

Rivers Coalition

Meeting Minutes: May 22, 2019

Mark Perry called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm and led the flag salute.

Members In attendance: 70 people were present. Mark Perry (FOS), Charles Grande (Pres. Council of H.I.), Jim Moir (MRC), Darrell Brand (Palm Cove Yacht Club), George Jones (ORCA), Todd Weissing (Lighthouse Point HOA), Dan Merritt (Seagate HOA), Joanne Swann and Joe Sawyer (St. Lucie Sailing Club), Glenn Kellis (Stuart Rod & Reel Club), Alex Gillen (Bullsugar), Paul Laura (HIPI), Marty Baum (Indian Riverkeeper), Brittany Bearden (MC Farm Bureau), Regina Wood (MC Native Plant Society), Mike Glynn (Locks Landing), Wayner Kuster (Four Winds Condo Assn), Jim Harter (Stuart Flyrodders), Marcy Pitkin (TC Unitarian Universalist), Martha Boston (Nettles Island Community Action), George MacLean (Guardians of Martin County), Gayle Ryan (MC Democratic Environmental Caucus), Lisa Beagle and Roselyne Rose (Surfrider Foundation), Jackie Trancynger (MC Conservation Alliance), Annie Potts (TC Rowing Club), Paul Gray (Audubon of FL), Hilarie Davis (USSCMC), Bill Evans (Palm Cove Yacht Club), Bobbi Deemer (League of Women's Voter of MC), Diane Goldberg (St Lucie Audubon), Ric Hall (River Warriors)

Non-members: Merritt Matheson (Stuart City Council), Ben Hogarth (City of Stuart), Jacqui Thurlow-Lippisch (SFWMD), John Maehl and Katie Bowes (Martin County), John Haddox (Brian Mast), Carl Stewart, Jim Skeoch, Richard E Hall, Todd Thurlow, Sandy and Tom Thurlow, Jenny Flaugh, Ed Lippisch, Jennifer Brand, Matt Theobald, Dave Derrenbacker, Daina Karol (FL Native Plant Society), Mike Knepper,

Chairman's Comments:

Mark Perry recognized Legislators: Merritt Matheson of City of Stuart, John Haddox for Brian Mast. All RC organization member representatives were asked to stand and introduce themselves.

Current Action Items: New member St Lucie Audubon, represented by Diane Goldberg, was voted in. Diane spoke a bit about her concerns and legislation.

Mini-Presentation: Lisa Beagle of Surfrider Foundation spoke of the Ocean Friendly Restaurant (OFR) program

Special Presentation: Topic: Lake Okeechobee Satellite Imagery by Todd Thurlow

Martin County Report: Dianne Hughes was absent due to her receiving an environmental award. John Maehl said that Lake O is at 11.20 feet. The eel grass in Western Lake O is restoring itself. 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: Ben Hogarth reported that the City has signed onto the nationwide carbon emission tax to reduce emissions. Also voted against the air blasting needed to do a survey of the ocean floor for Oil Exploration on the Continental Shelf. June 6th 4:00 City of Stuart is having a workshop on plastics and has joined Martin County in regulations against single use plastics.

SFWMD Report: Jacqui Thurlow-Lippisch reported that the SFWMD board has altered its mission statement to make it more public oriented. Mark Perry reminded all of the workshop to be held the day prior to the SFWMD meetings. This next one will be on the northern everglades restoration

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Lake O Report:

Dr. Paul Gray of Audubon said the eel grass is recovering and hopes the Lake stays below 11 feet.

State Report: Mark Perry had a handout of the House Majority Report with the budget items in detail. George Jones encouraged people to follow Florida Conservation Voters.org for Legislative updates.

LOSOM: Mark Perry said that the ACOE received more than 8,000 comments on LOSOM from the public. Alex Gillen spoke also.

River Coalition Committee Reports:

Speakers Bureau: Todd Weissing recapped the 4 speaking engagements in the month of May. Bruce and Barbara to join the Speakers Bureau committee.

River Kidz: Barbara Osborn spoke of the upcoming RK events.

Local Issues & Estuary Water Quality:

Mark Perry stated that the water quality of good. There is seagrass and oyster recovery. Thanks to the over 40 volunteers who weekly test the waters for FOS. FOS also voted against off-shore drilling.

Indian Riverkeeper Update:

Marty Baum stated that he has been Riverkeeper for over 7 years and he demanded that Lake O be cleaned to stop the algae from blooming. Marty had two speaking engagements, the Humanist Club and Pelican Island. There are two women interested in becoming riverkeepers for Mosquito Lagoon and Loxahatchee River.

Members Comments:

Mark Perry reminded people of World Ocean Day on June 8th. There will be oyster shell bagging events.

Alex Gillen warned not to be fooled by politicians saying how much money they got for Florida Forever, it wasn't as much as requested and some 50 million was rolled over from last year. To inflate the numbers.

Paul Laura made the motion to have the Rivers Coalition to write a letter of concern to our local State Rep. Toby Overdorf on his sponsorship of House Bill 771 (it was vetoed by Gov De Santis). Also ask Toby to attend the next RC meeting. Jackie Trancynger 2nd the motion. The motion was unanimously accepted. Jim Moir to write the letter and Mark Perry will sign it.

Hillarie Davis stated that the US Sailing Center of Martin County also has banned plastic straws, recycles, uses cornstarch utensils, and the student sailors compost their trash.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:39 pm