

Rivers Coalition

Meeting Minutes: February 22, 2024

Members via Zoom: Brittany Bearden (Martin County Farm Bureau), Scott Brown (Friends of the Everglades), Kevin Hinkle (St. Lucie Audubon), Kelly Cox (Audubon Florida), Beth Brady (Save the Manatee Club).

Members in person: Mark Perry (Florida Oceanographic Society), Darrell Brand (Palm Cove Yacht Club), Gil Smart (VoteWater), Todd Thurlow (North River Shores Property Assn), Jim Moir-Merritt Matheson-Melissa Burke (Indian Riverkeeper), Eve Samples-Allie Hartman (Friends of the Everglades), Todd Weissing (Lighthouse Point Assn.), Jim Harter (Stuart Rod & Reel Club), Kelli Dore (River Kidz), Greg Braun (Guardians of Martin County), Paul Gray (Audubon Florida), Joe Gilio (LORI), Valentina Miele-Bob Mathias (FOS), Renee Lessard Moreshead (Nettles Island Comm. Action Assn.), Joan Bausch (Martin County Chapter of the Native Plant Society), Paul Uttormark (Sandhill Cove), Jennifer Banks-Lee Williams (Treasure Coast Rowing Club)

Non-members via Zoom: Mike Conner, Coach Ingels, Derek Hennerson, Ernie Barnett, John Amerling, Kathleen White, Lisa Interlandi, Mary Starzinski, Mitchell Roffer, Sherry McCorkle, Skyler Klingshim, Terri Bates, Tim Gysan (USACE), Tom MacVicar, Vivien McLean-Bunce, Heather Schott (Rep. Toby Overdorf), Casey Kniffin (River Kidz), Adam Hart, Allie Pecenka (SCCF), Bill Baker, Danielle Lopes, Libby Pigman, Roland Ottolini, Susan Innis, Caitlin Newcamp, Lisa Kreiger, Erica Welch, Jennifer Smith, Kim Streiber, Kim Singh, Pat LaBalbo.

Non-members in person: Drew Bartlett-Lawrence Glenn-Kathy LaMartina (SFWMD), Col. James Booth-Jaz Levario (USACE), John Maehl (Martin County), Paul Linton-Deb Drum (Palm Beach County), Chris Collins-Ben Hogarth-Campbell Rich-Lee Baggett (City of Stuart), Jacqui Thurlow-Lippisch, Russell Singson (Marine Maintenance Divers), Elton Davis, Maray Burford, Gretchen Dewey, Cole Taschman (Cole Tashy Charters), Daniel Gant, Sean Reed, Eric Eikenberg-Bradley Watson (Everglades Foundation), Mike Knepper, Rebecca Fatzinger-Megan Remick-Jennifer Brand (Save Our River), Becky Harris, Mary Raddabaugh, Steve Goransky, Lynn Castro, Jason Bennett, Cathy Rethmeier, Tommy Schmitz, Aiden Natalie-Jon Roberson (Captains for Clean Water), Geoffrey Smith, Bob Lowery, Alaura MacPherson, Jennifer Dee, Sandra Lyman, Jim George, Douglas Ashley, Richard Stevens, Teresa Smith.

Mark Perry called the meeting to order at 11: am. There were 105 attendees in person, 51 attendees on ZOOM call.

Minutes taken by Miki Blumenthal, Administrative Assistant

Opening Comments: Mark Perry welcomed everyone, including City Commissioners Campbell Rich and Chris Collins. Mark introduced Congressman Brian Mast, who spoke first as he had another engagement to go to.

Congressman Mast addressed Col. James Booth of the USACE, stating that he didn't understand the "risk envelope" regarding the Herbert Hoover Dike right now. He emphasized that one did not go into battle with an outdated plan.

Presentation: "Lake Okeechobee Discharges and Impacts to the St. Lucie River Estuary"

Col. James Booth, USACE District Commander of the Jacksonville District, gave a brief biography and proceeded to give a presentation on the reasoning behind the discharges from Lake Okeechobee. He was joined at the podium by Drew Bartlett, Executive Director of the SFWMD. A lengthy Q&A session ensued between the speakers and the audience.

Unfortunately there were technical difficulties and the meeting was not recorded. Col. Booth's PowerPoint presentation will be posted on www.riverscoalition.org.

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Government & Agency Reports:

Both the USACE and SFWMD included their reports in the main presentation.

Coalition Reports:

Due to time constraints and the length of the meeting, no coalition reports were given.

Member and Public Comments:

Mark Perry recommended the book, *South Florida in Peril*, which describes how Congress and the State of Florida started destroying our River of Grass as early as 1911.

Mark Perry asked Col. Booth when we will see the new LOSOM schedule, and Col. Booth stated that they expect it to go into effect sometime this year.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:36 p.m.