



# Palm Beach County Water Resources Task Force



July 25, 2019  
1:30pm

**Clayton E. Hutcheson Agricultural Services Center  
West Palm Beach, Florida 33415**

## Meeting Minutes

### Water Resources Task Force Attendees

Seat ID	Member Name	Status	Alternate Name	Status
1	Vacant		Vacant	
2	Vacant		Vacant	
3	Chip Block (Chair)	Present	Vacant	
4	Jason Haselkorn	Absent	Vacant	
5	Myra Koutzen (Vice Chair)	Present	Rachelle Litt	Present
6	David Stewart	Present	Donald Magruder	Present
7	Melissa McKinlay	Present	Gregg Weiss	Present
8	Vacant		Vacant	
9	Harry Raucher	Absent	James Alderman	Absent
10	Adrian Salee	Present	Gregory Block	Absent
11	Jay Steinle	Present	Mark Elsner	Present
12	John Flanigan	Present	Richard Tomasello	Absent
13	Ted Winsberg	Present	Vacant	
14	Michael Johnson	Present	Greg Shafer	Absent

### 1. Call to Order and Introductions

A quorum was observed and Chip Block called the meeting to order at approximately 1:30 p.m. The Water Resources Task Force (WRTF) members then introduced themselves to the meeting attendees. The attached sign-in sheet provides the full list of meeting attendees.

### 2. Consider Approval of April 18, 2019 Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes from the April 18, 2019 WRTF meeting was made by John Flanigan and seconded by Adrian Salee. The April 18, 2019 meeting minutes were then approved by the WRTF.

### 3. Proposed 2020 Meeting Dates

Chip Block directed WRTF members and alternates to review the proposed 2020 WRTF meeting dates that are provided on the meeting agenda and asked members to contact Jeremy McBryan if there are any issues with the proposed dates.

#### **4. Avenir Project Update**

Ed Weinberg (EW Consultants, Inc.) provided an overview of the plans for the Avenir conservation area, which is 2,449 acres of the 4,763-acre Avenir development. A conceptual permit was issued by the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) in August 2017 and a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Clean Water Act Section 404 Permit was issued in May 2018. Land use approvals are ongoing with the City of Palm Beach Gardens. The restoration elements of the Avenir Conservation includes conservation easements, invasive species eradication, hydrologic restoration, native species planting, prescribed fire, and long term maintenance and management. Restoration of the conservation area will be conducted in three phases and an option exists to turn over the conservation area, once restoration is complete, to a third party government entity for long-term maintenance.

Ed Weinberg described the process of disking former pasture areas and the mechanical removal of Brazilian pepper. Ground leveling following existing contours is being done (ground elevations are not being altered) to prepare the soil for native vegetation recruitment and planting. Invasive species such as melaleuca, old world climbing fern and torpedo grass are also being eradicated.

Chip Block asked about the status of coordination with Palm Beach County's (County) Department of Environmental Resources Management (ERM) and the possibility of the Avenir conservation area accepting water from offsite such as the Mecca property. Ed Weinberg responded that there is limited coordination with ERM at this time and stated that storing offsite water within the Avenir conservation area would likely not be compatible with the Avenir project but the flow-through of limited quantities of water may be feasible.

Rachelle Litt asked about the use of Glyphosate to remove and control undesirable vegetation and the potential impacts to downstream environments. Ed Weinberg responded that he feels Glyphosate is safe and effective and the application rates being used for the Avenir project are consistent with the recommend rates which are based on agricultural research.

#### **5. Loxahatchee River Restoration Local Initiative and Mecca Site Evaluation**

Jeremy McBryan (County) provided an overview of activities related to USACE's Loxahatchee River Watershed Restoration Project (Loxahatchee Project) since the April 18, 2019 WRTF meeting. Activities completed include County staff briefing the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) on the motion passed by the WRTF on April 18, 2019 and BCC approval of the following motion at the April 30, 2019 BCC workshop meeting:

- Continue to support state and federal efforts to restore the Loxahatchee River Watershed
- Communicate key concerns with the proposed project
- Express interest in collaborating with USACE and SFWMD to reconsider the Mecca Reservoir to be more compatible with adjacent lands

Based on the BCC-approved motion and additional board direction received on April 30, 2019, the County submitted written comments to USACE on the Loxahatchee Project Draft Report on May 6, 2019. The County then met with SFWMD on May 20, 2019 and USACE on June 7, 2019 to

discuss concerns and potential forward paths. On July 2, 2019, the BCC approved a Consultant Services Agreement with Kimley-Horn and Associates to conduct a Loxahatchee River Restoration Local Initiative and Mecca Site Evaluation (Local Initiative) with the following objectives:

- Provide technical information necessary to enable continued collaboration with USACE and SFWMD
- Optimize or improve the Loxahatchee Project by assessing additional alternatives and local initiative elements
- Provide tools that can be used for future County water resources planning and management

One of the key goals of the Local Initiative is to enable the County to provide technical information to SFWMD prior to SFWMD Governing Board approval of a letter of support to USACE for the Loxahatchee Project, planned for October 2019. Jeremy provided the expected future activities and timeline for the Loxahatchee Project, which includes public and agency review of the Final Report and USACE headquarters approval via a Chief's Report in March 2020. Rama Rani (Kimley-Horn) then provided a brief overview of the Local Initiative elements and potential concepts/features to be considered for further evaluation.

Jay Steinle (SFWMD) asked that the County continue to engage with SFWMD staff and stated that the consideration of the letter of support on the Loxahatchee Project will likely be pushed to the November 2019 SFWMD Governing Board meeting. Jay Steinle expressed that it is still imperative that SFWMD and USACE work towards getting the Loxahatchee Project authorized by the U.S. Congress as part of a 2020 Water Resources Development Act but is committed to working with local stakeholders to optimize the plan. He also agreed that additional information on Aquifer Storage and Recovery well performance would be beneficial.

Scott Kelly (City of West Palm Beach) supports including the C-51 Reservoir in the County's evaluation and feels that water quality modeling or assessments need to occur due to high conductivity in the L-8 Canal which can impact the City's water supply. Chad Kennedy (Florida Department of Environmental Protection; FDEP) asked that FDEP continue to be informed of the County's efforts and many of the concerns raised during the public review of the Draft Report will be addressed in the Final Report. A suggestion to convene technical experts that have been involved with the local initiative was then proposed.

#### **6. General Task Force Member Comments**

Melissa McKinlay has concerns with the proposed above-ground reservoir on the Mecca site and supports efforts to reconsider the plan. She also asked for a briefing by USACE at the next WRTF meeting, if possible, on the recent draft proposal to implement a deviation to the existing Lake Okeechobee operational schedule and how this and other future water policy decisions may affect Palm Beach County stakeholders.

#### **7. General Public Comments**

Scott Kelly offered the City of West Palm Beach's support of the County's Local Initiative as well as the ongoing Lake Okeechobee operations re-evaluation, suggested convening a technical

working group to enable collective evaluation of issues and communication of concerns to the USACE, suggested that modeling may be needed to understand the risks of modifying Lake Okeechobee operations to all stakeholders in the County, as water supply and economic impacts could be devastating.

Chip Block suggested that the Technical Professional Working Group meet and report back to the WRTF, with recommendations, if appropriate, on the potential risks of the proposed changes to Lake Okeechobee operations and how the changes could affect Palm Beach County stakeholders.

Jay Foy (District Engineer for Indian Trail Improvement District; ITID) reiterated ITID's concerns regarding the Loxahatchee Project, which include the Mecca reservoir embankment height, the exclusion of many features that were envisioned in the original restoration plan, and the potential overestimation of the source of water within the ITID system. Jay applauds the County taking the lead on this first step of the Local Initiative effort as he feels we cannot wait for SFWMD and USACE to implement a comprehensive water resources plan in Palm Beach County, which addresses flood control, water supply and environmental restoration.

Drew Martin (Sierra Club) stated that Scripps was not developed on the Mecca site due in part to Sierra Club's opposition. Drew feels that water supply utilities solely relying on Lake Okeechobee is risky due to potential dry conditions that will occasionally occur within the Lake, there needs to be less sod in development projects, south Florida landscape practices need to change, too much potable water is used for outdoor irrigation, and mobile irrigation laboratories are available to assist businesses improve irrigation efficiency and implement water conservation practices. Chip suggested that a future WRTF meeting include a presentation on water conservation, perhaps Bud Howard with the Loxahatchee River District.

Jeff Koons congratulated staff on starting the Local Initiative modeling effort, stated that consumptive use permits are uncertain with proposed changes to Lake Okeechobee operations, stated the County has the best water and the most land, confirmed that the flow direction of Avenir conservation area discharges is both east and north, stated the new normal is "we have to do our own stuff", we cannot wait, ITID water is great, and if their water is managed correctly, 18,000 septic tanks would work perfectly, we have great water and great natural systems.

## **8. Adjournment**

Chip Block adjourned the meeting at approximately 3:30 p.m.



**Palm Beach County Water Resources Task Force**  
**Meeting Sign-in Sheet**  
**July 25, 2019**  
**1:30 pm**



Name	Organization	Email	Phone
Ted Winsberg	WRTF		
ALAN WERTERNY	MOCK ROOS		
Brian Accardo	MBDU		
Sheryl Wood	MBDV	swood@mansonbaldes.com	
ED WEINBERG	EWC		
Dan MacREIDER	LENGUEORITIES	DMA602P9@GMAIL.COM	
DREW MARTIN	SESEA CLUB	DMandCH6@aol.com	
CHIP BLOCK	JIC		
LAURA CORRY	SFWMD	LCORRY@SFWMD.GOV	561-692-6012
ADRIAN SALIE	NABCID		
Tommy Strowd	LWDD	tstrowd@lwdd.net	561 722 4551
Jeff Koons	ADVOCATE	JFKoons@GMAIL.COM	
MARK ELSNER	SFWMD	melsner@sfwmd.gov	
Kraig Krum	PBLERM	kkrum@pbj.org	



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Name	Organization	Email	Phone
Michael Johnson	Indian Trails	mjohnson@indiantrails.com	
Frank Bernardino	Anfield Consulting	frankeanfieldflorida.com	561/718-2345
Anne Cox	Familylandremembered.biz		561/339-1549
Gregg Weiss	PBC BCC	gweisse@pbcgov.org	561-355-2202
Rebecca Elliott	FDACS OACP	relliott@stfund.gov	561-682-6040
Monica Mayotte	City of Boca Raton	mmayotte@myboca.us	561/212-5543
Vay Foy	P.T.O	vfoyston@gmail.com	242- <del>5028</del>
Brian Shields	Calce Worth Beach	bshield@calceworthbeachfl.gov	561-1675
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Clifford Hippolyte	Stanley Consultants	hippolyteclifford@stanleygroup.com	561-584-8736
Danna Ackerman White	Vice Mayor Dave Kerner	dawhite@pbcgov.org	355-2203
Richard Rapeloff	PBC League of Cities	rapeloffr@pbcgov.org	355-4484
MARJORIE CRAIG		marjorie.g.craig@gmail.com	813.598.0503
Collyn Kowalsky	Nason Yeager	ckowalsky@nasonyeager.com	561-248-3922



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Name	Organization	Email	Phone
Suzanne Mecher	CDM Smith	mechlerse@cdmsmith.com	561-359-3933
Jake Leech	PBC Resilience	pleech@pbcgov.org	
ERNIE COX	PBA/FLA	ERNIE.FAMILY.LAW@PBAFLA.COM	B12 561-762-2282
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Karen Marcus	Sustainable PBC	Karen.Tmarcus@pbcgov.org	561
Scott Kelly	CITY OF WPB	SDKELLY@WPB.ORG	561-822-1400
Albrey Arrington	Lot. River Dist	albrey@lrecd.org	561-747-5700
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Denise Palmatier	Kimley-Horn	denise.palmatier@kimley-horn.com	561-723-0402



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Name	Organization	Email	Phone
JEREMY McBRYAN	PBC		
DAVE STEWART	LANTANA		
MELISSA MCKINLAY	PBC		
JAY STEINLE	SFWMD		
JOHN FLANIGAN	ENVIRONMENT REP.		