

**Caloosahatchee River and Estuary and Everglades West Coast
Basin Management Action Plans (BMAPs) Annual Meeting
Webinar Summary**

Tuesday, April 2, 2024

1:00 pm – 2:35 pm

Participants

Cassondra Armstrong, SFWMD	Maddy Hart, FDACS
Charles Avery, Citizen	Kenny Hayman, DEP
Christian Avila, SFWMD	Derek Hendrie, Lykes
Taufiqul Aziz, DEP	Carolina Hernandez, SFWMD
Bill Baker, MacVicar Consulting	Moirra Homann, DEP
Lisa Bally, ATM	Laila Hudda, Citizen
Evelyn Becerra, DEP	Stephen Hume, Citizen
David Bortell, Citizen	Nenad Iricanin, SFWMD
Beth Brady, Save the Manatee	Megan Jacoby, SFWMD
Andrea Browning, Lee County	Wes Kayne, Barraco & Associates
Patricia Burke, SFWMD	Chandler Keenan, DEP
Trevor Campbell, AECOM	Chris Keller, Wetlands Solutions
Lauren Campbell, DEP	Steven Kelly, FDOT
John Cassani, Calusa Waterkeeper	Evan Key, DEP
Stacy Cecil, SJRWMD	Lisa Kreiger, Lee County
Carolyn Ciarlariello, DEP	Tricia Kyzar, UF
Brad Cornell, Audubon	Juli LaRock, SFWMD
Kevin Coyne, AMP	Laura Layman, SFWMD
Susan Dahod, Citizen	Bill Lynch, Jones Edmunds
Tim Denison, Johnson Engineering	Alexandra Mattingly, SFWMD
Diane DiPascale, Collier County	Daniel McDevitt, McDevitt Law
Amy Eason, Martin County	Valentina Miele, FL Oceanographic Society
Kate English, Pavese Law Firm	Brandon Moody, Charlotte County
Yesenia Escribano, FDACS	Jessica Mostyn, DEP
Amanda Exposito-Ferree, Atkins Realis	Ryne Nimmo, DEP
Edgar Fernandez, Anfield Consulting	Kevin O'Donnell, DEP
Jay Ferrin, Florida Senate	Stacey Ollis, SFWMD
Jessica Fetgatter, DEP	Steffany Olson, SFWMD
Phil Flood, SFWMD	Roland Ottolini, Lee County
Jake Fojtik, FFBF	Rachel Perley, Four Waters Engineering
Marcy Frick, Tetra Tech	Ximena Pernett, RES
Joe Gilio, Citizen	Jon Perry, ESA
Beverly Grady, Citizen	Mark Perry, Florida Oceanographic Survey
Kyle Grandusky, GMA Water	Codty Pierce, Calusa Waterkeeper
Jennifer Green, FDOT	Libby Pigman, FWMD
Roxanne Groover, FOWA	Jason Pim, Sharkinetics
Raichel Gulde, RES	Nicolas Pisarello, ATM
Chris Guth, Federico and Associates	Robert Potts, ATM
Ron Hamel, FGCU	Jeff Prater, USACE

Irene Quincey, Pavese Law
Jennifer Reynolds, SFWMD
Ethan Richardson, DEP
Mary Kay Robbins-Kralapp, Citizen
Steven Rodriguez, SDPA
Rhonda Roff, Citizen
Maria Romero, Lee County
Zach Sampson, Tampa Bay Times
Warren Schirado, Citizen
Marlene Severino, DEP
Mailin Sotolongo- Lopez, DEP
Courtney Stevenson, Bonita Springs Utilities
Danielle Taylor, SFWMD
Drew Thacker, Westervelt

The Florida Channel
Jennifer Thera, FDACS
Richard Thompson, City of Fort Myers
Ansley Tilley, RES
Bill Tredik, ATM
Diana Turner, DEP
David Tyler, DEP
Rachel Vitek, RES
Shreya Vuttaluru, Tampa Bay Times
Tommy Walker, Alico
Youchao Wang, SFWMD
Rhonda Watkins, Collier County
Ken Weaver, DEP

The webinar recording and supporting materials are posted to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) file transfer protocol (FTP) site at
https://publicfiles.dep.state.fl.us/DEAR/BMAP/Caloosahatchee/Meetings/2024_Annual_Meeting/ or
https://publicfiles.dep.state.fl.us/DEAR/BMAP/EWC/Meetings/2024_Annual_Meeting/.

Questions and Answers

Question on the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) presentation: When will DEP determine the C-43 operational water quality certification? C-43 water quality certification is for Water Quality-Based Effluent Limits (WQBELs).

Answer from Diana Turner, DEP: I do not know that at this time but I can look into that.

Follow-up Answer: DEP will issue an operating permit for the C-43 West Basin Storage Reservoir project prior to final completion. According to SFWMD, construction of the C-43 reservoir is anticipated to be completed in December 2024. Please note that since this is a reservoir and not a stormwater treatment area, there is no WQBEL for this project.

Question the SFWMD presentation: Some great projects in the works. What efforts are being made in identifying additional projects and securing lands to address the shortfall of storage needs in the Caloosahatchee Watershed?

Answer from Stacey Ollis, SFWMD: The District is working in collaboration with DEP over the next year. We are in preparation now for our five-year Water Protection Plan reviews and those will be published in the 2025 South Florida Environmental Report (SFER). We are working on the collaboration for identifying additional projects and those will include identifying both public and possible other areas that would allow us to place additional projects. There will be more to come on that in the 2025 SFER.

Question on the DEP presentation: When will the next iteration of the Everglades West Coast BMAP be released/updated?

Answer from Diana Turner, DEP: We are going to be updating this BMAP by July 1st of next year and I will talk a lot more about what is coming up for that update later on in the presentation. It will be updated by next July.

Question on the DEP presentation: My question is about the nitrogen concentrations. Are they summaries/averages over time?

Answer from Marcy Frick, Tetra Tech: Those are the total maximum daily load (TMDL) concentrations, I am assuming. If they are then we are looking at some long-term averages.

Answer from Diana Turner, DEP: If it was about the scatter plots I showed for Everglades West Coast, that was all sample data over time. We do look at trends, particularly in Caloosahatchee.

Clarification: Yes, scatter plots.

Question on the DEP presentation: What projects are in place to improve the year-over-year total nitrogen (TN) reduction to meet the 20 year plan?

Answer from Marcy Frick, Tetra Tech: The projects that we have shown so far are the projects submitted by all of our local stakeholders that were shown in the slides earlier as well as ones that the Coordinating Agencies, that is the South Florida Water Management District, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, and Florida Department of Environmental Protection, are looking to do on a more regional scale. Each year as part of the Statewide Annual Report we ask for updates and new projects to continue to meet those targets.

Answer from Diana Turner, DEP: As part of the BMAP updates we will be asking for projects to include in the BMAPs so that is something that we look at as we do the updates.

Question on the DEP presentation: Are the TN reductions noted for the 10-year milestone based on modeling or actual measured/monitored amounts?

Answer from Marcy Frick, Tetra Tech: The answer to that is it is a combination. Depending on the project type, we use the BMAP model for the starting load as well as some defined efficiencies based on studies and literature values to calculate the reductions. Some other projects do have measured reductions that we report on.

Question on the DEP presentation: Are the phosphorus concentrations measured or calculated?

Answer from Marcy Frick, Tetra Tech: If that is for the projects, it is a combination of measured reductions and calculated.

Question on the DEP presentation: How often are the loads coming from the watershed updated?

Answer from Diana Turner, DEP: Every year with the South Florida Environment Report, they report on loads coming off the watershed every year.

Answer from Marcy Frick, Tetra Tech: For the BMAP, our model starting load remains constant but we do always look at those measured watershed loads that the SFWMD reports on.

Question on the DEP presentation: Where can we see the trends?

Answer from Marcy Frick, Tetra Tech: Those are in SFWMD's South Florida Environment Report and we do the five-year water quality trends for the BMAPs as part of those 5-Year Reviews. The Caloosahatchee trends were in the last 5-Year Review from the year before last.

Answer from Diana Turner, DEP: It is also on the StoryMap.

Question on the DEP presentation: What was the TN reduction number for 2023?

Answer from Marcy Frick, Tetra Tech: We would have to go back into the Statewide Annual Report (STAR) to look at what we got for that. [Note: Based on the draft STAR information, an additional 1,232 pounds per year of total nitrogen were achieved in 2023.]

Question on the DEP presentation: Do those new loads that factor into the TMDL?

Answer from Marcy Frick, Tetra Tech: We will talk about next steps shortly on how we will factor in those new loads.

Question on the DEP presentation: Are the reductions calculated or are you referring to the actual monitoring data as reported by the SFWMD in the five major basins?

Answer from Marcy Frick, Tetra Tech: The project reductions are either calculated using the model and literature or study efficiencies or monitoring data, where available. In terms of the watershed loads, some of that information does come from the SFWMD's South Florida Environmental Report.

Question on the DEP presentation: With the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) updating their best management practice (BMP) books and practices, how is DEP monitoring those BMP credits? Will there be an increase in sample monitoring to verify compliance?

Answer from Diana Turner, DEP: FDACS is pretty early in the process of updating those BMP manuals so I am not sure exactly what that will look like yet. We are still working through that process with them.

Question on the DEP presentation: Not seeing the same progress reported here as noted in the South Florida Environmental Report (SFER) on a basin or subwatershed perspective. Can you clarify?

Answer from Marcy Frick, Tetra Tech: We did talk about in the 5-Year Review and last year's meeting that there are increasing watershed loads. These progress charts are compared to the estimated loading at the time of the BMAP and Diana will shortly talk more about next steps on how we plan on addressing the increased watershed loads as part of the next BMAP update.

Question on the DEP presentation: Does the total phosphorus (TP) and TN loading account for the inflows from Lake Okeechobee?

Answer from Marcy Frick, Tetra Tech: For the BMAP, we are focused on the loads from the watershed that the local stakeholders are able to reduce. Those are the loading values that we are looking at in the BMAP.

Question on the DEP presentation: Are data reported here including excess Lake Okeechobee discharges as occurring today?

Answer from Marcy Frick, Tetra Tech: The data here are through Water Year 2023, which end at the end of April 2023 so we are not looking at current discharges. That will be reflected in the next targeted restoration area (TRA) update.

Question on the DEP presentation: What is the source of nitrogen in Cypress Creek and Orange River?

Answer from Marcy Frick, Tetra Tech: We have kind of looked into it and I know Lee County has done some studies and we are continuing to try and find sources so that we can address that. I do not think we have a set answer to that yet.

Question on the DEP presentation: Why is insufficient data so prevalent in the eastern basins after 12 years of BMAP?

Answer from Marcy Frick, Tetra Tech: The eastern area was just added in 2020 so we started monitoring those in 2020. As I mentioned, starting next year, we will have quite a few less insufficient

because we will have the five years of data.

Question on the DEP presentation: While the modeled BMAP load for TN was 3.9 million pounds per year, the 2022 measured 5-year average for the watershed was 5.2 million pounds per year. Has this problem of modeled versus measured 5-year averages disparity been addressed to get more realistic status assessments?

Answer from Marcy Frick, Tetra Tech: We will talk about that shortly.

Question on the DEP presentation: Can you comment on the status of House Bill 1557/Senate Bill 1386? Has Governor DeSantis signed yet? The bill adds some further requirements for wastewater treatment facilities specific to BMAPs and TMDLs.

Answer from Diana Turner, DEP: I do know that it has passed. I do not believe it has been signed yet as far as I know.

Answer from Moira Homann, DEP: I do not believe he has signed it yet so we're keeping an eye on that. Once it is signed, we will start talking about how we will incorporate those new requirements into our BMAPs for the updates for next year.

Question on the DEP presentation: Will also update stakeholders in the Everglades West Coast to include any community development districts (CDDs), as you did for the Caloosahatchee River and Estuary?

Answer from Marcy Frick, Tetra Tech: Yes, we did get information from Lee County to do that.

Question on the DEP presentation: Are municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) permitted programs in compliance with BMAP load reduction targets? If a MS4 is in a BMAP area it requires accountability with the BMAP load reduction.

Answer from Diana Turner, DEP: The MS4s have certain permit requirements that are handled by the MS4 group.

Answer from Marcy Frick, Tetra Tech: Everyone has been submitting projects and updates and making progress towards reductions so I believe that means they are in compliance.

Answer from Diana Turner, DEP: I believe so.

Question on the DEP presentation: How did we get a reduction in urban land use? Or is the 2017-2019 the current?

Answer from Marcy Frick, Tetra Tech: It does not look like there was a reduction. They both increased. The "Acres in Current BMAP" are from the 2012 BMAP with that land use coverage, which 2010 was probably the newest. The updated 2017-2019 coverage is the latest available. There was an increase in urban and a reduction in natural and agriculture.

Question on the DEP presentation: What happens in 2032 if required reductions have not been attained?

Answer from Diana Turner, DEP: There are a couple of things that can happen. We will have to evaluate where we are in 2032 to see if we need to extend the BMAP or if we need to take enforcement because BMAPs are a Secretarial Order so if we need to take enforcement we can.

Answer from Moira Homann, DEP: With the requirements of Senate Bill 1379 where stakeholders have to meet milestones every five years, we'll be able to keep tabs of where we are hopefully way ahead of time before we hit that 2032 deadline and we will be able to work to adaptively manage our

projects and work with stakeholders to ensure that we've got as many projects for the highest amount of reductions as possible before we hit that deadline. At that point we would reconsider if we need to make adjustments to our timeframes.

Comment: This feels like we are kicking the can down the road folks!

Question on the DEP presentation: How confident are you in the 10-year average loading data while also reporting insufficient data for the East and West basins?

Answer from Marcy Frick, Tetra Tech: The 10-year average loading data used in the BMAP are from the model. It is the last ten years of the model period and that was calibrated to data available at that time. The reason we are reporting insufficient data for East and West is for the TRA process we needed five consecutive years of monitoring and those basins have not previously been monitored consistently. As you can see, we do have data that Diana represented in the hotspot analysis. We just did not have the five consecutive years for the TRA approach. These are all just different ways of tracking progress to help inform where we really need to be focusing our efforts moving forward.

Question on the DEP presentation: Will DEP continue to allow excess BMAP load reduction credits for environmental resource permit (ERP) applications?

Answer from Marcy Frick, Tetra Tech: Any BMAP credits have to be above and beyond any permit requirements. If any permitted stormwater treatment projects do have more treatment provided than required, we can give some additional credit.

Question on the DEP presentation: What is TRA?

Answer from Marcy Frick, Tetra Tech: That is the targeted restoration area approach that we described a few slides ago.

Question on the DEP presentation: How are you handling "I" qualified data in the TN calculations?

Answer from Diana Turner, DEP: "I" data is included. We take a look to make sure there is no other qualifier codes with it.

Question on the DEP presentation: In the hotspot data map, there are still lots of insufficient data points. Does that mean no data are being collected in these locations? How can that be addressed?

Answer from Diana Turner, DEP: I have to go back and look at the station list. I do not recall if this is every single station that exists. There are some stations that just by the nature of what the purpose is of the station, they are only sampled a couple of times and then they are done. That could be some of these stations. It could be that they are newer stations so they maybe only have one year of data. There are a couple of different possibilities.

Question on the DEP presentation: Are data sorted by whether there are lake discharges at the time of sampling?

Answer from Diana Turner, DEP: No, I do not believe so.

Question on the DEP presentation: Will the results of the TRA and hot spot analysis be included in future BMAP Report and/or BMAP Story Map?

Answer from Marcy Frick, Tetra Tech: Yes, they will.

Question on the FDACS presentation: Are there any plans to conduct audits to verify BMP compliance?

Answer from Jennifer Thera, FDACS: Every two years we go out and do the site visit and make sure they are doing everything correctly and implementing everything they need to be doing. It is a two-step process to determine if the BMPs are being properly implemented. We first give them corrective measures and then if a producer does not properly implement, we turn them over to DEP for enforcement.

Question on the FDACS presentation: Despite 95% enrollment in East Caloosahatchee that is where the most nutrient hotspots are. Is there a connection between BMPs implemented and measured outcomes in downstream impaired waters?

Answer from Jennifer Thera, FDACS: For all the BMPs verified effective by DEP, there is a presumption of compliance with water quality standards and there is no onsite monitoring on an operation. Through monitoring, DEP identifies and tracks water quality trends in the waterbody to identify areas in the watershed that are exhibiting high loadings of TN or TP, the hotspot analysis that they talked about, to better focus our management efforts. We are currently working cooperatively with DEP and SFWMD to identify adaptive management strategies and regional projects that will help meet the TMDL.

Question on the FDACS presentation: What portion of agricultural operations have chosen the water quality monitoring option for BMP assessment?

Answer from Jennifer Thera, FDACS: As of today, that we know of, no one has selected the monitoring in lieu of enrolling in our program and implementing FDACS' BMPs.

Question on the FDACS presentation: Why is unenrolled acreage so high in the Everglades West Coast basin? Isn't enrollment required when in a BMAP area?

Answer from Jennifer Thera, FDACS: Of the 48% that is being remained to be enrolled, 26% of those acreages are unlikely agriculture. If we account for what is likely enrollable, we are at 71% enrolled.

Question on the FDACS presentation: Is DEP in charge of BMP enrollment enforcement? If so, what is being done to require enrollment?

Answer from Diana Turner, DEP: Yes, DEP is in charge of enrollment enforcement. Our resident expert in charge of the enforcement program is not with us today so I will follow up with you and we will post an answer online as well. [Note: please refer to the 2023 annual meeting folder on the FTP site for an explanation on what the BMP enrollment enforcement efforts are:

https://publicfiles.dep.state.fl.us/DEAR/BMAP/Caloosahatchee/Meetings/2023_03_17_Annual_Meeting/

Marcy Frick, Tetra Tech: We did cover that in the last two or three years in annual meetings. Some of that information is posted in past presentations, as well, if you want to look back at the FTP site.

Question on the DEP presentation: What model will be used to update the Everglades West Coast BMAP?

Answer from Marcy Frick, Tetra Tech: That will be another land use based model like was used before. We are just updating the land use year as Diana showed.