

Notes from the Quarterly Meeting of the Everglades Technical Oversight Committee (TOC)

August 10, 2021

South Florida Water Management District
3301 Gun Club Road, West Palm Beach, FL 33406

TOC Representatives:

Julianne LaRock, TOC Chair, SFWMD
John Barkett, Special Master
Daniel Crawford, USACE

Lori Miller, Refuge
Ed Smith, FDEP
Donatto Surratt, ENP

Note: *This meeting was conducted in person, online, and by phone and was recorded by a court reporter. Copies of the transcript are available for purchase; for more information, please contact Florida Court Reporting (561-689-0999). Handouts and presentations are available on the TOC website (<https://www.sfwmd.gov/our-work/toc>) and a recording of the meeting is available online at <http://sfwmd.ig2.com/Citizens/Media.aspx>.*

10:06 a.m. **1. TOC Opening Business** – Julianne LaRock, SFWMD

1A. Welcome, Announcements, and Identification of Participants

Julianne LaRock called the meeting to order.

1B. Agenda Modifications and Documents Available on the TOC Website

Julianne LaRock reviewed the agenda and the list of files recently posted on the TOC website. There were no requests to modify the agenda.

1C. Approval of Meeting Summary for May 4, 2021

The TOC approved the May 4, 2021, meeting summary with no requests for changes.

Associated Online Documents:

- [Final Agenda for August 10, 2021](#)
- [Draft Meeting Notes for May 4, 2021](#)

10:13 a.m. **2. First Quarter 2021 Settlement Agreement Report** – Chelsea Qiu, SFWMD

Chelsea Qiu presented the 2021 first quarter Settlement Agreement report, which includes results of TP monitoring in the Refuge, Shark River Slough, and Taylor Slough and Coastal Basins through March 2021. Results for Shark River Slough were calculated using provisional flow data and are preliminary. Final results for Shark River Slough for federal WY2021 will be presented after USGS provides final flow data for the S-12 structures through September 30, 2021.

Refuge 14-station geometric mean TP values for January, February, and March 2021 were below the computed long-term levels. Stage was high enough that all 14 stations were sampled for each of these months. The average monthly TP geometric mean concentration over the 36 months ending in March 2021 was 6.8 ppb, which is 2.9 ppb below the 36-month average long-term level of 9.7 ppb. The last excursion in the Refuge occurred in

September 2020. Preliminary geometric mean TP concentrations for April through July 2021 are below their respective long-term levels.

Preliminary TP FWMC for Shark River Slough for the 12-month periods ending in March 2021 (7.4 ppb) did not exceed the long-term limit (7.6 ppb). The percent of sampling events greater than 10 ppb was below the guideline during the first quarter of 2021.

For inflows to ENP through Shark River Slough in federal WY2021 through mid-July 2021, periods with higher stage and flow tended to be associated with lower TP FWMC, and, conversely, periods where stage and flow were low tended to be associated with higher TP FWMC.

In the 12-month period ending March 2021, almost 2 million acre-feet of water was sent to Shark River Slough. WY2021 will be the first full water year with the Combined Operations Plan (COP) implemented. During the first quarter of 2021 (January–March 2021), half of the flow was through the S12s. Because of the high stage in WCA-3A, USACE implemented emergency authorization for a deviation of the operating plan in November 2020–January 2021 that allowed the S12s to remain open. S12A and S12B were closed in January 2021, S12C was closed in February 2021, and S12D remained open through March 2021, which is the end of the first quarter of 2021.

TP FWMC values for Taylor Slough and the Coastal Basins for the 12-month periods ending in January, February, and March 2021 were well below the long-term limit of 11 ppb, and the observed percent of sampling events greater than 10 ppb was far below the guideline.

Questions, Comments, and Discussion:

Donatto Surratt said the partitioning of flows to the east and west of Shark River Slough was getting closer to the goal. The east-west split was 50-50%, which is close to the transition goal of 60-40%. The ultimate goal is to have 80% go to the east toward Shark River Slough, and 20% to the west. As more restoration projects come online, we will be able to relax the stage constraints in the east and move towards the ultimate goal. There has been good collaboration on operations between staff from ENP, SFWMD, and USACE.

Jed Redwine, ENP, added that it was a good year with respect to water quality and an excellent year for wading bird reproduction as well as ecological response across the system, showing that both goals can be achieved with the increased flows—a positive widespread ecological response while managing water quality.

Associated Online Documents:

- [Settlement Agreement Report, January–March 2021](#)
- [Settlement Agreement Report, January–March 2021 Presentation](#)
- [Quality Assessment Report for Water Quality Monitoring, January–March 2021](#)
- [Quality Assessment Report for Water Quality Monitoring, January–March 2021 Data](#)
- [Refuge TP Compliance Table, 2007 through First Quarter 2021](#)
- [Provisional Shark River Slough TP Tracking Report, First Quarter 2021](#)
- [Taylor Slough and Coastal Basin Tracking Report, First Quarter 2021](#)

10:04 am **3. S333N Working Group Update** – Donatto Surratt, ENP, and Mark Wilsnack, SFWMD

Donatto Surratt said break-out meetings took place on June 4 for (1) sediment characterization of the headwaters of the S333N structure and (2) hydrodynamics modeling.

Donatto described three project proposals sent out on July 20 related to the sediment characterization component: (1) Investigating Sediment and Flocculation Transport of Phosphorus at the 333 Gated Structures on the Northern Boundary of ENP, (2) An Autonomous Surface Vehicle for Sediment Profiling for the L67A and L29 Canals, and (3) Profiling, Sourcing, and Characterizing Sediments in the L67 and L29 Canals Upstream of the S333 Complex.

Mark Wilsnack, SFWMD, provided a progress update on hydrodynamic model scoping efforts. SFWMD drafted a scope of work for a study that will help identify the hydrodynamic processes that are conducive to the transport of sediment and phosphorus through the S333 structure complex and it will also evaluate some remedial measures to try to mitigate and lessen that transport. Currently, this draft is under internal SFWMD review before being transmitted to the interagency team.

Dan Crawford commented that he appreciated the coordination of ENP and SFWMD in this effort. Ed Smith echoed these sentiments.

10:51 a.m. **4. Public Comment**

Gene Duncan cited 365-day STA discharge TP FWMC values from the SFWMD website and questioned how the Loxahatchee [Refuge] can be in compliance if STA discharges at STA-1 East and STA-1 West TP concentrations greater than 40 ppb over the past year.

Yogesh Khare, Everglades Foundation, provided comments related to the S333N discharges to Shark River Slough. The sediment transport and hydraulics studies may take months or even years to complete. Is there consideration of any near-term solutions to control large TP load going into ENP before the studies are complete?

10:56 a.m. **5. TOC Closing Business** – Julianne LaRock, SFWMD

The TOC confirmed the next quarterly meeting for Tuesday, November 2, 2021.

10:58 a.m. Julianne LaRock adjourned the meeting.