

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

January 18, 2022

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.iqm2.com/Citizens/Media.aspx>.*

10:00 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 November 2, 2021

The TOC approved the November 2, 2021, meeting summary with no requests for changes.

Associated Online Documents:

- [Final Agenda for January 18, 2022](#)
- [Draft Meeting Notes for November 2, 2021](#)

10:09 a.m. **2. Third Quarter 2021 Settlement Agreement Report** – Chelsea Qiu, SFWMD

Chelsea Qiu presented the 2021 third quarter Settlement Agreement report, which includes results of total phosphorus (TP) monitoring in the Refuge, Shark River Slough (SRS), and Taylor Slough and Coastal Basins through September 2021. Results for SRS were calculated using provisional flow data and are preliminary. Final results for SRS for federal water year (WY) 2021 will be presented at the next TOC meeting, pending receipt of the United States Geological Survey (USGS) final flow data for the S-12 structures through September 30, 2021.

Refuge 14-station geometric mean TP values for July, August, and September 2021 were below the computed long-term levels. Stage was not high enough for all 14 stations to be sampled during these months. The 36-month average TP geometric mean is 6.9 parts per billion (ppb), which is 3 ppb below the 36--month average long-term level of 9.9 ppb. The last excursion in the Refuge occurred in September 2020. Preliminary geometric mean TP concentrations for October through December 2021 are below their long-term levels.

Provisional TP flow-weighted mean concentrations (FWMC) for SRS for the 12-month periods ending in July, August, and September 2021 (7.8, 7.9, and 8.2 ppb) were above the long-term limit (7.6 ppb), and the percent of sampling events greater than 10 ppb was above the guideline in the periods ending in August and September 2021. Based on the provisional results, periods with higher stage in federal WY2021 tended to be associated with lower TP FWMC, and, conversely, periods where stage was low tended to be associated with higher TP FWMC, which is consistent with patterns observed in previous years. Overall, the federal WY2021 provisional TP FWMC (8.2 ppb) is lower than the previous water year (9.3 ppb) but higher than the long-term limit (7.6 ppb) due to higher overall flow volume entering SRS in WY2021. As noted earlier, presentation of final WY2021 results for SRS is expected at the next TOC meeting pending receipt of the final quality assured USGS flow at the S-12 structures.

TP FWMC values for Taylor Slough and the Coastal Basins for the 12-month periods ending in July, August, and September 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 remarked that he appreciates the continuous flow dynamic to Everglades National Park being achieved using the Tamiami Trail Flow Formula, which appears to be ameliorating conditions that formerly led to TP spikes when structures that had been closed for a while were first opened to allow flow. Chelsea Qiu explained the reason sites are not sampled when depth is too low (less than 10 centimeters) is because sampling below that depth can lead to bottom sediment being introduced into samples, resulting in non-representative TP values. Daniel Crawford said the USACE has received a lot of positive feedback on the implementation of the Combined Operational Plan (COP) and the benefits of the continuous flows into SRS throughout the year. Daniel also noted that some of the increased discharges near the end of 2020 and the beginning of 2021 were due to emergency deviations to address elevated water levels in Water Conservation Area 3A due to Tropical Storm Eta, before the Tamiami Trail Flow Formula started in February/March 2021. Jed Redwine noted that ecological conditions downstream of northeast SRS have been favorable and that the long hydroperiods supported by continuous flow upstream have been very helpful in facilitating the processing of nutrients that are received by the marsh.

Julianne LaRock asked TOC representatives and their staff to begin considering the principals' three questions related to the expected WY2021 exceedance:

1. Have we sufficiently looked at all the information so we have a better understanding of what may have caused the exceedance?
2. Have we determined whether there is substantial evidence that the exceedance is due to error or extraordinary natural phenomenon?
3. If the exceedance is not considered due to error or extraordinary natural phenomenon, what have we considered for additional remedies that might need to be taken?

TOC representatives agreed they could begin looking at the data in time for the next meeting, but they might need until the following meeting to fully evaluate. Ed Smith noted the next principals' meeting is tentatively scheduled for March 23, so it would be good for TOC reps to discuss with their principals before this date.

Associated Online Documents:

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

10:52 a.m. **3. CEPP S-356E Water Quality monitoring** – Savanna Royals, USACE

Savanna Royals presented information on the Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP) South Contract 2a (S-356E pump station and S-334E spillway). S-356E pump station will have 1,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) capacity and six bays; the S-334E spillway will have 1,200 cfs capacity and will have a span of approximately 28 feet across the L-29 canal. The construction contract is anticipated to be awarded in fiscal year 2023 and construction is estimated to take four years to complete. During construction, the existing S-356/S-334 stations will continue to be sampled; after construction, monitoring will occur at two new platforms. Monitoring will be on a biweekly recorded flow frequency for total nitrogen, total phosphorus, dissolved oxygen, pH, specific conductance, and temperature, and will be conducted on the same day as sampling for SRS stations for the Consent Decree Appendix A compliance calculation.

Questions, Comments, and Discussion:

The area of impact to the marsh will be about six acres. Daniel Crawford noted that USACE gave this presentation to be transparent about upcoming CEPP construction at the earliest opportunity while there is ample time to adjust and consider any technical recommendations that may come from the TOC.

Associated Online Documents:

- [CEPP South Contract 2a S-356E Pump Station and S334E Spillway Presentation](#)

11:01 am **S-333 Follow-up** (*not on agenda*)

Donatto Surratt requested an update on the status of water quality monitoring for S-333, which has been on hold since the end of November 2021. Jonathan Madden indicated the work is almost complete and sampling will likely resume by the end of the month. Donatto Surratt indicated a desire for the TOC to address the two months of missing data.

11:03 am **4. Public Comment**

Public comments were given by Newton Cook, Yogesh Khare, and Drew Martin.

11:08 a.m. **5. TOC Closing Business** – Julianne LaRock, SFWMD

The TOC confirmed the next quarterly meeting for Tuesday, May 3, 2022.

Julianne LaRock requested that the TOC representatives provide their agenda items for the next meeting as soon as possible.

11:10 a.m. Julianne LaRock adjourned the meeting.