

# Rivers Coalition

## Annual Meeting Minutes: January 28, 2021

Mark Perry called the ZOOM Meeting to order at 11:05 a.m.

Members in attendance: 54+ people were present on ZOOM Call.

### Chairman's Comments:

Mark Perry welcomed all to the Annual Meeting.

### Annual Meeting:

**Review of past year:** Even with the COVID pandemic, the river issues are still around us. A lot of virtual meetings to talk about. The past year was: June-pretty bad, October- discharges, Dec-Jan –pulse releases, and the fresh water affecting the oyster reefs. Now in dry season and we can see the recovery in estuary. The condition of the River “B” – “Good.” Lt Col Kelly of USACE is going to a “deviation schedule” to deviate from LOSOM so there can be more releases to lower Lake O.

### **Announcement of 2021 Board of Directors:**

Mark Perry, President

Charles Grande, Vice President

Jim Moir, Secretary

Darrell Brand, Treasurer

Mike Conner, Director

Eve Samples, Director

Nicole Mader, Director

Todd Thurlow, Director

Todd Weissing, Director

Michelle Weiler, Director

Blair Wickstrom, Director

Mark said there is one vacancy on the board and there are openings on the Committees.

### **Financial Report Summary:**

We have a new CPA Fred Dulas, a River Advocate. Darrell Brand gave a thank you for the past year donations.

**Action Item:** *Barbara to update RC organizational member roster and send it out via email for people to review and update if needed*

**Presentation:** Eve Samples, Mark Perry and Blair Wickstrom presented the Update on LOSOM with additional remarks from Merritt Matheson of City of Stuart and John Maehl of Martin County. *To view the presentation go to: [www.riverscoalition.org](http://www.riverscoalition.org)*

### **Martin County Report:** Dianne Hughes says enterococcus at:

1/27/21 Roosevelt Bridge-moderate/Sandsprit Park and Leighton Park- good

1/19/21 Jensen Beach and Stuart Causeway- good

Salinity at Manatee Pocket is 27-29

South and North Fork of St. Lucie River is 13 units

Lots of manatees and stingrays are around, good recovery for water

### **City of Stuart:** Merritt Matheson toured the waterways with Ken Russell, City of Miami Commissioner.

Merritt is encouraging him to unite and join the argument for water quality. Miami needs more fresh water to regenerate the aquifer. There is hyper salinity in Biscayne Bay. We want to give them more water.

Ben Hogarth- “Aguaculture” to present at Feb 8<sup>th</sup> City Council meeting to present technology to remove vegetation without chemicals

**SFWMD:** Jacqui Thurlow-Lippisch brought up these items:

1. EAA Water Reservations
2. Curtain Wall for 8 and 1/2 square mile area
3. Strategic Plan 5 year update published including Climate Change and Sea Level Rise adaptations (recall these words were not allowed to be mentioned prior to 2019!)
4. Allapattah Flats ribbon cutting of partially restored wetlands. Allapattah Flats is the historic slough that ran between the Green and Orlando Ridges and critical to St Lucie comprehensive restoration. (Part of CERP IRLS natural lands)
5. SFWMD members will be participating at EVCO, Feb. 4 12-1pm.

\*I have been conversing with staff regarding LOSOM; 40e-61/Works of the District/public meetings to coordinate FDEP-FDACS-SFMWD as noted in 2016 Water Bill and never followed; Continued EAA momentum of which staff is doing a great job of; and last a library of **Landscape and Hydrology of the Pre-Drainage Everglades** maps available to the public based on McVoys 2011 publication.

**Lake O Update:** Dr. Paul Gray -there is too much water in the Lake, it is at 15.5 ft.. If the water level stays high then we will have an algae problem next summer. We need to reduce the Lake, it naturally doesn't drop until March. Dr. Gray does not want massive "dumps" but wants the lake lowered.

**State and Federal Legislation:** Charles Grande brought up **Senate Bill 426**, where the State wants to take over the regulation of the ports in Florida. The cleanest part of the lagoon is now northern SLC and southern Indian River County. The Port could be damaged by ballast water and exotics. Ft. Pierce Port should be maintained at County and City level.

**Action Item:** *Charles would like the **Rivers Coalition** to pass a resolution to the State - Senate Bill 426 stating the management of the ports should not be transferred to State level. Senator Gayle Harrell is chair of Transportation Committee, she could have tremendous power of the bill.*

#### **Coalition Reports:**

**River Kidz:** Nic Mader said there are so many manatees out there now. She is getting ready to do a print run of RK workbook to give out to community.

**Speaker Bureau:** Todd W. said Speakers Bureau is the venue to get our message and information out into the community. Next April speaking engagement is at Halpatiokee Park.

#### **Local Issues & Estuary Water Quality:**

FOS Water Quality Report the water quality is B - Good. Strong tides with full moon.

**Seagrass Update:** Jim Moir said SFWMD is now again doing seagrass surveys.

Macro algae shift away from seagrass in ecology of estuary.

**Indian Riverkeeper:** Mike Conner said we have a unified voice regarding no discharges. Water is crystal clear near Hell's Gate. JB causeway fishing pier is closed due to trash left by fishermen, Mike wants the pier open for fishing for public access. Law on the books against littering should be enforced instead of closing the pier. Tyler Treadway's 12 Days of Christmas bought new tires for IRK truck. Mike is on the Seagrass Panel at Everglades Coalition Conference in February.

#### **Member Comments and Announcements:**

Everglades Coalition Conference link :<https://www.evergladescoalition.org/conference>

Next RC meeting February 25, 2021 11:00 via ZOOM.

Adjourned 12:35 p.m.

