

Rivers Coalition

Meeting Minutes: July 23, 2020

Mark Perry called the ZOOM meeting to order at 11.05 am.

Members In attendance: 46 people were present on ZOOM call

Chairman's Comments: Mark Perry welcomed all to Zoom call. Greeted Merritt Matheson, Stuart City Commissioner and Toby Overdorf, State Representative. Welcomed candidates: Elise Ackerly (Dem District 82) and Corrina Balderramos Robinson.

Mark explain that Rivers Coalition is a 501 © (3) and cannot be endorsing any candidates. Votewater.org and Bullsugar are 501 © (4) and they CAN be political.

Special Presentation: Blair Wickstrom is representing Vote Water. Org in the "Vote Water" presentation. See ZOOM presentation at RC Facebook and RC website. <http://riverscoalition.org/>

Martin County Report: Dianne Hughes will be making comments on the deviation to ACOE.

More enterococcus reported (Leighton Park in Palm City) due to heavy local runoff due to recent rains have made a big impact on system, even though there were no Lake O discharges. We are in our own system right now.

Darrell asked for County insight into the upcoming dredging project from the locks to the crossroads. Dianne was under the impression that is not so much removal project as a navigation project. Several RC BOD members thought that the disturbance in the estuary of turbidity will have impacts outside the scope of the project. <https://www.martin.fl.us/LOSOM> <https://www.martin.fl.us/WaterQuality>.

City of Stuart Report: Merritt Matheson and Ben Hogarth attended a web meeting of ACOE. Merritt said that the City has many questions regarding the upcoming dredging by ACOE of St. Lucie River to Locks. The City would prefer no dredging at all. Mark Perry will provide info on Mike Ornellas so City and County and contact him

SFWMD Report: Jackie Thurlow-Lippisch was at another meeting but sent this report.

1. Ed Lippisch was up in the plane on 7-18-20 and the winds appear to have blown the massive algae bloom southwest along the shoreline/marsh area of Lake Okeechobee. (posted these photos on Facebook and in blog post.) There was no bloom seen off Port Mayaca. ~Of course this can change any time.

2. SFWMD Water Sampling License Agreement with Sailfish Point-monitoring water quality via a well owned by property owners and County Club Assn. (#14 7-9-20 consent agenda).

3. Monitoring of Lake Okeechobee Sediment Discharges to Caloosahatchee and St Lucie Estuaries (#16 7-9-20 content agenda). Thank you for speaking on this issue at GB meeting.

4. SFWMD/USACOE Project Partnership Agreement for the Central Everglades Planning Project South Phase. The District seeks to enter into a PPA with the USACOE for the CEPP South phase which helps deliver more water south into ENP... Very important! (#26 7-9-20 discussion agenda).

State and Federal Agencies: n/a

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Lake O. Update: Dr. Paul Gray was at another meeting but said the Lake is filling up slowly, the Lake is at 12.81 ft. Todd Thurlow presented a Lake O report showing his satellite photo research. *Can be seen at RC website in the recording of this meeting.*

Mark Perry said EAA takes out 130 billion gallons each year for their irrigation. Sugar then sends it south and fills our water conservation areas and STAs so that if we have rain event there won't be room for the rain flow and they will discharge it to the East and West.

Diane Goldstein made the point that local landowners need to build their own STA's on their property to clean their water first before releasing it into canals.

State Legislation Report: Mark spoke on WRDA 2020 Bill, it will make ACOE check on Blue Green Algae before releasing from Lake O. Mark discussed the Clean Waterways Act and Environmental Accountability Act.

River Coalition Committee Reports:

River Kidz: Nic Mader would like to post the VoteWater.org voter guide on RK FB page. She needs a new place to store her boat that she uses for Dolphin Ecology Project.

Local Issues & Estuary Water Quality: Mark Perry stated that the water quality is at "D+" "Poor."

Due to all the recent local rainwater runoff into the St. Lucie System. The salinity has dropped.

Mark shared SFWMD report by ??? Glenn on Lake O Cyanobacteria Bloom Potential.

Indian Riverkeeper Update: Mike Conner spoke on how the Clean Waterways Act has been watered down.

Spoke on how St Lucie County is spraying weed killers next to the water impoundment. He called Chris Dzadovsky of St. Lucie County to report it, who in turn gave him the name of the employee in charge of the project.

This week is the 13th Annual Waterways Clean-up. It will be one week long.

Members Comments: Mark Perry explained that MRC-Low Impact Design (LID) letter by Leesa Souto will have Rivers Coalition as one of the signers.

Mark asked Merritt Matheson and Dianne Hughes to forward any upcoming meetings regarding our IRL system be sent to Barbara for distribution among the RC members via e-mail.

Eve Samples reminded everyone of the Blue Green Algae Task Force on-line meeting on July 29 8:30 a.m.

Reinaldo Diaz stated that legislation needs to emphasize state wide warning signs.

Toby Overdorf, State Representative, wanted to point out that he had written 1363 Bill that was promoting our water but that it didn't pass. He is hoping another legislator's bill will add some of his ideas. He gave out his cell phone (772) 260-9689 and encouraged all to call him with questions or comments.

Blair asked Toby to fill out the VoteWater.org questionnaire.

Next meeting Sept 24th 11:00 ZOOM Mtg.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:40 pm