

MINUTES

Everglades Technical Oversight Committee Meeting
Thursday, Sept. 7, 2000
8:30 a.m. to 11 a.m.
South Florida Water Management Headquarters
3301 Gun Club Road, West Palm Beach, FL 33406
Storch Conference Room

TOC Members Present

Laura Brandt, A.R.M. Loxahatchee National Wildlife (Refuge)
Mike Zimmerman, Everglades National Park (ENP)
Frank Nearhoof, Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)
Bob Barron, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
Absent: Garth Redfield, South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD)

Others Present

Aumen, Nick -- ENP	Jorge, Jennifer -- SFWMD
Azeredo, Dee -- SFWMD	Marshall, Ana -- SFWMD
Bechtel, Tim -- SFWMD	Mo, Cheol -- SFWMD
Bennett, Susan -- SFWMD	Nungesser, Martha -- SFWMD
Brown, Susan -- U.S. Sugar Corp.	Smith, Lisa -- SFWMD
Charkhian, Bahram -- SFWMD	Struve, Dave -- SFWMD
Cheesman, Maxine -- SFWMD	Van Horn, Stuart -- SFWMD
Davis, Linda -- SFWMD	Waldon, Mike - USFWS
Duncan, Gene -- Miccosukee Tribe	Walker, Bill -- Consultant to Dept. of the Interior
Federico, Tony -- MacVicar, Federico and Lamb Inc.	Walsh, Joe -- GFC
Fontaine, Tom -- SFWMD	
Gray, Susan -- SFWMD	

1. Introductory Comments – Bob Barron

Bob Barron began the meeting at 8:45 a.m. and asked for approval of the minutes of the May 12, 2000, TOC meeting. Minutes were approved and finalized by the TOC.

2. Update on Everglades Consolidated Report – Susan Bennett

2001 Everglades Consolidated Report Technical Editor Susan Bennett updated the TOC on the status of the draft 2001 Everglades Consolidated Report and announced that it is now available on the Web for review (**Attachment A**). She added that the Web Board and Peer Review Public Workshops Agenda were also available on the Web. Bennett thanked District and DEP authors for their continued cooperation and adhering to tight deadlines.

3. Agenda for Public Workshops on Everglades Forever Act Programs, Phosphorus and Mercury in the Everglades, October 3, 4 and 5, 2000 – Dee Azeredo

Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Division Deputy Director Dee Azeredo briefed the TOC on the three-day, peer review public workshops of the 2001 Everglades Consolidated Report and distributed the agenda to the TOC members and other participants (**Attachment B**). She added that entire process is conducted in accordance with the Florida Sunshine Law via the WebBoard and asked that all report comments be posted on the WebBoard between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. She noted that the workshop is being held off-site this year at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in West Palm Beach, with one full day devoted to phosphorus enrichment (Oct. 4) and another day to the mercury problem (Oct. 5). Azeredo added that the peer review expert panelists' biographies and matrix of panelists' assignments to chapters can also be found on the report Web site.

4. Water Quality Conditions Report to the TOC – Tim Bechtel

Tim Bechtel reviewed the First Quarter 2000 Water Quality and Quality Assessment Reports to the TOC (**Attachment C**). Bechtel said the data indicate good conditions in the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge compared to the interim and long-term TP levels and concentrations recorded last year. Shark River Slough went over the interim limit by a small amount due primarily to low flows. He added that more composite concentrations greater than the 10 ppb calculated limit are due to changes in the inflow to Taylor Slough pump S332D. Beginning Water Year 2000 (Oct. 1), the District started tracking concentrations for the old structures at S175 and S332, and then used new structures S332D and S174. Bechtel noted Figure 3: September concentrations are a little higher when the S332D structure was used in place of S175 and S332. He suggested that the higher concentrations are due to a lack of diluting seepage that was occurring in the flows going through S332 and S175 structures (S332D pumping directly from L31 North into L31 canal).

Bechtel pointed out that Figure 3 shows two lines. One is the flow-weighted means using the old S175, S332 plus S18C (sampling events are lighter dots). The other line is using the new structure S174, S332D plus S18C (sampling events as black diamonds).

Bill Walker asked if District continued tracking both ways. Frank Nearhoof responded that the TOC decided to keep tracking both ways until it's satisfied with data.

Tim Bechtel said both sets of calculations will be continued for the rest of this year and will go for at least a full wet year and full dry year. Bill Walker asked if Shark River Slough looked at tracking S334 and subtract those off. Bechtel said yes, the structure was incorporated in these calculations based on Mike Zimmerman's (ENP) proposal last year.

Bill Walker asked about new structures S355 A and B. Tim Bechtel said the Corps operates those structures and performs sampling. Mike Zimmerman added that the Corps just started sampling at those structures to keep it consistent.

Tony Federico asked if we use the new structures for the compliance checking, whether the compliance limit should be adjusted. Bob Barron said that the comparison will be done for a few months and didn't want to tinker with formulas, but wait to see if a trend is there. Walker added that limits don't apply until 2005, and it's premature to adjust the formula, but it makes sense to track it beyond a year. Bob Barron said that the Class III formula never goes away unless formula goes below 10. Bill Walker said that this is the tricky part to making an adjustment because we don't know if the difference we're seeing is due to operation of S332D, which wasn't in place during base period. He added it's not obvious on how to make an adjustment. Bob Barron proposed to note it and watch both sets of data over the next year and see where it heads from there.

Frank Nearhoof discussed C-111 questions relative to the start operations at S332 and S332D and B, and their effect on water quality. He said that we need to look at associated modeling, and added he has never seen the modeling. He said modeling may predict where water is coming from and going to under new operational scenarios. Bob Barron agreed to bring models to the TOC. Mike Zimmerman said he would scope out C-111

status. Frank Nearhoof said that in order to interpret S332D and S332B water quality data, the TOC should all have data in hand. He said that it looks like those data being done under contract to the Corps are a bit high compared to District's and Department's data. Frank Nearhoof noted that the consultant's lab runs a low standard and is going back to QA records to compare, and the Department is trying to identify time periods with bias. He suggested flagging apparent biased high data, and then figuring what to do with it. Bob Barron added this as an agenda item for the next TOC meeting (water quality sampling at S332 D and S332B).

There was a discussion of loads through S197 structures. Tim Bechtel distributed graphs that show loads through S197 when one more culvert/spillway is open from January 1998 through April 2000 (**Attachment D**). He pointed out that the top figure is mislabeled: x axis should read "TP in Milligrams/Liter" and y axis should read "TP Data Comparison between S18C and S197 Flow." Tim Bechtel questioned whether we should account for water that goes through S197 when we do inflow calculations to Park Bill Walker suggested that we look at the base period and go back to see how often flow went through S197; we should document one way or another. He said that the point is there is no flow to report, and if that's the case, we should document if we subtract S197 flow off now and in the future, or if flow occurred in base period and didn't subtract it. Bob Barron said to leave the issue as a comeback item and document what happened during base period and flow during that time. Tim Bechtel added that S197 is open during high flows for flood protection; closed under all other conditions.

5. Follow up on letter to TOC principals on water quality excursions in the ARM Loxahatchee Wildlife Refuge – Tim Bechtel

Tim Bechtel reported that a draft letter went out to all principles. No comments or responses have been received.

6. Reductions to the trace metals, mercury and other water quality sampling -- Bahram Charkhian

Bahram Charkhian said that the District will implement its new monitoring program for mercury and trace metals Oct. 1, 2000, based on TOC approval in January 2000. He added that the District is looking at other monitoring programs to present to TOC in the future to make them more consistent with non-ECP monitoring program. Maxine Cheesman added that the District will go ahead with the new mercury and trace metals monitoring, and will be back with other parameters to review with TOC.

7. Field studies on atmospheric deposition of phosphorus; project discontinued – Tom Fontaine

Environmental Monitoring and Assessment Division Director Tom Fontaine said the field studies on atmospheric deposition were discussed at several TOC meetings. Since then, the District has received no endorsements from TOC or outside the TOC; no offers of support to continue. He said that based on all input to date, the District can not justify going forward with the program.

8. Public/additional TOC member comments

Laura Brandt of the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee Wildlife Refuge said the Refuge is looking into putting in two new water level stations, one in the north end and one in the south end. The refuge is awaiting a cost estimate from USGS. She added that the USGS will be maintaining the gauges, but the Refuge will pay for the cost of installing and maintaining them. The stations will be used for more than just internal Refuge use. She said that the Refuge may need assistance accessing the gauges for maintenance during low water events and may look to the District for helicopter support. In addition, since the gauges will be useful for a number of projects any cost sharing to monitor stage first, then flow, direction, conductivity and rainfall from TOC or others would be welcome. One gauge will be in the northern portion of the refuge because they suspect the north area may be impacted by changes in the location of inflows and diverted flow patterns. Laura Brandt added that the Refuge is looking to have a hydrologic model developed that will eventually link to a water quality model. Options for model development include via cost-share with USGS, or development by the District.

H. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11 a.m.

A video tape of the meeting is saved with the minutes for the record.