Martin County Projects Update



Rivers Coalition Meeting October 30, 2014 at 11 a.m., City of Stuart Commission Chambers

(Update provided by Deborah Drum, Ecosystem Restoration & Management Division)

- Martin County is finalizing design and has received the ACOE permit for the Bessey Creek Hybrid Wetland
 Treatment Technology project. Bids for construction are being obtained and the project should be under
 construction within the next month.
- Martin County presented a grant application through the St. Lucie River Issues Team on October 3rd for the Willoughby Creek Water Quality Improvement Project. The project has been ranked 2nd out of six applications for St. Lucie River Estuary funding.
- Martin County Fertilizer Ordinance: On October 7 Martin County's Board of County Commissioners approved revisions to the Fertilizer Ordinance. The revisions include:
 - a requirement for 50% slow release nitrogen;
 - o a requirement for 0% phosphorus fertilizer; and
 - o a requirement for an increased setback to 25 feet for fertilizer application adjacent to water bodies. Staff is working on a requested follow up item for more enhanced enforcement options for the Fertilizer Ordinance provisions.
- Water Quality: The County has received the DRAFT St. Lucie River Microbial Source Tracking Wet Season Report and is currently reviewing it internally. In this study, 5 of the 14 sites had detections of chemical and/or biological markers and elevated bacterial counts in at least 2 of the 3 sampling events. The presence of a human fecal source marker (qPCR Bacteriodales HF183) was detected at sites located at Golden Gate (MCWQ-11) and All American Ditch (MCWQ-14). The combination of consistently elevated counts of fecal coliform bacteria, the presence of the human marker, and detection of sucralose at these 2 sites suggests inadequately treated human waste water sources may be present.

Based on the evaluation of results and site conditions, FDEP recommends that 1) microbial source tracking sampling designs be fine-tuned for each site to address site-specific conditions; 2)study design is repeated during the dry season and; 3)a Walk the Watershed event occur around the All American Ditch and Golden Gate water bodies looking for potential sources. We plan on taking an informational update item to our Board of County Commissioners on November 18th based on a presentation of the data created by FDEP.

• WOTUS: The US Environmental Protection Agency has extended for the second time the public comment period on its controversial proposed rule to define the scope of Waters of the United States under Clean Water Act jurisdiction, and the Martin County Board of County Commissioners directed staff on October 28 to submit comments consistent with the following policy statement: SUPPORT legislation that clarifies that local streets, gutters, and human-made ditches are excluded from the definition of "Waters of the U.S.," while also requiring federal agencies to consult with state and local officials to identify which waters should be federally regulated and which should be left to the states.

- Water Farming Tour: Martin County Commissioners were invited via Congressman Murphy and toured individually the Caulkins Citrus Company's water farming pilot project underway, designed to help clean and reduce the flow of water to the St. Lucie River and Indian River Lagoon by increasing water storage on the land, in partnership with the SFWMD.
- All Aboard Florida DEIS: Currently, Martin County staff submitting their comments and recommendations on aspects of the DEIS relevant to their work, and Ecosystem Restoration and Management Staff are reviewing the environmental impacts of the project-- staff will present the technical comments on the DEIS to the Martin County Board of County Commissioners at their November 18, 2014 meeting.
- Everglades Restoration Update: \$101 Million Contract Announced to support C-44 Treatment Wetlands: The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) Governing Board recently announced its investment of approximately \$101 million in a contract to construct the treatment wetlands portion of the C-44 Reservoir and Stormwater Treatment Area (STA). Once complete, the STA will include 32 miles of berms, 30 miles of canals and 56 concrete water control structures. Inside the berms, plants such as cattails, pickerel weed and bulrush will remove and store nutrients, including phosphorus, from the water before it flows into the St. Lucie River and Estuary. The six cells of vegetation are critical components of the overall C-44 Reservoir Project, which will also include a 3,400-acre reservoir capable of storing about 16 billion gallons of water among other features.
- Indian River Lagoon Counties Collaborative Update: The Indian River Lagoon Counties Collaborative is Chaired by Martin County Board of County Commissioners Vice Chair Ed Fielding and includes commissioners from Volusia, Brevard, Indian River, St. Lucie and Martin Counties. At the September meeting of the Indian River Lagoon Counties Collaborative, the members discussed the Be Flordian program, draft legislative priorities, heard a presentation on the Grove Land Reservoir and Stormwater Treatment Area and an update on the National Estuary Program structure. The next meeting of the Collaborative will be held on Friday, November 7 from 1:00 4:00 p.m. in the Indian River County Commission Chambers, 1801 27th Street, Building A (South), Vero Beach, FL Topics on the agenda include a tentative presentation by Linda Seals, University of Florida, Brevard County Extension Director and finalization of the federal and state legislative priorities. These priorities will also be considered by the Martin County Board of County Comissioners for adoption.

• County Coalition for Responsible Management of Lake Okeechobee ● St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee Estuaries ● Lake Worth Lagoon: The County Coalition hosted its annual 16 County Ecosystem Summit on September 12, 2014. The Coalition invited representatives from all 16 counties that comprise the South Florida Water Management District to discuss and adopt shared legislative priorities associated with the health and welfare of the ecosystem, and heard presentations from Col. Alan Dodd from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Dan DeLisi of the South Florida Water Management District and Drew Barlett from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. The 16 counties collectively represent nearly 8 million Floridians and are represented by 12 Congressional members in the United States House of Representatives as well as by Senator Bill Nelson and Senator Marco Rubio. The 16 Counties 2015 Federal and State Legislative Priorities were approved at the Summit and include:

#1 Herbert Hoover Dike (HHD)

FEDERAL: Increase annual appropriation or rehabilitation of the HHD to accelerate project completion

#2 Kissimmee River Restoration
FEDERAL AND STATE: Continued appropriations to complete restoration
Other important priorities:

- FEDERAL AND STATE: Funding necessary to complete St. Lucie C-44 reservoirs/STA complex and the entire Indian River Lagoon-South project including the C-23, C-24 and C-25 projects
- FEDERAL AND STATE: Funding necessary to complete the C-43 project
- FEDERAL: An updated Water Resources and Reform Development Act every two years to include authorization of crucial ecosystem restoration projects
- STATE: Protect local fertilizer ordinances
- STATE: Protect local wetland protection ordinances, oppose any preemption to regulations, particularly in water control districts created and operating pursuant to chapter 298, Florida State Statutes
- STATE: Support the recommendations of the Senate Select Committee on Indian River Lagoon and Lake Okeechobee Basin

The Everglades Caucus, co-chaired by Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart and Congressman Alcee Hastings, wishes to host the County Coalition at their meeting in Washington, D.C. As a result, plans are underway for the 2nd Annual 16 County Lobby Day/Fly-In. The meeting is tentatively planned for December 3 or 4 and we hope to have confirmation very soon, we will advise as soon as possible.

Please note: the December meeting date of the County Coalition has been changed due to the potential fly in. The December County Coalition meeting will be held on Friday, December 12 at 10 a.m. at the Judge William L. Hendry Courtroom, located at 304 NW 2nd Street, Okeechobee Florida, 34972. As discussed at the September meeting, the County Coalition is reviving the annual "BBQ" which will be hosted following the meeting at 12 noon.