

## **Lake Okeechobee Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP)**

### **Webinar Summary**

*Thursday, April 4, 2024*

*1:00 pm – 2:11 pm*

#### **Participants**

|                                            |                                           |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Silvia Alderman, Akerman                   | Ray Hodge, United Dairy Farmers           |
| Jana Ash, RES                              | Moirra Homann, DEP                        |
| Christian Avila, SFWMD                     | Danielle Honour, CDM Smith                |
| Bill Baker, MacVicar Consulting            | Nenad Iricanin, SFWMD                     |
| Lisa Bally, ATM                            | Danielle Ivey, Audubon                    |
| Bethany Barnes, Tampa Bay Times            | Megan Jacoby, SFWMD                       |
| Terrie Bates, Citizen                      | Paul Jones, SFWMD                         |
| Evelyn Becerra, DEP                        | Chandler Keenan, DEP                      |
| Diana Bello, Kimley Horn                   | Chris Keller, Wetland Solutions           |
| Julie Bortles, Orange County               | Elizabeth Kelly, Martin County            |
| Patricia Burke, SFWMD                      | Steven Kelly, FDOT                        |
| Lauren Campbell, DEP                       | Evan Key, Florida Senate                  |
| Amy Castaneda, Miccosukee Tribe            | Lee Killinger, Florida Crystals           |
| Stacy Cecil, SJRWMD                        | Lisa Krinsky, UF                          |
| Carolyn Ciarlariello, DEP                  | Jacob Landfield, SFWMD                    |
| Kelly Cox, Audubon                         | Ivette Leiva, FDOT                        |
| Kevin Coyne, AMP                           | Heather Lindell, Orange County            |
| Nina Cudahy, Toho Water                    | Lisa Lotti, City of Orlando               |
| Susan Dahod, Citizen                       | Jonathan Madden, SFWMD                    |
| Sean Dallas, Oversight District            | Sarah Malone, ATM                         |
| Amy Eason, Martin County                   | Deborah Manzo, Okeechobee County          |
| Katherine English, Pavese Law              | Brian Megic, Liquid Solutions Group       |
| Amanada Exposito-Ferree, Atkins Realis     | Valentina Miele, FL Oceanographic Society |
| Elizabeth Fata Carpenter, Everglades Law   | Jessica Mostyn, DEP                       |
| Jay Ferrin, Florida Senate                 | Stacey Ollis, SFWMD                       |
| Jessica Fetgatter, DEP                     | Steffany Olson, SFWMD                     |
| Phil Flood, SJRWMD                         | Timothy Perry, Gardner Bist Attorneys     |
| Marcy Frick, Tetra Tech                    | Libby Pigman, SFWMD                       |
| Aubrey Frye, SFWMD                         | Nicolas Pisarello, ATM                    |
| Joe Gilio, Citizen                         | Jeff Prater, USACE                        |
| Susan Gosselin, Osceola County             | Irene Quincey, Pavese Law                 |
| Raichel Gulde, RES                         | Jennifer Reynolds, SFWMD                  |
| Christopher Guth, Federico & Associates    | Dawn Ritter, Highlands County             |
| Elizabeth Guthrie, Ducks Unlimited         | Maya Robert, Cape Coral                   |
| Bret Hammel, Palm Beach County Water       | Ellen Rogers, Florida Senate              |
| Sam Hankinson, DEP                         | Beth Ross, Gunster                        |
| Maddy Hart, FDACS                          | Samantha Russo, SJRWMD                    |
| John Hayford, Okeechobee Utility Authority | Warren Schirado, Citizen                  |
| Kenny Hayman, DEP                          | Brent Setchell, FDOT                      |
| Carolina Hernandez, SFWMD                  | Marlene Severino, DEP                     |
| Margarita Hernandez, DEP                   | Kimberly Shugar, DEP                      |

Gil Smart, Friends of the Everglades  
Drew Thacker, Westervelt  
The Florida Channel  
Jennifer Thera, FDACS  
Raychel Thomas, Pavese Law  
Ansley Tilley, RES  
Scott Towler, Answer Advisory  
Diana Turner, DEP

David Tyler, DEP  
Rachel Vitek, RES  
Tommy Walker, Alico  
Youchao Wang, SFWMD  
Benita Whalen, Dispersed Water  
Jesse Wineberg, Orange County  
Manuel Zamorano, SFWMD

The full 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/LakeOkeechobee/Meetings/23%20Annual\\_Meeting\\_2024/](https://publicfiles.dep.state.fl.us/DEAR/BMAP/LakeOkeechobee/Meetings/23%20Annual_Meeting_2024/).

### **Questions and Answers During Meeting**

**Question on the DEP presentation:** Can the portal be opened after July 1 but before November so stakeholders have a little more time to add information?

**Answer from Marcy Frick, Tetra Tech:** Moira Homann responded to this in the chat but the long-term goal is to have the Portal open for longer periods of time, but we are not going to be able to accommodate that this year. As Diana mentioned, this is still a new tool so we use this time to make updates based on your feedback.

**Question on the DEP presentation:** Is the targeted restoration area (TRA) analysis showing a downward trend for total nitrogen (TN) or total phosphorus (TP) in the basins?

**Answer from Marcy Frick, Tetra Tech:** We are not using the TRA to determine a trend. We have a separate trend evaluation that we do. This is really just to show where we seem to be getting higher concentrations and loads to focus resources.

**Question on the DEP presentation:** When you do a hotspot ranking for each gage location, does it account for if the numeric nutrient criteria (NNC) is a stream versus lake, or is the whole watershed using 1.54 milligrams per liter (mg/L) for all gages?

**Answer from Diana Turner, DEP:** The whole watershed uses that 1.54 mg/L. It is a higher level tool so we do not break it down to be that granular.

**Question on the DEP presentation:** Do conditions that occur during an event like a hurricane get included in hotspot analysis?

**Answer from Marcy Frick, Tetra Tech:** We use all the available data but I do not think sampling during an extreme event like that typically occurs.

**Answer from Diana Turner, DEP:** I do not know if we would have sampling that would occur in that event. We do have a list of qualifier codes that we exclude and I can look those up and let you know. I am not sure there would be a lot of sampling during a hurricane event.

**Question on the DEP presentation:** Are the hotspot locations and TRAs available in geographic information system (GIS) format?

**Answer from Marcy Frick, Tetra Tech:** Once those are finalized, we can put those on the FTP site, as well.

**Answer from Diana Turner, DEP:** Yes, we can do that.

**Question on the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS)**

**presentation:** What sort of meetings and timelines can stakeholders expect to see for the release of new best management practice (BMP) manuals?

**Answer from Jennifer Thera, FDACS:** We are working on trying to get them all updated this year through rulemaking. We have a bunch of different working groups going on right now. Some are going through our internal process to go to rule development. They are in various stages. If you would like more information, you can sign up for our Florida Administrative Record (FAR) notifications.

**Additional Questions Submitted**

**Question:** What is more effective in BMAP reductions: less TN and/or TP applied to agriculture or efficiency of BMPs?

**Answer:** Both reducing nutrient applications and implementing BMPs are effective in making BMAP reductions. Nutrient application practices are one type of BMP that producers implement.

**Question:** Have efficiency removals been based on models concentrations, actual analysis, or both?

**Answer:** Both. Depending on the project type, we use the BMAP model for the starting load as well as defined nutrient removal efficiencies based on studies and literature values to calculate the reductions. Other projects do have measured reductions that we report on.

**Question:** Indiantown is its own municipality within the C-44 basin and has maintenance responsibilities of its own stormwater system. Please include them in the process.

**Answer:** Noted. If you have a contact at Indiantown, please let them know to sign up for BMAP notifications.

**Question:** We appreciate the additional storage and treatment of the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) projects that are underway. How will the reductions from these projects be distributed to the stakeholders? Martin County has previous agreements with the SFWMD due to our financial contribution to the project on the distribution of the reductions from the C-44 reservoir that should be honored during the next update.

**Answer:** The reductions from regional projects completed by the Coordinating Agencies (SFWMD, DEP, and FDACS) will go towards achieving reductions needed on agricultural lands that are above and beyond requirements for owner implemented BMPs.

**Question:** As a suggestion, please include within the TRA analysis the availability of public lands for projects. Targeting basins on the water quality data should be priority, but if land is not available in the basin, it will be hard to create projects to provide reductions.

**Answer:** This suggestion is noted. Consideration for public lands can be a factor used once the high priority basins have been identified and additional analyses are occurring.

**Question:** According to the TRA and the hotspot analysis, it appears that the C-44 basin is identified as priority 1. Most of that basin is agricultural, yet according to FDACS' presentation, most of the land has been enrolled in the BMP NOI program. How will projects be prioritized in this basin if agricultural land is presumed under rule to meet the water quality requirements when they are enrolled in the program?

**Answer:** Agricultural producers in a BMAP are required to either implement BMPs from the appropriate FDACS manual or monitor water quality. The owner implemented BMPs will achieve a

portion of the reductions needed from the agricultural lands. The Coordinating Agencies will work with producers and local stakeholders to identify additional projects (such as agricultural cost-share or regional treatment) to meet the remaining required reductions.

**Question:** In the TRA analysis, the C-44 is a priority 1 yet in the St. Lucie BMAP it is a priority 2. How is the overlap of these BMAPs being taken into consideration?

**Answer:** The TRA evaluation uses target concentrations and unit area loads specific to each BMAP area, which is why the priorities can vary. Since this basin is ranking as a higher priority in both BMAPs, resources should be focused in this area to improve water quality.

**Question:** The target load for total phosphorus is 0.04 mg/L yet for the St. Lucie BMAP it is 0.081 mg/L. How are these targets being reconciled in the C-44 Basin?

**Answer:** The targets in each BMAP are based on the total maximum daily load (TMDL) for each focus waterbody. These target concentrations must be achieved in the focus waterbody but the concentrations may vary throughout the watershed. Projects implemented in this basin will benefit both waterbodies and will receive credits in each BMAP.

**Question:** Please take note that most of the hotspots are in agricultural areas and provide solutions on how we can address these areas in the next BMAP iteration.

**Answer:** Owner-implemented agricultural BMPs will achieve a portion of the reductions needed from the agricultural lands. The Coordinating Agencies will work with producers and local stakeholders to identify additional projects (such as agricultural cost-share or regional treatment) to meet the remaining required reductions. If you have potential project ideas and/or project locations, please share those with DEP for evaluation.

**Question:** We appreciate FDACS showing a slide on the agricultural rule. How will FDACS address water quality impairments on agriculture that is enrolled in the BMP NOI program? If a municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) samples an agricultural area that is enrolled and discovers that it is not meeting the BMAP, what should the MS4 do? Report it to FDACS?

**Answer:** Owner-implemented BMPs may not fully achieve nutrient reductions needed to meet TMDL and BMAP requirements. If an MS4 identifies potential water quality concerns on an agricultural property, they can contact FDACS for follow up.

**Question:** When the DEP Stormwater Rule gets signed by the governor, how will the extra reductions be handled? The stormwater rule requires 95% reduction in Outstanding Florida Waters (OFWs). This will be extra load reductions for the watershed. Will each MS4 need to track the extra reductions?

**Answer:** BMAP credits are assigned for nutrient reductions that occur above and beyond any permit requirements. Future projects implemented under the revised stormwater rule requirements will need to be meet the new required treatment efficiencies. If additional reductions are provided beyond those requirements, BMAP credit could be provided for that additional treatment. The higher treatment requirements under the new rule will reduce the water quality impacts from development.

**Question:** Please include TN as an impairment. Based on sampling, the lake is clearly impaired not only by the numeric nutrient criteria but based on the TMDL for the St. Lucie River and Estuary as well.

**Answer:** Lake Okeechobee has not been verified as impaired for TN. As part of the BMAP, reductions in TN loads from projects are being tracked.