

Rivers Coalition

Meeting Minutes: June 27, 2019

Mark Perry called the meeting to order at 11:00 am and led the flag salute.

Members In attendance: 80 people were present. Mark Perry (FOS), Charles Grande (Pres. Council of H.I.), Darrell Brand (Palm Cove Yacht Club), George Jones (ORCA), Joanne Swann (St. Lucie Sailing Club), Alex Gillen (Bullsugar), Paul Laura (HIPI), Marty Baum (Indian Riverkeeper), Blair Wickstrom (Florida Sportsman), Brittany Bearden (MC Farm Bureau), Regina Wood (MC Native Plant Society), Jim Harter (Stuart Flyrodders), Marcy Pitkin (TC Unitarian Universalist), George MacLean (Guardians of Martin County), Lisa Beagle (Surfrider Foundation), Jackie Trancynger (MC Conservation Alliance), Shari Anker (Conservation Alliance of SLC), Doug Gaston (Audubon of FL), Jeanette Hartzell (League of Women Voters SLC), Laurie Aguerra-Arcos (League of Women's Voter of MC), Ric Hall (River Warriors), Dave Derrenbacker (MC Realtors Assn), Michelle Weiler (TC Rowing), Cheryl Bryson (Venture Three), Linda Grand (American Association of University Women), Jerry Appell (27-80mPaddlers), Toby Overdorf (Crossroads Environmental)

Non-members: Sarah Heard (Martin County Commissioner), Merritt Matheson and Becky Bruner (Stuart City Council), Ben Hogarth (City of Stuart), Dianne Hughes, John Maehl and Vivan Powell (Martin County), Amy Gallante (Brian Mast), Carl Stewart, Jim Skeoch, Jennifer Brand, Daina Karol (FL Native Plant Society), Mike Knepper, Bob Daniels (Kation X), Michelle Byriel (FOS), Becky Harris, John Snyder, Lt Col Jennifer Reynolds, Erica Skolte, Jessica Mallett, Savannah Lacey (USACE), Bruce Osborn (RC Speakers Bureau).

Chairman's Comments:

Mark Perry recognized local legislators: Merritt Matheson and Becky Bruner of City of Stuart, Sarah Heard of Martin County. All RC organization member representatives were asked to stand and introduce themselves.

Current Action Items: "Partners in Preserving our River" certificates given to Illustrated Properties and Harbour Ridge Yacht Club for their generous donations

Mini-Presentation: State Representative District 83 Toby Overdorf spoke of Tallahassee legislation. Gave updates on the ban on plastic straws, biosolids moratorium, SFWMD Caucus forums across the State. Many questions were asked of him.

Special Presentation: Topic: CERP and LOSOM Updates by Lt Col Jennifer Reynolds USACE. She received a standing ovation when finished. Her PPT can be seen on RC website.

Martin County Report: Dianne Hughes said that Lake O is at 11.26 feet. Her PPT can be seen on RC website. Go to the following websites for water quality updates: www.martin.fl.us; www.martin.floridahealth.gov; www.dep.state.fl.us and www.reportalagalbloom.com.

City of Stuart Report: Merritt Matheson said there will be a City sponsored River Clean-up at Shepard Park July 27th 8-12

SFWMD Report: Mark Perry read Jacqui Thurlow-Lippisch's SFWMD update:

1. SFWMD Chief Officer of Resiliency position has been posted
2. SFWMD denied Sunbreak Farms permit for biosolids spreading due to possible leakage/runoff to IRL
3. SWMD Presentation at last business meeting by Dr Hurato on Climate Change/Sea Level Rise. Consortium of S.E. Florida gave presentation to Gov. Board
4. Following Dr Hurato's presentation Staff presented with ACOE on ACOE/SFWMD structures most affected/to be most affected by Sea Level Rise
5. Voted to support Old Tamiami Trail removal allowing more water to go south; later it was announced another 40 million from the state and 60 million from USDOT was given to lift two more sections of Tamiami Trail
6. Gov Board allowed extended lease of lands in St Lucie Co. for model airplane club with understanding that property may be needed for DWM (holding water) in rainy times. This is a new requirement as makes lands of value and not just leased until built upon for projects
7. Reviewed budget with record 417 million earmarked for Everglades projects
8. SFWMD G.B. voted to support staff pursuing eminent domain for Remaining Lands Acquisition of lands that have

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no people or businesses on them that can help with South-Dade Hydrologic Improvements to send more water south

9. SFWMD took action to build the storm water treatment area for the EAA reservoir 18 months ahead of the original schedule
10. SFWMD continues to assist ACOE in recovery of Lake Ecology and to minimize the risk of summer harmful discharges
11. DEP is holding workshops July 25, 26, 27 for "New Biosolids Regulations. Please see website and participate. I will send Gary Roderick's comments to Mark Perry.

Lake O Report:

Doug Gaston of Audubon reported that Lake O is recovery, the vegetation is coming back. Did lose 40,000 acres of submerged vegetation which provided habitation for fish. The bad news is there is still blue-green algae on the lake and some areas have no vegetation due to not enough sunlight.

State Report: George Jones stated that Gov. DeSantis did cut some projects but most Everglades projects came through unscathed. There is 625 million in State budget for eco-system renewal. Did ask for 100 million for Florida Forever funding, only got 33 million. Gov. formed a Blue-green algae task force.

LOSOM: RC is asking people to carpool to July 10th SFWMD workshop on northern Everglades and estuaries

River Coalition Committee Reports: n/a

Local Issues & Estuary Water Quality: Mark Perry said the water is "pretty good." Jim Harter said that the Violet Goby's in the South and North Fork of the St. Lucie River are dying due to lack of oxygen.

Indian Riverkeeper Update:

Marty Baum spoke of the "Moms for Clean Water" Marty has asked the RC to discuss and endorse this campaign.

HR 3324 Discussion: Blair Wickstrom explained that Brian Mast is replacing the "Stop Toxic Discharge" Bill with "Protect Florida" Bill. This bill includes Human Health into the equation. "We want zero risk just like sugar gets." Mark Perry said the RC board has written a draft letter in support of HR 3324.

Paul Laura made a "point of order" motion to "delay the vote on supporting HR3324 until the membership has a chance to read and comment on it. He is not objecting to the bill but just wants time to consider it. The motion was 2nd by Marty Baum. Discussion was called for and Regina Wood said that she needed time to contact her board for direction. Mark stated that the RC By-laws only needs 2/3 of RC board to approve, which we have. Still needs 2/3 of full body of RC members to vote and ratify the support letter.

Motion was made by Paul Laura to delay the vote until the next meeting. The motion to delay was approved by the majority, 2 people voted against the delay.

Members Comments:

Shari Anker wanted to use the correct verbiage in regards to blue-green algae, which is a natural part of the food chain. We should be using the term "cyanobacteria."

Mark Perry announced the Blue-Green Task Force meeting Monday, July 1st in Ft. Myers. The link to the webinar will be up on RC website.

This Saturday is the Toxic Trail Run from Port Mayaca (5:30 am) to Stuart Beach.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:45 pm