

Rivers Coalition

Meeting Minutes: March 25, 2021

Mark Perry called the ZOOM Meeting to order at 11:01 a.m.

Members in attendance: 64+ people were present on ZOOM Call.

Chairman's Comments: Mark Perry welcomed Tim Gysan and Savannah Lacy from USACE Jacksonville. Mark welcomed City of Stuart mayor, Eula Clarke and City commissioners-Becky Bruner and Merritt Matheson. Also Jacqui Thurlow-Lippisch from SFWMD.

Presentation: Tim Gysan introduced himself as having worked at USACE for 21 years. 16 years as an Engineer on CERP. In 2021 he became Project Manager.

He gave PowerPoint presentation on LOSOM and Volume 3 which deals with Lake Okeechobee releases during the year. They are in the middle of updating Vol. 3. To see ZOOM recording of presentation go to www.river-coalition.org or Rivers Coalition Facebook page.

James Moir : If the surface flow attenuation features are removed doesn't that imply the ASRs are for water supply only and how does that balance risk vs Reward against massive cost?

Tim Gysan: The ASR wells provide long term storage to meet water needs of the environment and water supply users without having to hold the lake higher. So it really allows flexibility to manage the lake within the preferred ecological band leading to a healthier lake. They also then in conjunction with the C-53 reservoir make sure water is available for the needs within the Caloosahatchee ecosystem. They also provide the availability of water for the Everglades during dry times. Finally by managing the lake at desired levels, storage is available during large storm events to limit releases to the estuaries. So, yes ASR do help with water supply for both the environmental and water supply users.

Martin County Report: Dianne Hughes: Salinity in the St. Lucie River North and South Fork is 15-16, Middle River gage has been broken by a boat.

City of Stuart: Ben Hogarth said that the most important time is in the next 2-3 months for LOSOM. Mark Thanked Ben for being so proactive on Monday's PDT meeting.

SFWMD: JTL: There was a plan for Col. Kelly and Drew Bartlett to go out by boat but the small craft warning cancelled it. JTL went out with scientists Jessica Frost and Melanie Parker to dive the oyster beds off Rio. Drew Bartlett saw firsthand how important sunlight is to oysters. They saw no seagrass near Boy Scout Island off Sewall's Point. There are 35 snail kite nests along the C-44 Canal.

Lake O Update: Dr. Paul Gray said that the Lake is deeper than he is comfortable with. The danger of toxic algae is looming and the lake level needs to be lowered.

Coalition Reports:

River Kidz: Nic Mader said the corrections to RK workbook is being done now, 5,000 copies to be printed. Nic is working with Valerie Gaynor, the new director of Environmental Studies Center.

Speaker Bureau: Todd W. Since 2004 there have been Health Dept warnings 60% of the time. Our system is broken. Next event is an outdoor event.

Local Issues & Estuary Water Quality:

FOS Water Quality Report the water quality is B- GOOD. It is "F" on the South Fork due to discharges

Seagrass Update: Todd Thurlow showed comparison satellite images. Saw sprouts of seagrass at Sailfish Flats. C-44 Daily 500 cfs is only taking off ½" off lake

Indian Riverkeeper: Mike Conner questioned the utility of pulse releases when we could have had longer time for recovery. Mike told of Brian Mast's three new Bills introduced in Wash DC. Northern estuary the manatees are starving due to lack of seagrasses. Their gut flora is so bad, full of glyphosate from herbicides, Dr. Grant Gilmore is now on Indian Riverkeeper BOD.

Lake Worth Riverkeeper: Reinaldo Diaz thanked City of Stuart for signing on the letter to stop the Bahamas Off-Shore Drilling. Lake Worth is getting some cyanobacteria at S-155 where there are warning signs posted. Reinaldo: This week an average of 2,500 cfs is moving south out of Lake Okeechobee. Approximately 500 cfs of that is making its way to the STAs and WCAs. There is no lake water being sent to the Lake Worth Lagoon but water is moving into the L-8 basin for water supply.

Member Comments and Announcements:

Becky Harris: U of Miami study on (HABS) Harmful Algae Blooms on human health. They are looking for volunteers for 3 month study.

JTL- See her photos from the air on her blog

Greg Braun- Report on LoxaLucie Headwaters

Kelli Dore- Everglades Law Center and Jensen Beach resident said there is a grant given for a summer program to get grassroots advocacy program going at ESC? Asked Nic Mader and Merrit Matheson to contact her.

Next RC meeting April 22, 2021 11:00 via ZOOM. It is Earth Day and we will focus on seagrasses

Adjourned 12:45 p.m.

Links from Chat:

USACE schedules informational meeting for Indian River Lagoon – South C-44 Preliminary Project Operating Manual on April 8 <https://www.saj.usace.army.mil/Media/News-Releases/Article/2529184/usace-schedules-informational-meeting-for-indian-river-lagoon-south-c-44-prelim/>

USACE seeks public comment on Indian River Lagoon - South C-23/C-24 Reservoirs and STA <https://www.saj.usace.army.mil/Media/News-Releases/Article/2542309/usace-seeks-public-comment-on-indian-river-lagoon-south-c-23c-24-reservoirs-and/>

Informational meeting for Indian River Lagoon – South C-44 Preliminary Project Operating Manual on April 8 Thursday, April 8, 2021, at 5:30 p.m.

https://usace1.webex.com/meet/South_Florida_CCO

Telephone: 844-800-2712

Passcode: From Erica Skolte, USACE to Everyone: 11:26 AM

Contact Erica Skolte Erica.A.Skolte@usace.army.mil if you have any questions or are looking for additional information regarding Tim or Savannah's presentations.

