

DRAFT

**Myakka River Management Coordinating Council
Twin Lakes Park
6700 Clark Road
Sarasota, Florida 34241
February 27, 2015
9:04 A.M. – 12:01 P.M.**

MINUTES

The meeting began at 9:04 A.M. with Jono Miller presiding. This meeting was advertised in the Herald Tribune on Friday, February 13, 2015.

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

Jono Miller - Sierra Club
Greg Blanchard - Manatee Co.
Lou Kovach - Homeowner
Martin Horwitz – FDOT
Tom Mallett - Myakka State Forest
Marlene Guffey - Homeowner
Betsy Roberts - Manasota 88
Bill Byle - Charlotte County
Jerry Cattelane - Homeowner
Allain Hale - Env. Conf. of SW FL
Robert Bendus - Historical Resources

Dr. Mary Jelks - Friends of Myakka
Jon Robinson - FDEP
Jim Beever - SWFRPC
Chris Whittaker - North Port
Melissa Dickens - SWFWMD
Gillian Carney - City of Venice
Maran Hilgendorf - CHNEP
Howard Berna - Sarasota County
Corky Pezzati - LWVSC
Gillian Carney - City of Venice

INTERESTED PARTIES

Chris Oliver - FPS
Lee Amos - Conservation Foundation
Dee Allen - Mosaic
Juliette Jones - Friends of Warm Min. Spgs.
Hugh Dinkler – ESA

Eric Strickland - FFS
Judy Meents - FPS
Chris Becker - FPS
Michael Jones - Sarasota Co.
Ashley Ellis - Sarasota Co.

BUSINESS MEETING:

- **Call to Order and Roll Call was made.**
- **Public Comments: None**
- **Additions to Agenda: Jono invited the group to watch a couple of minutes of the "Moods of Miakka" movie being entered into the Sarasota Film Festival.**

- **Approval of Meeting Minutes: Betsy Roberts Moved to accept; Jon Robinson seconded. The Minutes were adopted unanimously.**

OLD BUSINESS:

Jono mentioned the presentation given by Mike Heyl from SWFWMD at the previous Council meeting in which he discussed minimum flows and levels. After the meeting Mike wrote to both Jim Beever and Jono separately. Jono read his response letter to this Council. (Correspondence on these topics will be available with the minutes online)

NEW BUSINESS:

Greg Blanchard – Manatee County Update:

Greg noted that a question was raised at the last meeting as to whether Manatee County had a strategy for obtaining Amendment 1 funds. After the legislature makes some determinations on implementation, Manatee County will aggressively pursue any opportunity that develops out of Amendment 1 for restoration, but at this time they do not have a master strategy.

Jono mentioned that the Triangle Ranch in Manatee County would be of greatest interest to the Council since it is on the (Florida Forever) list and it is in the Myakka Basin.

Greg mentioned that Manatee County's restoration resources (matching funding, management resources, etc.) tends to be aimed toward completing actions in Duette Preserve and along the coast where the projects are very expensive.

Jono mentioned the Terra Ceia project. He noted that it is ranked fairly low on the list at this point and that if someone wanted to know the greatest chance of getting Florida Forever funding soon, it would be in the Myakka Basin even though that may not be Manatee County's priority.

Chris Whittaker – City of North Port Update:

The developer of West Villages has started the pre-application process for Village A, which is in the area between River Road and the West Villages Parkway. It will be around 1,300 homes and plans include a city or county park along River Road.

Recently, adjacent to Warm Mineral Springs, North Port has had 14 acres under a comp plan amendment, plus they annexed about 0.4 of an acre. The area will potentially become a mixed-use development.

Gillian Carney – City of Venice Update:

Gillian stated that there is an active petition under review for the Woods Development.

Howard Berna – Sarasota County Update:

Things remain fairly quiet in the permitting world along the river with respect to shoreline construction, docks and boat lifts. But Sarasota County does have one Myakka River Protection Zone variance under review right now. It is scheduled for public

hearing on Wednesday, April 1st. It is a project at the Diocese of Venice property just upstream from Snook Haven on the opposite shoreline. The proposal is for a rock and water feature within 20 feet from the river area. The objective from the petitioner is to create something that can be seen from the river. It will be lighted and it will have cascading water. The documents can be found at the County's website for Meetings on Demand in a few weeks.

Sarasota County does not include a staff recommendation for public hearings but does conduct a review to weigh the project as to how it meets or may not meet the purposes of the Myakka River Protection Zone. That review is nearly complete.

Jono inquired if it is not a dwelling then what is the proposed structure?

Howard responded the proposed feature will be about 12 feet high, 19 feet wide with rocks and some vegetation around it. It would serve as a shrine or place for people to reflect. The Diocese would like it to be seen from the river to draw attention to the facilities there.

Jono asked if the Diocese has some other structures that are visible from the river.

Howard said there were a couple of observation decks painted reddish color. This is the vicinity where the proposed structure is intended. If people wanted to participate they would look at the County Meetings on Demand a week prior to April 1st. One could write any comments or concerns to Ashley Ellis or Howard Berna.

Jono stated that part of the challenge is if one can't make it to the Board meeting on April 1st and you want the board to see your comments; you have two options: one is submit them before the Board packet is completed. The other is to submit them after the Board packet.

Howard responded that if you emailed the Commissioners they will see it and send it to staff and it is given back to them on that day.

At the last Council meeting there were some comments from Becky Ayech. She had asked for the copy of construction plans to review for Myakka Road replacement bridge. Howard noted that Chris Oliver has a CD with the bridge plans if anyone would like to view them.

Jono inquired as to the status of the Snook Haven addition.

Howard responded that the project is moving forward. He noted that staff were working to make sure the plans stay consistent with the Manatee Protection Plan and the MWSR Management Plan; specifically making sure the project does not increase the number of motorized boats on the river.

Melissa Dickens – Southwest Florida Water Management District Update:

Discussion occurred a few months ago on the Most Impacted Area (MIA) stakeholder outreach effort associated with the Southern Water Use Caution Area (SWUCA) Recovery Strategy. This week the District conveyed options to the Governing Board. These options did receive stakeholder feedback. The Governing Board was supportive of these options. The District is going to identify anything that needs to go back to the board. These options were:

- Continue monitoring and collecting data on water levels, water quality, rainfall and groundwater withdrawals,
- Continue to refine modeling efforts by updating their analytical tools to more accurately assessing wells at risk,
- Continue conservation efforts including: education, public outreach, some cooperative funding conservation programs
- Expand the Facilitating Agricultural Resource Management Systems (FARMS) Program in the MIA; setting up a FARMS specific target for that area and potentially increasing the cost-share for projects in the MIA,
- Expand beneficial reuse – working to do more reclaimed cooperative funding projects, also working with agencies to reduce obstacles that interfere with reclaimed projects.
- Explore the feasibility related to aquifer recharge and aquifer storage and recovery (ASR).

Melissa addressed questions asked at the last Council meeting. There was discussion on aquatic vegetation management and any impact on manatees in the river. Melissa spoke with their vegetative management manager, Brian Nelson. He offered to present information to the Council. Basically, the vegetative management permits are issued by FWC. The protocol is essentially the same statewide, and if an applicator sees a manatee in the area they are to stop treating that specific area and go elsewhere. Brian indicated there has not been documented instances of harm to manatees because of vegetative treatment.

Jono asked Jon Robinson, Manager of MRSP, if the bypass around Down's Dam is now sufficient that a manatee can negotiate that.

Jon answered that they have been up to the park for the last three years. The manatees seem to be going around the dam.

Jon stated that he believes the applicators do a good job of surveying the area before they apply and the areas that are narrow and shallow enough they will not treat. He also noted that treatment is needed or there would be blockages.

Melissa gave an update on bio-control with moths to combat the climbing Lygodium (authors note = climbing fern). The District is continuing to monitor to see how the moths are doing with respect to combating the Lygodium, however significant damage has not yet been seen.

There is no update regarding the status of the Mosaic and SWFWMD discussion about Flatford Swamp.

A technical memo related to Mike Dalsis' presentation from last meeting which was authored by Todd Osborn of UF is available and can be provided to this Council if interested. She will provide this memo to Chris Oliver.

Tom Mallett – Florida Forest Service Update:

Tom noted that the Forest Service has a project for cattle leasing on the southwest property in the forest called the Winchester Tract. It is expected to be a small number of cattle and there should not be an impact on the water quality in that area. It is expected later in the year.

A pre-bid meeting was held a couple of weeks ago with SWFWMD engineers for a contract on a long range project to control surface water in the southern portion of the forest. The current plan is to install two surface water control structures. One would be adjacent to the Newgate Waterway Canal. The other would be across the ditch to the north that dates to the cattle ranch days. The idea is to slow water flow to restore wetland functions in the forest in the two associated watersheds (Oyster Creek and Rock Creek). Ideally this will improve water quality and help groundwater recharge. Ryan Smith with SWFWMD is heading up the project.

Jono inquired as to the size of the cattle lease area, if the area was already fenced, grazing capacity, and stocking rate.

Tom stated he thought it was a small lease of 100 acres. The area has some fencing but will need new fencing. The area is native range sliding back to forest conditions but is thought to have some grazing value. He could provide more details later if members were interested.

Bill Byle – Charlotte County Update:

Bill noted that Charlotte County officially adopted its Scrub-Jay Habitat Conservation Plan which was an attempt to resolve a number of permitting issues. The County is trying to get scrub-jay permitting from a two or three year process for a quarter acre lot down to one week. It has been a 10-year long process.

The plan does effect populations near the Myakka. There are some struggling scrub-jay populations in South Gulf Cove that are trying to survive on filled land with Brazilian pepper, wax myrtle and cats. Charlotte County made a commitment to preserve suitable scrub-jay habitat.

If one wanted to build a house in a scrub-jay area – instead of going through a lot of surveys, taking a couple of years and ending up paying \$20-50,000 – the new fees would run from about \$2,200 up to a half acre and then increase from there.

Bill noted that development is increasing on the remaining lands in Charlotte County, with new construction on every street.

In the last month the County obtained around 700 acres of land near Cecil Webb as a part of the Yucca Pens/Charlotte Flatwoods hydrologic restoration. Now the focus is on trying to buy out-parcels. Between the YUCCA Pens 7,000 acres and Charlotte Harbor there is at least a half a dozen creeks that are really important for getting fresh water into the harbor and providing important estuary habitat. The County is looking at about eight creeks, a couple thousand acres for possible acquisition.

This Council should consider trying to get as much of the floodplain in conservation as possible, especially the Myakkahatchee Creek. After a number of years studying this in relation to mining creeks in Polk and Hardee County, it turns out that these little creeks whether they are tidal or not are extremely important habitat.

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

Chris gave a summary of the MWSR 2014 Annual Report. The entire report will be posted on the website.

Permitting:

- Scouring counter measures on the bridge at U.S. 41 – this permit was amended to include Senator Bob Johnson’s Landing as a staging area.
- A permit was approved last year for the C.R.780 Bridge over the Myakka River with construction to begin this spring.
- A permit for the Snook Haven Addition and boat ramp was issued. It included some other improvements: ADA accessibility, etc.
- Talks continue with Sarasota County Parks and Recreation staff about recreational use of Senator Bob Johnson’s Landing. No formal plans have been received yet.

Natural resource issues:

- There was a manatee stranding on January 17, 2014 above Down’s Dam.
- Violations on the river continue with people speeding, cutting vegetation, unpermitted fires and camping especially along the Carlton Reserve. Chris, County Staff and Friends of the Carlton have been working with law enforcement in an attempt to reduce these activities.
- On the slow speed sign south of Tarpon Point someone attached a handmade sign that said “Fried Man-O-tee” with ingredients and instructions on how to fry and eat manatees. This sign was removed.
- Lygodium is still a big problem along the river. It is seen south of MRSP along the Carlton but more so on private property. Sarasota County staff has been very helpful with several joint treatment workdays.
- The island apple snail population continues to increase. Efforts continue to monitor and remove them with Myakka River State Park’s staff and volunteers.

Jono asked if the report would contain how many hours were spent working on the areas adjacent to the river.

Chris has not been including the number of hours in this report.

Jono stated that if people are putting signage along the river to make it conspicuous he believes part of the testimony that needs to be involved in that is the amount of effort people are making to keep the immediate area adjacent to the river channel looking as natural as possible.

Chris stated the hours could be included.

In 2014 there was an increase in sightings of manatees in the river near and in MRSP. The first sighting was just below MRSP on Sunday, May 4th. The first in MRSP was August 1st near the FPL lines in the middle of the state park. The last confirmed sighting was November 18th.

The number of wading bird nests at the rookery are in decline including both wood stork and great egret. Moving into 2015, this year's rookery nest numbers are expected to be low.

District 4 staff has been meeting law enforcement to work on the violation issues mentioned earlier. Recently, the MWSR program received a request from the FWC Waterway Division to update the permit related to signage in the river.

Bill Byle added that Chris may want to wear rubber gloves when handling apple snails. He learned from NPR radio station that apple snails carry a parasite; a serious threat to human health.

Discussion occurred regarding the hydrology and other issues involving Deep Hole.

BREAK from 10:01 to 10:11 a.m.

PRESENTATIONS:

Chris Becker – MRSP Management Plan timeline:

The Myakka River State Park (MRSP) Unit Management Plan (UMP) is in the process of being updated. It was noted that the Myakka Wild & Scenic River (MWSR) has a separate management plan (which was just updated in late 2011). The MRSP UMP was last approved in 2004, so it is a little past due for its 10-year update. Park staff has been working on gathering information for the Resource Management Component (RMC) which is the main focus for the District and park Biologists. It includes background information, hydrology, topography, natural communities and cultural resources.

The District is in the process of gathering the information and updating plant and animal lists and expect to have the draft RMC sent to the folks in Tallahassee in the next month or so. From that point it gets assigned to a planner in Tallahassee at the Office of Park Planning. The planner will come to the park and work with the park manager and

biologist to develop what is called the Land Use Component (LUC). This consists of new trails, new bathrooms and other like items. The park will help guide what is needed to meet demands of the park including visitation and also show the planners the important resources that need to be protected.

Then the plan which includes both RMC and LUC parts gets combined and goes through an internal DEP review. After the review, public meetings will be set up to talk about the plan and get public comments on what folks would like to see in the Myakka River State Park plan.

In addition to public comment, there is also an Advisory Group of stakeholders. By statute the Advisory Group includes members from the Florida Forest Service (FFS), Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC), local governments and staff, recreational users, and environmental groups. They review the plan and make any additions or corrections to it. The plan then goes to Acquisition and Restoration Council (ARC) for approval. The ARC meeting is another public forum which allows comment.

Dates for the public workshop and Advisory Group meeting have not been set. Prior to the meeting, there will be notice in the local paper and signs at MRSP.

Jon Robinson, MRSP Park Manager, mentioned that this is the park staff's first plan since they went from a 5-year to a 10-year plan update. This plan will be guiding management for the next 10 years. Chris's function is to work on the RMC, and noted that the RMC then goes to Tallahassee and a land-use planner starts looking at it.

Jon also noted in the last 10 years the visitation at MRSP has doubled from 220,000 visitors per year to over 450,000. If this trend continues it will put a lot of impact on the Upper Myakka Lake (UML) and the river. That is where the visitors tend to go. 98% of the visitors that come to the park do not get out of their cars, other than at the Bird Walk, the UML and Canopy Walk or, if camping, at the campground. Jon stated the public will want input over whether they develop additional facilities to handle more people or they set more rigid carrying capacities to control the impacts on the natural resources.

Jon asked if public input would be better earlier in the process so the planner is aware not only of park staff perceptions but also the public interests. [Author's note: This plan is expected to be developed through a new format, with public workshops and comments before the plan is drafted, and then another public workshop after the draft plan is developed.]

Jon Robinson explained that the existing UMP is public record; it is online and available to the public. This new Plan is an update of that Plan online. What was proposed in 2004 will be looked at, what's been completed since then, what's still on the list and is there anything to be added/make changes. For example, there is a Bird Walk Tower identified on the list. Jon plans to propose a change in location to be where there are user facilities. This is the starting point for the LUC.

General discussion continued on best time for public input in the process.

Mike Jones – Blackburn Canal Overview.

Mike gave an overview of the creation of Cow Pen Slough Canal noting that the drainage feature was dug between 1960 and 1970. Dona-Robert's Bay was the contributing watershed. The creation of Cow Pen Slough Canal and Blackburn Canal greatly enlarged the size of the watershed and increased flow into these two small estuaries. The Blackburn Canal comes through Venice into the top of Roberts Bay. The Blackburn Canal was dredged in the 1950s.

Mike stated that the purpose of Cow Pen Slough Canal was more to drain some of the upper watershed for agriculture and Blackburn Canal was to relieve flooding. Curry Creek was originally a creek. Blackburn Canal was designed to join the Myakka River to Curry Creek. On the west end is Curry Creek and the east Blackburn Canal. Curry Creek was also dredged when connected.

Mike mentioned that over time sediments filled the upper half of Roberts Bay. (PowerPoint photos were shown highlighting the difference between how it looked in the 1930s and 2004.) Originally, the bay was much more open; then bridges and causeways were built which greatly constricted the flow. When Blackburn Canal was dug it resulted in much more water than what originally went into the bay.

Mike noted a study was conducted during the development of the Dona and Roberts Bay Plan. The study looked at the Blackburn Canal and that system. The study estimated that about 7% of the flow that comes down the Myakka River at that point gets diverted from Blackburn Canal out to the Dona and Roberts Bay Estuary. While there is no budget right now a potential future project was drawn up: a low-flow weir at the old ridge line (the ridge line is where watersheds or basins separate; here right around Jackson Road in Venice.) A low-flow weir would, according to the very rough, preliminary estimate, cut off about 70% of the fresh water flow going through Blackburn Canal. In large storm events all that water would still head down that way.

If the County were to do the project they would need more studies. They would have to tie it into the Myakka River Minimum Flows and Levels (MFL) program. Part of the reason this was on hold for so long was to give SWFWMD an opportunity to finish the MFLs. Plus the County will probably need to do some model maintenance for their own models. This would be a delicate balance. The project would have to be built in such a way as to cause no increased flooding on the river while balancing the reduction of water going down the canal.

Jono asked what the County's understanding was of the navigational use of the canal. Mike replied that this also would need to be balanced because it would be unpopular to put in a weir which would restrict motor boats.

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Chris Oliver inquired if the manatee usage had been considered since it is a designated manatee area. Howard Berna added that there would be a permitting element for the structure with FWC in relation to that and possibly other entities.

Discussion occurred regarding the direction of the flow and tides. It was noted that much of the time in the winter the flow is the opposite way towards the Myakka River.

Dona Bay Project:

The Dona Bay Project had to go through a re-design. The Dona Bay Project encompasses the Albritton Property (county purchased) ~1000-acre grove; Cow Pen Slough, the canal that was dredged; The Pinelands Reserve and Venice Minerals. Basically the goals of this project is the reduction of fresh water flows into the bay while improving water quality and harnessing water.

The design involves an existing Cow Pen Slough structure with three gates that allows the water to be held up at certain times of the year. The County plans to replace this structure which is in disrepair with a new one about 250 feet to the south. The removal of berm and another control structure will allow the water to be diverted on the Albritton Property. This area will be excavated to a total depth of 12 feet to serve as a water quality treatment area and also provide flood relief during higher flows. This area will be connected to a borrow pit on the Pinelands Reserve and then later a connection to the lower borrow pit near Knight's Trail Road, eventually creating a treatment train where several areas hold back a lot of the fresh water that comes down Cow Pen Slough. This phase is going out for bid now and for construction to start in June.

The next phase of the project will be an additional connection of a pipeline all the way through to Venice Minerals which is going to be about another 400-acre body of water increasing capacity in a water quality treatment train that will hold water and attenuate it. Eventually, this may be a future water supply. The water that is stored in these areas and the reservoir will then be pumped over to Carlton Reserve for treatment. Or the County might build a surface water treatment plant.

Questions and answers followed on Dona Bay project elevations, flood potential and drainage issues related to any modification to the Blackburn Canal. (A PDF version of the presentation will be available with the minutes online).

Juliette Jones asked if anyone had information on a deep injection sewage well which was put in (around 1989) three miles from Warm Mineral Springs.

Jim Beever responded normally they try to put the sewage below the boulder zone. There are all sorts of interconnections between the different aquifers so it would be worth having somebody from the SWFWMD that is experienced with the stratigraphy of the area come and talk about that or provide materials on the matter.

Melissa Dickens offered to provide some materials to show where it is going relative to the aquifers that are feeding Warm Mineral Springs.

Jono Miller – Myakka Wild & Scenic River Management Plan review (continued):

Section 4 (Objectives and Actions were shown on a Power Point projection)

Objective 4: To coordinate the local, regional, state and federal agencies in the use and regulation of land management practices to protect the quality of the Myakka River and its tributaries.

4.1 - The Council shall continue to jointly evaluate the function and composition of the Council as the management and coordination body and implement any necessary modifications.

Jono suggested that this be addressed at the end of the Management Plan Review.

4.2 – Maintain officer who will be in charge of reviewing significant permits/development applications and reviewing comment after post land development controls that regulate development within environmentally sensitive areas of the Myakka River.

Chris Oliver stated the (projected) verbiage was literally cut and pasted out of the current Management Plan from 2011. DEP has provided staff via the Park Service, District 4. The dedicated staff is my position which is responsible for looking at permits for any type of activity on the river and coordinating with this Council.

4.2 – The field office should be established on public land adjacent to or within the Myakka Wild & Scenic River segment.

Jono noted we do not have a field office along the river but it could be argued it is adjacent. At some point this objective should be amended if it is not implemented.

Juliette Jones stated that an office to have a presence there is a step in a good direction.

Maran Hilgendorf asked what staff who have had the position thought on the matter.

Chris Becker stated in the past there was a ranger assigned to the river but due to staff reductions that position was cut. There was a proposal to purchase the Decker Property and to have a dedicated boat ramp, but did not get the support to purchase it. One consideration is that the Bureau Chief needs to sign documents relating to the MWSR program and they are at the Osprey District Office. Having a satellite office as part of something else on the river would be great.

Mike Jones suggested a satellite office with a couple offices upstairs and with educational museum type center downstairs.

Chris Becker added that similar offices are provided for Fish and Wildlife Commission and others in some FPS facilities.

Jono asked about the status and ownership use of the really old Stark building at Snook Haven that is north of the restaurant.

Howard thinks there are some code issues about updating it and making it safe. He does not know what the plan is at this point.

Jono thought it would be a shame to let the building decline to the point of being torn down noting that we have the Crowley, the interpretive facility at MRSP, but south of that there is not a whole lot. It would be interesting to have a little ground floor, wheelchair accessible, museum about the Myakka River and the current rules. Then have a satellite office upstairs. It might be possible to get people from Venice Historical Community to raise some money to do something like this.

Howard said he would take this concept back to the Parks and Recreation people in Sarasota County.

Chris Oliver mentioned that it was suggested at earlier meetings about having a shared office that included law enforcement.

Jon Robinson noted that there is need for law enforcement presence on this section of the river.

There was some discussion about changing the wording to be more encompassing and the process to do this. Chris Becker agreed to look into amending it.

It was agreed that all the proposed changes would be brought up at some later meeting to be voted on. It was discussed that the document could be made available online. If anything needed to be discussed they could be set aside and the rest could be voted on. It would be done in a strike-through underline fashion.

4.3 – Encourage consistent land-use, planning & regulations in the watershed among all local governments, regional and state agencies to be consistent with the management plan. There were no comments.

4.4 – DRP and others instrumental in the management of the Myakka River should seek all appropriate funding sources for the implementation of the management plan. This should include but not be limited to the Manasota Basin Board (no longer exists), the Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program (CHNEP), the Department of Economic Opportunity, etc.

Chris Oliver noted that the CHNEP pays for the Council website and all of the document postings and there were some other small grants.

4.5 – DRP shall monitor local codes and review and comment on proposed land development controls that regulate development within environmentally sensitive areas of the Myakka River watershed.

Chris Oliver stated this objective was very similar to item 4.2. Many applications, ERPs through SWFWMD and through DEP are reviewed.

4.6 – DEP or DRP and Sarasota County should encourage and provide information to help create a homeowners’ guide to regulatory requirements on the Myakka River and promote awareness, appreciation and understanding of the history and ecology on the Myakka among people living and working in the watershed.

There is no current homeowners’ guide. There is a 2009 owner/paddler guide in Sarasota County, but no explicit homeowners’ guide. In previous meetings there was talk of a guide with native plants and animals on one side and exotics on the other.

Maran Hilgendorf suggested there be a different name for this guide. Homeowners’ guide might be misconstrued. Something like “Homeowners’ Regulatory Requirements on the Myakka River”.

Howard Berna said Sarasota County has some on-line information related to local Myakka River Protection Zone Ordinances that helps a homeowner understand the regulatory requirements in Sarasota County.

Maran’s intent was to reword the paragraph (section 4.6) such that accomplishments could be recognized. The wording now sounds as if a “Yes” or “No” is required. A homeowners’ guide has not been produced, but information has been provided.

Jim Beever stated that when these objectives were created the vision was to have a document like the Tampa Bay Estuary Program puts out: Living with the Bay. It shows not just the legal requirements, but what you can do to make it better in terms of pesticide management, fertilization, setbacks, native vegetation, etc. It was encouraging behavior as well as listing what was statutorily required. This has not been accomplished. In part because no one has taken ownership of it.

Jono felt there was a head start with the county on the regulatory requirements, some of the exotic information and information from CHNEP. The information could be assembled in PDF form; it could be made available on the website. Then the Myakka Conservancy or the Friends of Myakka could raise money to print hard copies and mail it to property owners on the river.

Discussion continued on the best format and way to get the information out.

Jono summarized that a more generalized educational program with an actual strategy for getting information to the homeowners on the river should be the aim.

Motions:

Discussion of Motion:

Marlene Guffey brought up discussion of the Catholic Diocese plans for a water structure on their property on the Myakka River. There are rules on the river which include not cutting limbs, etc. to keep it natural. She believes it probably would be a beautiful structure, but does it belong on the river? It is an artificial structure and if this is granted then what's to prevent anyone that lives on the river from putting their statues out by the river with lights, for example.

Jim Beever asked if a reason was given for why it had to be seen from the river. The response given by Howard Berna was that one of the purposes shared by the Diocese was that they wanted it to be viewed from the river for the folks on tour boats coming and going from Snook Haven to encourage them to come to their facilities, and use them.

Jim Beever made a Motion that says that this Council opposes any form of advertisement which interferes with the Wild & Scenic River's values.

Jim continued saying this is the same as what was proposed near the Big Cypress Swamp. When the town of Ave Maria was proposed in the area near Big Cypress and the panther habitat the owner of Domino's Pizza who funded that development wanted to build a giant standing cross that was so large that when lit at night it would be seen by everyone in the Big Cypress National Preserve and as far away as Naples, FL. The local people said No; they wanted to see the swamp.

Corky Pezzati Seconded the Motion. The Motion passed unanimously.

Election of Officers:

Chris Oliver read Article 7 of the Bylaws.

Marlene Guffey nominated Jono Miller to continue as Chairman. Allain Hale seconded.

The Motion passed as there were no other nominations for Chairman.

Allain Hale nominated Jim Beever to continue as Vice Chairman. Marlene Guffey seconded. Jim was willing to serve if people were OK if he was late or if meetings could start at 9:30am. He noted if House Bill 484 passes there will no longer be a SWRPC. If the Regional Planning Council is dissolved, he retires so then he won't be a member of the Council. **The Motion passed as there were no other nominations for Vice Chairman.**

Council Membership:

Any new member recommendations would have to be approved by the Council then go up the chain to Tallahassee.

Lee Amos said the Conservation Foundation of Gulf Coast is interested due to ownership on the river. It is a local, not for profit. They work from Tampa Bay to Charlotte Harbor. They conserve land through donations from the public and through grants. They have a number of parks and nature preserves in the area including Tarpon Point Landing on the Myakka River. Through their work with Sarasota County they've protected more than

8,000 acres in the Myakka River Watershed. They are currently working on about 7,500 acres of conservation land in the Myakka River Watershed.

Greg Blanchard moved to recommend the Conservation Foundation of Gulf Coast. Maran Hilgendorf seconded. The Motion passed.

Jono suggested Crowley Museum and Nature Center in Sarasota County. It has an important educational role. It now has contiguous protected property down Myakka River State Park.

Discussion occurred regarding attendance of members and the effect on the quorum.

Maran Hilgendorf moved to inquire of Crowley Museum and Nature Center to see if any staff have an interest to serve on the Council. Lou Kovach seconded. The Motion passed.

Lou Kovach moved to contact the Venice and Sarasota Audubon Societies to see if they have any interest in serving on this Council, possibly Bob Clark. Allain Hale seconded. The Motion passed.

Clarification and questions occurred about what types of membership was to be included in the Council.

Juliette Jones stated she is a member of the Friends of Warm Mineral Springs which is a 501c3 organization founded in 2012. They are a member of the Florida Springs Council, a newly formed organization consisting of a coalition of springs all across the state to come together to be watch dogs and also a member of the Florida Springs Institute. They have a lot of scientific people in their membership of forty. She believes the Friends would be very interested in being a member of this Council.

Allain Hale moved to have Friends of Warm Mineral Springs contacted for membership. Lou Kovach Seconded. The Motion passed.

Bill Byle moved to approach Dee Allen from Mosaic to see if they would be interested in membership. Maran Hilgendorf seconded. The Motion passed.

Marlene wanted to know the difference between dredging and removing sediment. It states in the rules that there can be no dredging in the river. Does that mean going below the bottom of the river, or is that any sediment that is taken out of the river?

Howard Berna answered that there is a distinction between new dredging and maintenance dredging. Maintenance dredging is specifically defined in the County Ordinance. It is removing sediments to a previously dredged location. Sediments naturally move in a river system. That area of the river that has never been dredged is considered new dredging even if it is sediments that have travelled inland.

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In the canal situation sediments that come into the canal can be maintenance dredged because that has been previously dredged. Other areas of the river that has not been dredged would be a new dredge. In the County's Comprehensive Plan there are restrictions and prohibitions for new dredging in the Myakka River.

Maran Hilgendorf suggested that this Council bring up the question of membership at the last meeting preceding the meeting of new membership so that members could be prepared and discuss then. Then the first meeting of the year would be just a matter of voting.

Future Agenda Items: Not discussed.

Next Meeting Date: Not discussed.

Maran Hilgendorf moved to adjourn. Allain Hale seconded. The meeting was adjourned.

The meeting ended at 12:01 p.m.