

**Legislative Subcommittee Meeting
November 30, 2010
9:00am – 11:00am
Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority
6311 Atrium Drive, Suite 100
Lakewood Ranch, FL 34202**

MINUTES

The meeting began at 9:15am with Peggy Morgan (FDEP), Jono Miller (Sierra Club), Susan Hochuli (PRMRWSA) and Vice Chair Belinda Perry (Sarasota County) in attendance. Interested parties present included Valinda Subic (FPS), Natalie Balcer (FPS), and Laura DeWald (DEP Law Enforcement). This meeting was advertised in the Sarasota Herald Tribune on 11/13/2010.

Valinda and Laura provided an introduction to the subcommittee and explained the benefits of decriminalizing the Myakka Wild and Scenic River Designation Act (Section 258.501 F.S.). Everyone in attendance agreed that decriminalization would lead to more enforcement cases on the river and likely be a positive outcome for both law enforcement and recreational users.

The subcommittee discussed the importance of timing the amendment to the Act and two ways to proceed with the decriminalization process. Valinda stated that we could either wait until DEP as an agency wanted to move forward with the decriminalization or we could seek out a legislator to introduce a bill that he/she would be supportive of. One drawback of opening the Act up for amendment may be that other parts of the Act besides the Penalties section could also be changed. This may lead to the Act having less authority.

The prohibited activities in Florida State Parks were reviewed with the fines that are currently in place for violations in Section 258.008 F.S. It was decided that consistency between the park and river rules would be important however the River Rule (62D-15) has many additional elements that are not included in the park rules where the appropriate penalties will still need to be decided upon. It was suggested to look at established penalties to help decide on what the infraction should be. Laura mentioned that the fines collected from River Rule violations would go back to the state no matter what type of law enforcement officer wrote the citation.

Ultimately the subcommittee was in favor of decriminalizing the Act, but coordination between DEP and legislators will be needed when the time is right to move forward. Laura agreed to gather data from before and after the park rules were decriminalized to show the changes in behavior. Peggy and Laura will both check into what penalties are already established for existing DEP and other agency violations that might occur on the river. Belinda agreed to check on the status of the combined state and county rules on the river pamphlet for homeowners. The meeting adjourned.