment Area Project (BOMA property); East Caloosahatchee Storage Project; Charlotte Harbor Flatwoods Initiative

Mr. Brooks noted there was substantial overlap between priority projects cited most frequently during the Community Forum and those projects that ranked highest in the implementing agency survey conducted prior to the September 2 interagency meeting. (See discussion below.)

IV. Review of Implementing Agency Survey Results
The bulk of the meeting focused on reviewing and discussing the results of implementing agencies' initial prioritization of potential Caloosahatchee projects. (The survey was conducted via Survey Monkey prior to the September 2 meeting. A total of 10 agencies participated in the survey.)

Pat Field with CBI initiated the discussion by reviewing survey results. He noted that many of the priority projects identified by agencies overlapped with those mentioned most frequently at the Community Forum. He also noted that a number of projects were not ranked in some surveys due to insufficient information. Finally, he mentioned that many local projects garnered support, but few rose above a mid-rank prioritization.

The review of survey results and a discussion of initial priorities generated the following key points:

- Regional projects should be ranked separately from local projects, as they are of a different scale and are typically funded from different sources.

- Regional projects should be sorted within four different categories: (1) well-defined projects ready for immediate prioritization and implementation; (2) well-defined projects requiring additional information prior to implementation; (3) conceptually defined projects that will require more in-depth feasibility studies; and (4) identified needs but no defined projects.
- Local projects should be sorted into two different categories: (1) projects ready for immediate implementation and primarily just awaiting full or partial funding; and (2) longer-term projects. Participants expressed interest in identifying priorities among the many candidate projects, but agreed that any ranking will need to be grounded in credible data.
- Prioritization of local and regional projects should be informed by, among other things, comparative data (cost-benefit analysis or other metrics) that enable implementing agencies to assess the relative merits of the various projects. At the same time, others noted that cost-benefit metrics alone may not be sufficient to prioritize among projects, as the region may wish to prioritize projects with lower cost-benefits but greater overall impact (e.g., delivering more expansive water quality or supply benefits). Furthermore, sufficient data may be missing that would allow more of that kind of analysis.
- In general, it is better to rank water quality projects against other water quality projects and water supply projects against other water supply projects. Similarly, a filter marsh project is difficult to compare with a sewering project. The group agreed to talk about this further at next meeting.
- To the extent that local projects lack or fail to provide sufficient cost-benefit data, implementing agencies may not be able to put such projects forward as regional priorities, as there will be no objective basis for prioritizing one project over another.
- Ongoing projects should be captured in a companion project list, but not be included for prioritization since they are already underway and presumably have identified funding sources.
- A final package of regional priority projects may want to draw on a mix of longer-term and immediate projects, so as to balance those projects able to deliver more significant benefits with those able to provide near-term results. As noted above, this approach is most effective among near- and longer-term projects not competing for the same funding pool.
- The implementing agencies need to be strategic in how and when projects are aggregated or split for prioritization purposes. Where possible, it is important to identify linkages among projects (for example, noting that the West Caloosahatchee Water Quality Treatment Area project is intended to complement the C-43 reservoir project even if it is not yet ready for implementation). At the same time, several participants recommended differentiating among now-grouped projects if they are in different states of readiness (i.e., Four Corners/Spanish Creek initiative) so they could prioritized accordingly.
- Restoration projects such as tape grass plantings and oxbow restoration are important initiatives and should be noted, but are qualitatively different than water quality and supply projects and should not be included for ranking.

Based on the discussion, the group sorted the projects into the different categories outlined above. A number of projects were also revised based on additional input regarding project timeframe, status and focus.

A more definitive ranking of both regional and local projects is to be conducted (likely in late September or early October) once better data on water quality, water supply and project cost is gathered and, as possible, summarized in a comparative cost-benefit analysis. SFWMD is to work with project proponents to gather the additional data.

V. Timing for Finalizing Project Prioritization
Based on the additional work needed to inform a new ranking exercise, implementing agencies expect to have a proposed list of priority projects ready to bring to interested stakeholder later in 2014. Dan DeLisi with SFWMD said such timing would mesh well with various funding timelines.

V. Next Steps

The participants ended the meeting by confirming next steps and action items as noted at the beginning of this meeting summary. The next interagency coordination meeting is to be held in late September or early October. The next Community Forum will likely be held in mid-to-late November or early December.

Appendix A – Attendance

Name	Organization
Bonnie Wolff-Pelaez	Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Jennifer Carpenter	Florida Department of Environmental Protection
Kurt Harclerode	Lee County
Roland Ottolini	Lee County
Lesley Bertolotti	South Florida Water Management District
Dan DeLisi	South Florida Water Management District
Phil Flood	South Florida Water Management District
Kelly O'Nan	Hendry County
Shane Parker	Hendry County
Missie Barletto	Glades County
Vince Miller	City of Ft. Myers
James Evans	City of Sanibel
Connie Jarvis	City of Cape Coral
Dave Lindsay	East County Water Control District
Mike Cook	East County Water Control District
Kyle Grandusky	County Line Drainage District
Process support:	
Patrick Field	Consensus Building Institute
Bennett Brooks	Consensus Building Institute