

**SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT (SFWMD)
WATER RESOURCES ADVISORY COMMISSION (WRAC)
LOWER WEST COAST WATER SUPPLY PLAN REGIONAL WORKSHOP 5
Tuesday, August 28, 2012, 9:30 AM – 11:30 AM
SFWMD Big Cypress Basin
2660 Horseshoe Drive North
Naples, FL 34104**

MEETING SUMMARY

Item 1. Welcome and Opening Remarks Dean Powell, Chief, Water Supply Bureau, SFWMD

Mr. Powell welcomed all to the meeting and stated that the draft plan documents are available on the District web page and comments on the plan are strongly encouraged.

Item 2. Introductions, Updates and Today's Topics – Mark Elsner, Administrator, Water Supply Development Section, SFWMD

Mr. Elsner described the remainder of the plan development schedule leading up to presentation of the final draft to the District's Water Resources Advisory Commission and Governing Board in November. The deadline for written comments on the draft Plan is September 28. Presentation of the draft plan to the District's Water Resources Advisory Commission and Governing Board will be made in September.

Item 3. April 4 Workshop Follow-up – Linda Hoppes, Lead Planner, Water Supply Development Section, SFWMD

Item 4. Overview of the Draft 2012 Lower West Coast Water Supply Plan Status Update – Linda Hoppes, Mark Elsner and, Dean Powell

As a part of this presentation, the speakers reviewed the goal and objectives of the plan as well as a brief summary of each chapter. Questions and comments from meeting participants were:

- Why are the agricultural acres projected to be higher in 2030 than the 2025 projections from the 2005-2006 LWC Plan Update? Why not just plan for the higher numbers instead of using a range? Why do the projected acres jump at 2020? *The projections were developed with input from a variety of sources including the USDA, FDACS, IFAS, Florida Farm Bureau, and other agricultural agencies and stakeholders. We believe they represent the best available data at this time. We show a range because the projections are challenging and affected by many market conditions, agricultural conditions (health of the crops), the weather, and urban development. The range helps show the potential variation and the high numbers were used in water demand projections. The high range begins at year 2020 because stakeholders and agencies feel that citrus growth and recovery will begin about this time.*
- Will the plan include any new conservation requirements to ensure further reductions in water use? *The District is implementing it's Comprehensive*

Water Conservation Program that was approved in 2008. There is currently a state-wide effort led by DEP to develop consistent methods between the water management districts (CUPcon) and one of the topics being addressed is conservation. We are letting this group take the lead on conservation requirements.

- *The definition of water resource development projects is similar to the definition used for Federal restoration projects. Should restoration projects and MFLs and reservations be included in the water resource development chapter? In water supply planning, we use the definition of water resource development that is contained within the statute which differs from how it is used by the federal government. Topics such as MFLs, reservations, and other restoration projects are included in the plan but in a different chapter.*
- *Are the public water supply (PWS) demand numbers based on specific municipal systems or by county? How do we factor in people on private wells? PWS demand is calculated for each utility and then summed for each county. People on private wells are included in the Domestic Self-Supply category. This is a challenging category because we can estimate the number of people in the category but the water used is not measured and we must make estimates.*
- *It is said the USACE has no plans to allow additional water to be stored in Lake Okeechobee when the repairs are complete. If that is true, the plan should not include increases in Lake Okeechobee water to be included as a future source. USACE staff would have to address this, but our understanding is the schedule and water levels are planned to be specifically discussed after 2016.*
- *What was the rationale to not include the 'other planned improvements' in the Caloosahatchee MFL Recovery Strategy? Some of the projects are not completely District projects and therefore we don't have complete control. Other projects are primarily water quality related. We choose to not include operational changes and procedures because we need to retain operational flexibility. One of our core missions is flood control and we need to be able to respond appropriately.*
- *A requirement of the permits for the C-43 Reservoir was mitigation for panther habitat. Has this funding been set-up? We do not know the answer and will check and get back to the group on this.*
- *The Environmental Community believes that not enough is being done to preserve water for the natural system. The C-43 West Reservoir is not enough. MFLs are needed for additional water bodies. The water pie is being divided up solely for human consumption. A policy needs to be established that required the water from retired permits to go to the benefit of the natural system. In the past years, there have been a number of permits that have been retired and in only one case (Okeechobee Utilities Authority) was additional water allocated. The remainder has remained 'in the lake'. The policy of the District Governing Board is to look at each case individually.*
- *Agriculture needs better incentives to promote stormwater retention because the changes are expensive. The use of reclaimed water needs to expand and there need to be ways to make more people connect. The agricultural needs are different than that of the Caloosahatchee and the regions should be split in two – the areas connected to Lake Okeechobee and those not connected.*
- *Agriculture supports the repair of the Lake Okeechobee Herbert Hoover Dike if the repairs lead to more water for both agriculture and the natural system.*

But if the repairs will not lead to more water, why should the money be spent on the repairs?

- Lake Okeechobee should be managed as an ecological resource (lake) rather than a reservoir. Agriculture commented that it could be managed as both.
- Can the plan include strategies such as natural water storage to help with sea level rise? This could be restoring old farm fields to wetlands such as was done with CREW. *This is a great idea and follows the method of dispersed water management.*
- In the Lower East Coast planning area, there was a striking difference in the PWS demand projections made in the 2006 plan as compared to the projections made now. Do you know why that difference is not as significant in this planning region? *The big change in the lower east coast area was likely based on both population and per capita water use. Palm Beach, Broward, and Miami-Dade counties all had significant population growth projected in that time frame. In addition, the District's Year-round Landscape Irrigation Conservation Measures went in to effect in March 2010 following several years of water shortage restrictions. Both Miami-Dade and Broward counties have implemented 2-day a week irrigation rules, while Palm Beach County is 3-days per week. This, in combination with other factors, has resulted in a significant reduction in the per capita water use rate. Miami-Dade initiated a strong and active conservation program and has been able to eliminate or postpone several alternative water supply projects.*
- The plan probably needs to discuss the difference between salt-water intrusion (from the riverine system) and impacts from brackish connate water. Several additional technical comments were made; these will be submitted to the district in writing.

Item 5. Wrap Up/Next Steps – Linda Hoppes and Mark Elsner

Final questions and comments were:

- Accomplishments of the state-wide reuse policy work group needs to be incorporated into the plan, including recommendations for legislation and substitution credits.
- All users need to look for ways to optimize use of the resource (water). Could the plan include a discussion of ways that agriculture and PWS might coordinate?
- Additional written comments will be submitted.

Adjourned - 11:16 AM