

**Myakka River Management Coordinating Council
SWFWMD Sarasota Service Office
6750 Fruitville Road
Sarasota, Florida 34240
December 11, 2015
9:34 A.M. – 12:10 P.M.**

MINUTES

The meeting began at 9:34 A.M. with Jono Miller presiding. This meeting was advertised in the Herald Tribune on Friday, November 27, 2015.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Jono Miller - Sierra Club	Ashley Ellis - Sarasota Co.
Gerald Boyce – City of Sarasota	Dr. Mary Jelks - Friends of Myakka
Diana Donaghy- FDEP/FPS	Lou Kovach - Homeowner
Jim Beever – SWFRPC	Vivian Cross - FDOT/District 1
Elizabeth Wong - North Port	Becky Ayech - ECOSWF
Tom Mallett - Myakka State Forest	Marlene Guffey – Homeowner
Tara Poulton – SWFWMD	Maran Hilgendorf – CHNEP
Bill Byle - Charlotte County	Gillian Carney - City of Venice
Maya Burke – Tampa Bay RPC	

INTERESTED PARTIES

Chris Oliver - FDEP/FPS	Rob LaDue – Sarasota Co.
Lee Amos – CFGC	Nadine Hallenbeck - FDEP/FPS
Dee Allen - Mosaic	Chris Becker - FDEP/FPS
Juliette Jones - Friends of WMS	Shelley Thornton – Mosaic
Hugh Dinkler – ESA	Julie Byrne – Sarasota Audubon
Wade Matthews – Sarasota Audubon	Ashley Melton – Sarasota Co.
Allain Hale – ECOSWF	Ezell Givens – FDEP/FPS

BUSINESS MEETING:

- **Call to Order and Roll Call was made.**
- **Public Comments: None**
- **Additions to Agenda: None**
- **Approval of Meeting Minutes: Becky Ayech Moved to accept; Dr. Mary Jelks seconded. The Minutes were adopted unanimously.**

OLD BUSINESS:

Judy Meents retired October 9th, 2015. Nadine Hallenbeck is now taking the minutes.

Jono Miller began by informing the group of the recent passing of Senator Bob Johnson, who was instrumental in the designation of the Wild and Scenic Myakka River; and Betsy Roberts, who represented Manasota-88 on the Council for many years.

Jono Miller asked Chris Oliver to give an update on the status of people that are being considered for new membership since there hasn't been three meetings this year. Chris advised that at the February 27, 2015 meeting several motions were passed to consider potential nominees. He noted the nominates: The Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast, the Crowley Museum and Nature Center, Sarasota Audubon Society, Venice Audubon Society, Warm Mineral Springs (WMS) and Mosaic. Chris stated that all nominees attended a pre-application meeting and that the next step would be for the nominees to attend a Council meeting. Then nominees would submit their completed application to Chris which then goes to the District Bureau Chief and then to Tallahassee for final approval. A few applications have already been received.

Jono asked for the interested parties that are not currently members to introduce themselves.

Lee Amos – Biologist with the Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast (CFGC), which is a local not for profit that conserves land from Manatee County to Lee County.
Dee Allen – Mosaic, they have operations in the Myakka basin, property north of Flatford Swamp and some north of North Port in the Big Slough area. They are good stewards of land and they are community partners. They have expertise that they could bring to the table.

Juliet Jones – Director at Friends of WMS, a not for profit organization founded to protect, restore and preserve WMS for future generations. As a result of founding Friends of WMS, they've been all over the state studying with other not for profit entities coming together in an alliance to support the natural world.

Julie Byrne – Sarasota Audubon

Allain Hale discussed North Port Friends of Wildlife, noting their interest in membership.

Chris Oliver noted that new nominees would need to be discussed at the next meeting and an official motion made to nominate them. (The by-laws state that motions for nominations for new members be made at the first meeting of the year.)

Jono Miller encouraged current members to speak with the potential members during the break to find out more about each organization.

NEW BUSINESS:

Becky Ayech made a motion to send a letter of appreciation to Judy Meents for her years of service to the Council. Marlene Guffey seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Becky Ayech made a motion that the Myakka River Management Coordinating Council recommend to all appropriate state officials that any evaluation of whether or not state parks and preserves “pay for themselves” include a comprehensive economic impact analysis, complete with calculation of appropriate multipliers and total ecosystems value, to reflect the true financial benefit of these state properties as long as they are responsibly managed and maintained, and as long as they are protected from inappropriate and unintended uses. Maran Hilgendorf seconded.

Discussion of motion:

Becky noted an example of the 4th of July boat races and every year how much money they generate. She thinks that the state should do the appropriate economic analysis for State Parks that studies the impact to tourism, the number of hotels, the number of restaurants and the other venues since that is the only way to truly have an appropriate discussion.

Jim stated that in addition to the market based evaluation that Becky proposed that there are also ways to calculate the total ecosystem services values of non-market benefits provided including cleaning the water, the soil stabilization and other benefits. He asked that these considerations be added to the motion as a recommendation to include along with the market based economic calculations. Jim noted the work of Dr. Weinstock at the University of Miami which has actually been able to calculate the number of jobs created by conservation lands in places like Lee County. The studies show that a certain number of jobs were created per area that was preserved as a park in the Lee County which had a large economic impact.

Becky agreed to add the consideration of ecosystem services to the motion. Maran agreed to amended language as the second.

Jono added that State Parks are contributing over 80% to their costs and the shortfall that they're not covering is about \$20 million. The DEP has published figures that there is \$2 billion in economic benefit from the state parks system so that works out to be about a 100 to 1 return on the state's investment.

Diana Donaghy and Tara Poulton abstained. Motion passed.

[Editor's note: an additional motion occurred on page 11 regarding the Council's recommendation to the Acquisition Restoration Council.]

Updates:

Maran Hilgendorf – Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program (CHNEP) Update:

Maran noted that this is CHNEP's 20th anniversary. It's a partnership to protect the natural environment from Venice to Bonita Springs. The CHNEP provides a venue for people to come together to talk about different issues and come to a resolution on how to proceed to solve the issues that threaten our natural environment. This is a year of transition, last year the CHNEP moved to Punta Gorda. This year the director is retiring and they are in the process of deciding how to request applications for a new director.

February 23-25 there will be a workshop on climate adaptation for communities. It's run by the NOAA Office for Coastal Management. It's a new workshop meant for those actively involved in helping governments prepare for climate change. Interested parties should go to Eventbrite and search for CHNEP.

In summer 2016, there will be Interpretive Guide Training Program through National Association for Interpretation, with CHNEP support they will be able to lower the cost of registration.

The CHNEP plans to offer a day long tour sometime between February and April, sponsored by Mosaic. It will feature restoration sites and restoration techniques

Maran discussed CHNEP grant program noting throughout the year micro grants are offered for up to \$250 and also public outreach grants once a year for up to \$5,000.

Jono brought up that the grants supporting the MRMCC's website.

Ashley Ellis – Environmental Protection Division of Sarasota County Update:

Ashley provided a summary of permit reviews that have taken place since the last meeting. There have been building permits and about six dock permits within the Myakka River protection zone but none directly on the Myakka River. These were for dock repairs, boat lifts or repairs to seawalls. There is one WNCA permit in review.

Since the last meeting the Myakka River protection zone variance was approved and the Council was notified of the public hearing. The variance was granted to the Diocese of Venice for a water feature that is located within the Myakka River Protection Zone. People in the area may start to see construction.

Jono advised that he and Ashley worked with the Diocese to move the structure back to improve the screening between the river and structure. He noted that they met with them three or four times on site. The Diocese is also proposing a boardwalk that would parallel the river on a portion of their property. The boardwalk would be constructed so that people on the boardwalk could see the river but that people on the river couldn't see the boardwalk.

Bill Byle – Charlotte County Update:

Bill brought up a property that Charlotte County owns which is a couple hundred acres on the west side of the Myakka River about a mile north of the road to Englewood. The county has attempted many times to try and sell it. It has a lot of development potential because it is on the river. Bill stated that most of that interest has passed and he does not believe that the property will be developed. He continued that the property has issue with a lot of trespassing and vandalism and there are plans to fence the property. Currently, there is no active land management. Bill requested having a discussion with the Myakka State Forest regarding potential assistance with the above issues.

Chris Oliver asked if there is a name for this area. Bill replied that there is not.

Jono suggested that naming it may be the first step in conserving the property.

Discussion continued regarding location, management of this parcel, and a general discussion of panther sightings on the west side of Myakka River.

Bill suggested that the Council should consider an extension of the Myakka Wild and Scenic Program into Charlotte County and that it could be revisited to just include this (for mentioned) small area instead (of the entire river with Charlotte County). Bill thinks this option would create less opposition than past efforts to extend the designation.

Bill stated that the county is going through Comprehensive Plan revisions and currently the county does not have anything in its land use management plan which is related to the river other than the requirement to have a representative on this Council.

Jono asked if there are any environmental groups in Charlotte County that seem to have a defined interest in the lower Myakka.

Allain Hale brought up that Greater Charlotte County Sierra Club noting that the group had filed a lawsuit regarding environmental protections.

[An aerial map of the lower Myakka River was projected.] A continued discussion of developed areas, undeveloped properties, areas with protection occurred.

Marlene Guffey stated that she thinks the rules are too aggressive for Manatee County and Charlotte County to be on board and that should be taken into consideration if the Council desires the Counties to become a part of the Wild and Scenic River.

Elizabeth Wong – City of North Port Update:

Elizabeth began by highlighting several environmental policies implemented by the City. She stated they are only city in the county that requires 100% more treatment volume for developments or dry ponds. They require one inch of treatment versus the half inch. She stated that city was the very first city to come up with storm water rules requiring developers to look at Low Impact Development (LID). Developers required to evaluate their maximum extent practical to use low impact development concepts such as minimizing impervious areas, getting the storm water back in the ground where it belongs, using pervious pavements.

The City leads by example and they are putting a lot of pervious concrete in sidewalks in the City Center. Any type of development in North Port done for the city requires some element of LID.

North Port also has a new gopher tortoise website and app where residents can report sightings.

Elizabeth gave an overview of new developments happening near River Road. Island Walk is in phase 3 and 4 of construction. The project has a lot of storm water ponds,

more than the minimum required. The ponds provide a lot of good treatment and they also reuse the water from the pond which is called storm water harvesting, taking pollutants that go into pond and putting them back on flowers and grass so there is another chance to use them. Grand Paradiso, is still selling a lot of homes. The developer is adding more ponds than required. There are three large residential developments going in called the Preserve, Renaissance and Oasis. The city of North Port is staying on top of them and making sure the developments add in ponds and reuse storm water. North Port is buying property along the creek and preserving it, near U.S. 41. The City is building a kayak launch on the Myakkahatchee creek and Blue Ridge. Also part of the Thomas Ranch area was annexed from Sarasota County.

Jim added that an area of Taylor Ranch is undergoing a sector plan, which are bigger than DRIs (Development of Regional Impact) but there is much less review. The sector plan has been proposed and most of Taylor Ranch is being considered for various commercial and residential developments.

Bill Byle ask for a comment of the City's fertilizer ordinance.

Elizabeth replied that they were right behind Sarasota County to implement a fertilizer ordinance and theirs is more restrictive than Charlotte County. One must have 50% or higher of slow release nitrogen and not allowed to fertilize past the top of the bank of any water way.

Juliette asked about the impact the development will have on the flow rate at WMS?

Elizabeth replied there will be no impact because she doesn't think the city has any plans on developing the land around WMS.

Discussion continued how future developments related to flows at WMS and Myakkahatchee Creek, drinking water availability, water use permits, stormwater harvesting, and about sewage treatment.

Gillian Carney – City of Venice Update:

Gillian noted that there is a lot of development going on in Venice. The City does have ordinances for pesticides and fertilizers.

Marlene asked about ("The Woods") development going in on Jackson Road noting its proximity to the Myakka River on a 200 acre property that the City of Venice annexed. She expressed concern related to the proposed density and potential for flooding making a suggestion that the Council should start concentrating, as a group, more on zoning changes and annexations and because Sarasota County would have likely been more restrictive.

Discussion continued regarding rules for development especially in the floodplain, including their application and effectiveness.

Tara Poulton – SWFWMD Update:

Tara noted that she will be the new representative for SWFWMD on the Council. Her position is the Government Affairs Program Manager and is the liaison between the district and local government, the agricultural community and constituents. If you have a question and you do not know who to track down at the district you can contact her. Her territory is Sarasota, Manatee, Charlotte and Desoto Counties.

Tom Mallett – Florida Forest Service (FFS) Update:

Tom started by noting that the FFS acquired Myakka State Forest through the Conservation Recreation Lands Program in the 90s. The Forest is about 8600 acres and the Myakka River goes through the Northeast quadrant. The southwest drains into Lemon Bay watershed.

Staff burned about 1800 acres of the Forest last year in the prescribed burning program which is part of the ecological conservation activities on public lands. They are looking to burn up to 2700 acres but they are falling behind partly because of weather conditions and some smoke complaints. A tree planting for about 100 acres in the middle of the property is planned in order to restore an area historically used as ranch land.

Jono asked if 6000 acres are available for small game hunting?

Tom confirmed that was correct adding that game hunting is east of Winchester and the River and South of the river. They are closing the open season soon. FWC manages the hunting rules and the enforcement.

Wade Matthews asked if small game hunting include deer.

Tom stated that it does not. He mentioned that if you come on to the property you expect to see a lot of deer, but you do not.

Jono asked if it is true that this is the only State Forest inside of a city.

Tom confirmed they are in the city of North Port Tom continued to note that the Forest's camping area saw 2300 day use permits and 400 campers this year. Staff have plans to redevelop the campground and resurface the main road with pervious material. They are required to install a structure for bathrooms and showers, a big septic field, and RV dump site.

Jono added that the fire lanes are very aesthetic because it was going to be part of GDC development but there was a legal challenge and it ended up becoming a state forest.

Tom added that a lot of that area lacks trees and that is part of the area they are trying to reforest over time. They are getting a lot of natural regeneration out there which is good for the watershed and the water quality.

Tom stated that SWFWMD is planning to construct a dam on the south part of the property. The location and drainage of this project were discussed, noting that the plan was to restore more historical flow patterns to East Creek which is outside of the Myakka River Watershed.

Discussion regarding the future development of the Thomas Ranch area and potential issues with prescribed fire occurred.

Tom added that in Bradenton there is a Fire Wise program that is a public outreach where they talk to the communities around State Forest about the fire risk issues. Staff are trying to do a good job talking with people and will likely reach out to Thomas Ranch as it is developed.

A suggestion was made to incorporate a Notice of Proximity for land management activities for the developments that are coming in.

Chris Becker added that the FPS can supply some information on that.

Diana Donaghy – Myakka River State Park (MRSP) Update:

Diana noted that this past year MRSP burned nearly 10,000 acres. The Parks total acreage is a little over 37,000 but of that only 21,000 is considered naturally burnable. Park staff try to burn these areas at least once every three years.

The Park's exotic program has had quite a bit of activity. They have a contractor that traps the hogs on the south side of S.R. 72. Extensive flooding in the last couple of years has impaired hog control efforts. A new grant from FWC's Aquatic Habitat Restoration and Enhancement Program will target exotic plants in the upper lake and the Myakka River, north of where the power line runs. It is a three year project but will require reapplication for funding every year. FWC recognizes it is a three year project so hopefully the project will continue to get the funding. In early November the first aerial treatment of 125 acres of invasive exotic plants was conducted. They will continue in phases.

The Park just had its first annual half marathon and that brought in over 1300 participants and attendees. This was done during the morning portion of the day so as not to impact the other visitors too much. They will be having four concerts this year, January 22, February 19, March 18 and April 8. Last year MRSP had approximately 450,000 visitors.

Diana continued that burrowing owls were seen last July; multiple sightings of Caracara, including a couple of breeding pairs; and numerous sightings of manatees.

Discussion followed on recent observations of rare species within MRSP.

Chris Oliver – Myakka Wild & Scenic River (MWSR) program update:

Chris thanked Tara Poulton and SWFWMD for hosting the meeting. He encouraged comments from the members about future venue options. He also thanked the CHNEP for their continued support of the MRMCC website.

Permitting:

- The program is moving forward with relocating the MWSR permit process to the DEP South District Office. This is an objective included in the management plan. There is one permit application being processed by the South District Office. The proposed structure would be located just north of the state forest in the second lot on the west side of the river. FWC's Waterways Management Office reviewed MWSR regulatory signage in the river.

Natural resource issues:

- Few reports compared to previous years but there are still issues with blatant non-compliance with speed. People are going really fast especially between Border Road and the south boundary of the MRSP.
- Fewer reports of illegal campsites. The manager of D Bar F Ranch (formerly Downs'), Chuck Johnston, had some illegal access on their property and law enforcement was contacted. The county flew a helicopter and sighted a few separate people on ATV's in the Pinelands Reserve.

Wildlife Observations:

- Nesting on the Rookery Island did pretty well compared with the last five years. In June, the FWC did conducted an aerial survey while Chris went out in the boat at the same time to conduct a count and coordinate findings. The peak number was 304 birds on the rookery. 110 were juvenile wood storks which is pretty good compared with lower numbers the last five years. It is about half of the average from the late 1990's.

Becky asked why that might be.

Chris said it is complicated, there has been a lot of development which has impacted wetlands and hydro-periods. Storks may have to fly further to feed. Increased boat traffic may be a factor. There are likely a combination of different factors that could be play roles in reducing stork nesting in the area.

Chris continued to note that biggest thing on the river this year is the increase in documented manatee sighting in MRSP. Last year there were a total of 15 observations. This year we had over 25 observations, many included photos and video. The most notable sighting was up at CR-780, during the Myakka River Bridge Replacement Project. An AT&T crew replacing the telephone cables spotted a manatee.

Elizabeth asked if sighting near where she lives are important.

Chris replied that any sighting of a manatee in the Myakka River is positive. But those above the (Down's) dam are important for several reasons. Until recently there were no

records in MRSP and the south boundary of the park as also the boundary of the officially designated manatee critical habitat area. Documented observations can establish a record which may be considered the next time the rule regarding manatee speed zones and manatee critical habitat areas is updated.

Diana mentioned that they are not just feeding, they are frolicking.

Discuss followed on observed behavior and how manatee critical habitat areas are determined. It was noted that Myakklemore, the manatee calf who was stranded in January 17, 2014, is scheduled for release sometime in January 2016.

Jono added that part of the reason we are seeing manatees is that the Down's Dam is compromised and water has found a way around on the eastern side, which is now within the park, so it is easier for manatees to get in. There are more days a year that manatees can get above the dam. Also, it is easier for people in jon boats to get upstream of the dam because there are no barriers now when you are coming up river and no sign announcing where the park property starts. People are entering the park without a permit and, they can claim, unknowingly. It seems like this would complicate enforcement actions, so is anything being done about this?

Diana mentioned that she and Chris have been working on some signage including the need for a sign at the southern boundary.

BREAK from 11:10 to 11:20 a.m.

PRESENTATIONS:

Lee Amos – Update of CFGC projects in the watershed:

The CFGC is working to conserve about 8,000 acres in the Myakka River Watershed. Last year, the MRMCC voted to write a letter of recommendation to the Florida Forever Program for three ranches which are now a part of the Myakka Ranchlands Project (MRP) in the less than fee category. Since September a fourth ranch has been added. The Murphy Marsh, which is in Manatee County next to the Triangle Ranch. The Acquisition Restoration Council (ARC) will vote to re-rank all the Florida Forever Projects. The CFGC is asking for letters of support, asking the ARC to rank the MRP in the high category.

Becky asked what the motion would be if the Council was going to support it?

Lee responded that the Council could motion to write a letter of support to the ARC.

Jono added that it would just be reaffirming and including the Murphy Marsh. Something should be added to the motion directing Chris Oliver to allow Lee to forward an email to the members of the council about Murphy Marsh.

Elizabeth asked if there was a priority ranking.

Lee answered that yes, on the Florida Forever list they're fifth.

Lee in conclusion stated that which properties are purchased first has a lot to do with the politics at the time, the land owners at the time, and how negotiations are going. Murphy Marsh, Triangle Ranch and Orange Hammock Ranch are under option agreement so those three would definitely be going forward before Shep's Island Ranch.

Becky made motion that the MRMCC reaffirm its previous position of support for the Myakka Ranchlands acquisitions adding the Murphy Marsh parcel and to authorize Chris Oliver to forward (The CFGC's) Lee's email to Council Members regarding information on this coming (ARC) vote.

Lou Kovach seconded. Motion Passed.

Becky stated it is her understanding that the folks at Triangle Ranch are getting antsy and if there is not something that's resolved by the end of the year it is off the table.

Lee confirmed that was the case but they are getting close.

Rob LaDue – Senator Bob Johnson's Landing (SBJL) and Snook Haven Park (SHP)

The phase conceptual plans for SBJL were approved by the Sarasota Board of County Commissioners for these projects. SBJL was purchased under the Environmentally Sensitive Lands Protection Program and Neighborhoods Park Lands Program. Rob described the 7.1 acres property and noted the county is also looking at the Myakka River Oyster Bar as a potential purchase as well. In July of 2014, the Parks Advisory and Recreation Council recommended approval of our Phase Preliminary Improvement Plan, which includes a pilot rowing facility for visiting teams. In October 2014, the County held a celebration on site to honor Senator Bob Johnson including his work to protect the Myakka River and get it designated as a Florida Wild & Scenic River. In January 2015, the Board of County Commissioners approved the phase conceptual plan for the park. Also in consideration is non-motorized access, a canoe/kayak launch and maybe some concessions. A floating dock for rowing with a storage area is also being added.

The next steps will be:

- December 2015: newly permitted rowing facility, install this winter.
- Winter/Spring 2016: finish design and permitting. The Myakka River Oyster Bar could have implications on the final design if the County decides to purchase it.
- Summer 2016: bidding phase completed.
- Fall 2016: construction commence.
- Spring 2017: construction complete and park opens.

Rob gave an overview of location and amenities present at SHP. He noted that it is difficult to use the current boat ramp adjacent to the music stage. The county purchased property adjacent and the launch facility is going to be moved there. The last permit, a federal permit, was secured this November which had delayed the project. In Spring 2012 public meetings were held in Venice and the city of North Port looking for information from the public on what they would like to see at SHP and SBJL. In July 2014, it was

approved as a conceptual plan by the Parks Advisory and Recreation Council and then County Commission approved the first phase of conceptual plan which a boat ramp with a small dock, and various parking for trailers and cars. Phase 2 involves finding a purpose for the abandoned residence. Whether or not they will tear it down and build a new pavilion and restroom is unknown. They are looking at fiscal year 18 for phase 2. Trying to preserve the trees was a big part of the design. The entire site is covered in trees and it was very important to preserve them. Plans will remove only one tree if it can be done as designed. The next steps will be:

- Winter 2015/Spring 2016: finish bid documents, award contract
- Spring 2016: commence construction for phase 1
- June 2016: commence construction, which is expected to take until Fall 2016 to complete. Several old docks located next to restaurant will be replaced, tearing out the old wooden revetment and replacing it with a natural sloping shoreline for a better kayak launch. It will also include an ADA accessible fishing pier.

Lee asked if there has been a management strategy or management plan created for the Wood Stork colonies regarding the pilot project for rowing at SBJL.

Rob replied there has not been.

Chris Oliver stated that the biggest concern with the rowing facility is the southern route would have teams rowing in proximity to the Rookery. It is not the rowers themselves that are the main issue but the noise from the training boats and megaphones.

Rob requested information regarding the certain times of the year this will be an issue and they can work with that. SANCA (Suncoast Aquatic Nature Center Associates) will be managing the facility regarding availability to rowers.

Lee referenced the situation at Bay Preserve, where the Sarasota Crew trains. Rowing involves a lot of people, it can be hard to control everyone. It can get complicated. He would urge them to develop a good management strategy during the pilot program.

Jim added that Wood Storks are a protected species. The FWC defers to the USFWS for guidance with regard to activities that can disturb Wood Storks. He suggest coordinating with USFWS to let them know what is planned and noted it takes some time for review.

Marlene noted the need for place to launch small boats and asked how many parking spaces for motorized boats will there be?

Rob replied that there will be 12. He noted that access will be free.

Shelley Thornton – Mosaic, Upper Myakka River Conservation Project:

Mosaic has some offsite mitigation projects for new mines including the Ona Mine in Hardee County, Desoto Mine in Desoto County and Wingate East in Manatee County. Each has its own offsite mitigation project associated with it. There are compensatory mitigation onsite and offsite, with all offsite mitigation projects in addition to what

happens onsite. Regulations require mitigation, acre for acre, type for type. The onsite mitigation elements include a mine-wide reclamation plan, and considers integrated habitat networks. After reclamation is done, there is the preservation and protection of avoided lands. There is in kind establishment to replace wetlands and streams, as well as the protection of established wetlands with conservation easements. The offsite mitigation projects involve large, more ecologically valuable parcels and, with the three applications, they are looking at an average of about 1500 acres per project. Rigorous scientific technical analysis is associated with them. Mosaic has consultants working on this, with specialties in stream and wetland reclamation - a significant investment of financial resources. These projects focus on a regional watershed scale and utilize the CHNEP Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP). The CCMP identifies four priority problems: water quality degradation, hydrological alterations, fish and wildlife habitat loss, and stewardship gaps. These projects allow them to implement at least one or more of these priority actions.

Shelley provided an update on The Wingate East Mine permitting process. It's evaluated as part of an area-wide environmental impact statement. The application was submitted in November 26, 2014. The ERP was issued on November 13, 2015 and was deemed complete by Manatee County on November 16, 2015. Mosaic anticipates going in front of the county commission the first quarter of 2016.

Two parcels are being considered for the conservation project in the Myakka River Watershed. These parcels are appealing because they are the headwaters of the Myakka River and they are adjacent to preservation areas proposed for the Wingate East Mine. These projects would double the width and length of the overall preservation area via permanent conservation easements. The project would be regionally significant because of the protection/restoration of the headwaters of the Myakka River, about a mile and a half of the river, and about 207 acres of adjacent habitats.

Mosaic intends to incorporate the existing land use, the preservation that's already in the area and expand upon that. Starting with 1940s aerials to see what was there historically so they can mimic the historical drainage patterns. The goal is to change as little as possible. Some enhancements will involve creating some meandering in the river which increase residence time and help with sediment deposition going down stream. There will be burning done as well. Some areas have not been managed in a while. There has been a lot of encroachment by pine trees but there is also some potential to create some bay systems. Activities are being performed on about 46% of the property including restoring the fire ecology, reducing the erosion in the stream, providing stabilization. The priority actions right now are remove exotic vegetation, restore lands and hydro-periods and reduce non-point source pollutants.

Becky noted that historically modifications to the hydrology and lateral seepage from agriculture were a problem and asked if these activities would continue.

Shelley replied that those activities will not continue on the property.

Juliette asked if the Wingate Mine is already in operation.

Shelley answered that it is and this is just expanding the mining to the east.

Juliette questioned how much water does your operation pull up and where does it pull it from to do the mining?

Shelley responded that they have wells at Wingate East. She was not sure on the exact number because there is only one water use permit for all of the facilities. They do recycle about 90% of the water in a recirculation system.

Future Agenda Items:

Jono mentioned the Council should meet three times a year. At the next meeting the Council should discuss the nominations of potential new members and should be structured so the management plan can be discussed.

Chris Oliver brought up that the management objectives stipulate the Council should have agricultural interest members. (Currently there are none). Thomas Ranch area and D Bar F Ranch could be considered.

Becky announced that she is resigning, Linda Wilson will be taking her place.

Discussion followed regarding the status of the Amendment 1 challenge and lawsuit.

Next Meeting Date: Not discussed.

Becky Ayech moved to adjourn. Maya Burke seconded. The meeting was adjourned.

The meeting ended at 12:10 p.m.