

Rivers Coalition

Meeting Minutes: September 24, 2020

Mark Perry Called the ZOOM Meeting to order at 11:05 a.m.
Members in attendance: 44 people were present on ZOOM Call.

Chairman's Comments: In lieu of saying the flag salute Mark Perry reminded us how blessed we are to live in a country where we can freely meet and have our voices heard.

Special Presentation: Jim Moir introduced Joanie Reagan, retired Storm Water Management Director of Cocoa Beach. Joanie gave her presentation on Storm Water Management with Low Impact Development/Design (LID). Leesa Souto of Marine Resources Council also spoke after Joanie's presentation.

You can see the ZOOM meeting recording and PPT at RC website: <http://riverscoalition.org>

Martin County Report: Dianne Hughes gave the water quality statistics:

St. Lucie River:

Salinity 1 psu-12 psu. Poor quality for oysters.

Chlorophyll 1.45-11 micrograms per liter.

Oxygen 4.5-5 micrograms per liter. South Fork oxygen is 2.43 mpl, depressed.

Temperature 81 - 84 degrees F.

Indian River Lagoon:

Salinity 26 psu-30 psu.

Chlorophyll 2.62-5 micrograms per liter.

Oxygen 3.8-5 micrograms per liter. .

Temperature 83 degrees F.

No fish kills or algae blooms reported.

Report of brown water in North Fork. Could be Spring Tide mixing with groundwater seepage or canal discharges to cause turbidity.

City of Stuart: Ben Hogarth is feeling positive about LOSOM performance measures even though it will continue another year.

In July the City of Stuart sent a letter to SFWMD outlining the legal history of the Water Resource Bill and discouraging them from inserting the Savings Clause into it.

City wrote a letter of thanks to Riverkeeper Alliance for the lawsuit brought by them against the USACE. The basis was the USACE did not follow the process of law regarding endangered species. It was a symbolic victory. Merritt Matheson said today's presentation was excellent and wants the City of Stuart to go in the LID direction. Merritt passed on Mike Conner's photos to LT Polk of USACE showing the high water and potential flooding to residential communities on the South Fork of SLR.

SFWMD: Jacqui Thurlow-Lippisch said that she and her husband, Ed, just completed the southern Loop of Florida in their trawler. She was glad to see the waters that she represents.

At last governing board meeting they approved the interconnecting canal between C-44 and C-24, construction will begin immediately. \$27 million will be spent on STA #2 improvement. The cost is to be shared equally between taxpayer and the EAA tax. Although 95% of the water in STAs come from EAA and not Lake O.

Lake O is at 15.24' and discharges might occur. JTL reminded us to be thankful for the two years in which "we were NOT dumped on." All water conservation areas are full except WCA # 2 which is almost full so we can't send water south.

October 8th is next SFWMD governing board meeting online, prior registration is needed.

Mark Perry said that the LOSOM new draft IDS (Integrated Delivery Schedule) is coming out soon. Mark will send to Barbara the workshop date to post on RC website.

Lake O Update: Dr. Paul Gray likes the Lake O level at 15.24', it is perfect for a healthy lake. Last year the Lake was at 14'-15' and it never flooded so the wetland species were replaced with terrestrials. Now the snail kites and wading birds are doing better.

During Tuesday's Periodic Scientist phone call it was discussed that the hurricane season is over in 4-5 weeks and hopefully the Lake O level will not be reduced.

State Legislation: Toby Overdorf, State Legislator, gave his update.

Coalition Reports:

River Kidz:

Nic Mader said not much activity since kids can't gather doing this COVID pandemic. She encouraged people to share the new RK workbook found on RK website.

Local Issues & Estuary Water Quality:

Mark Perry said the water quality is C+.

The South Fork doesn't look good due to local canal runoff and the King Tide.

The 2008 LORS rules state that no discharges can occur if the tailwaters are over 3 'or else the residential areas will flood. Mark hope they will bank the water instead of releasing it.

JTL asked if the Lake O level can now be raised because of the recent Hoover Dike construction. Mark P said the release schedule will not change until all the improvements are complete.

Also if Lake O is raised then the ecology of the lake would be harmed.

Indian Riverkeeper: Mike Conner is out doing a video shoot of the algal bloom on the IRL with filmmaker, Dylan Hansen. Todd Thurlow showed photos that Mike Conner sent in of the North Fork.

Member Comments and Announcements: Greg Braun of Guardians of Martin County spoke of the LoxaLucie Headwater concept of buying privately owned land in western Hobe Sound and conserving it. He will present this idea to The Loxahatchee Management Coordinating Council Monday Sept 28th at 2 p.m. via ZOOM. Also at the MC Native Plant Society meeting on Oct 6th 2 p.m. and the Town of Jupiter on Oct 15th.

Next RC meeting October 22nd 11:00 via ZOOM.

Adjourned 42:45 p.m.