

Wekiva River, Rock Springs Run, and Little Wekiva Canal Basin Management Action Plan

Onsite Sewage Treatment and Disposal Systems (OSTDS) Remediation Plan Meeting

Summary

Wednesday, December 14, 2016

9:30 AM

*Public Works West Altamonte Operations Facility
(Lake Lotus Training Room)
950 Calabria Drive
Altamonte Springs, FL 32714*

Attendees

Advisory Committee Members

Julie Bortles, Orange County
Mike Cliburn, Friends of Wekiva
Roxanne Groover, FOWA
Bart Harriss, FDOH
Travis Hollman, City of Altamonte Springs
Nick Mcray, Lake County
Megan Nelson, Orange County Utilities
Kim Ornberg, Seminole County
Charles Whitaker, Homeowners

Others

Quinten (Bob) Beitel, Resident	Melanie Fowler, AMEC Foster Wheeler
Carter Belvin, ATM	Charles Friel
Mary Brabham, SJRWMD	Xueqing Gao, FDOH
Audra Bucchfield, FDOH Orange County	Moira Homann, DEP
Tiffany Busby, Wildwood Consulting	Elisabetta Natale
Kevin Coyne, DEP	Erin Reed, Geosyntec
Dennis Davis, Wright-Pierce	Robert Samson
Bill Eggers	Bob Walter, Seminole County
Chris Ferraro, DEP	Heather York, Wildwood Consulting
Casey Fitzgerald, SJRWMD	

Welcome and Introductions

Tiffany Busby welcomed attendees to the OSTDS advisory committee meeting and thanked Altamonte Springs for the use of the meeting facility. She stated that the focus of the meeting will be to look at the nitrogen contributions to the Wekiva River, Rock Springs Run, and Little Wekiva Canal and specifically at the contribution from OSTDS. She thanked the advisory committee for their time. She reminded attendees that the meeting format is different than previous meetings because the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) wants to engage committee members. She stated that attendees could offer public comments at different points during the meeting and asked attendees to be brief. She welcomed feedback from the

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advisory committee throughout the meeting. She stated that although the advisory committee meetings will focus on septic systems, the other sources will be addressed during other meetings. She requested that attendees sign in and stated that notes would be taken during the meeting. Tiffany stated that she is a DEP contractor. Attendees introduced themselves. Tiffany introduced Moira Homann as the basin coordinator and main point of contact.

Recap Items

Moira provided an overview of the agenda. She reminded committee members of the Sunshine Law requirements. She displayed updates to the advisory committee members. She stated that she can add other alternates to the advisory committee upon request. Moira stated she received public service announcements (PSA) developed by the Florida Onsite Wastewater Association (FOWA) from Roxanne Groover. She has posted these PSAs to the public site and will provide a live link to the website in the presentation.

Moira stated that the priority focus area (PFA) must be delineated for springsheds. Rick Hicks is working with the St. Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD) to develop the boundaries. The PFA will be the area of focus for the first five years of the OSTDS remediation plan. Rick sent the draft PFA boundary and document to the SJRWMD for feedback. Moira anticipates sending the PFA document and files to the committee for review by the end of the calendar year.

Moira stated that she received from Robert Samson a list of questions gathered from homeowners. The questions are related to changes involved with upgrades to septic tanks, costs of upgrades, among others. Moira will post the list of questions on the public site and will send them out with the follow up email. She added that the questions could be discussed during the next meeting.

OSTDS Remediation Plan

Tiffany displayed a slide of the parts of the remediation plan. She stated that the legislature requires three components to each plan including science, projects, and public education. The discussion today will focus on projects.

Scientific Information - Tiffany displayed a slide stating the legislative requirements for scientific information in the remediation plan to "*Collect and evaluate credible scientific information on the effect of nutrients, particularly forms of nitrogen, on springs and springs systems.*" She stated that the development of the Wekiwa/Rock Springs Nitrogen Source Inventory Loading Tool (NSILT) is underway at the DEP and will do a lot to integrate information on the various sources. The NSILT will reference nitrogen data, the number of septic tank systems, recharge areas, and other information. The DEP will share the NSILT report upon completion. Tiffany asked if there are other sources of OSTDS information that should be considered.

Roxanne stated that Rick Hicks (DEP) is also finalizing a Wekiwa OSTDS study. Roxanne suggested inviting Rick to present the results of the study at a future meeting. The study investigates nitrogen fate from septic tanks.

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Bart Harriss stated that there is a 2017 report from the Florida Department of Health (FDOH) that was completed in 2015 that would be good to include.

Roxanne stated there is a pilot septic system project with a lined septic field in the Wekiva basin on Orchard Drive. Rick Hicks supervised the study using mulch liners.

Bart stated that a study was conducted at the Wekiwa Springs State Park by a manufacturer that may be helpful. Roxanne offered to reach out to the manufacturer to request the report. Moira stated that she would add a folder on the public website to collect scientific resources.

Julie Bortles stated that Orange County installed monitoring wells in the basin. The county will be pulling groundwater samples and will be able to share the data with Moira. Erin Reed stated that there is a study by the University of Central Florida that researched boron and total Kjeldahl nitrogen (TKN) in 21 septic tanks in Volusia County. Erin offered to contact the publisher, *Environmental Earth Sciences*, for a copy of the article.

Bill Eggers stated that there is an Apopka study prepared by MACTEC for SJRWMD. Robert Samson stated that there are better, more complete studies available now.

Dr. Xueqing Gao stated that there are seven full-scale systems being monitored around the state looking at treatment efficiency and drain fields. He anticipates that study being complete within two years.

Bart stated that the FDOH has information about septic tank failure rates around the state as well as county-specific rates. Roxanne suggested including installation rates as well. Xueqing stated that the final report for the Florida Water Management Study has been submitted to DEP for review. He will ask Elke Ursin (FDOH) if the report can be included at this time.

OSTDS Related Projects – Tiffany stated that it would be helpful to understand some of the constraints to septic tank remediation and limitations to sewerage projects. She reminded attendees that 5-year, 10-year, and 15-year project timelines need to be developed and it may be helpful to identify areas where there may be limits to sewerage or where lined systems may not be the best option. She stated that we also need to figure out how to calculate reductions and how to address population growth.

Roxanne stated that the FDOH Technical Review and Advisory Panel (TRAP) met on Friday, December 9, 2016, and passed language that will allow FDOH to permit the use of lined drainfields in septic tank systems. She stated that she anticipates approval early next year. Tiffany added that these systems are not currently permitted. Xueqing stated that the language also includes monitoring of these systems, and some in-tank systems will be revised to be included as performance-based systems.

Robert Samson stated that there has been legislation for municipalities to require septic system maintenance, but none of the municipalities have adopted the language. Robert stated that the existing systems need to be better maintained, and it would be helpful for this committee to draft some guidelines. Tiffany cautioned everyone that good septic system maintenance, while important, does not mean that we can meet the nitrogen reductions. She reviewed a study

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yesterday that was performed in Massachusetts showing very small improvement after septic tank pump outs. Robert stated that we cannot remove all septic tanks in the basin. Kevin Coyne agreed and added that this is not the intent of DEP.

Kim Ornberg stated that she believed the legislation related to local government maintenance requirements was Senate Bill 550. Roxanne stated that that legislation was repealed but another bill came along allowing local maintenance requirements, but not requiring maintenance for 19 counties with first magnitude springs. Kim stated that Wekiwa Springs is not a first magnitude spring. Roxanne stated that this is an option and she offered to research the rule language and to send it to Moira.

Tiffany stated that the committee will discuss maintenance again, but at this time we need cost-effective solutions remove nitrogen sources.

Bart stated that homeowners need to understand the importance of maintenance even if it is not required. He added that even if new septic system technology can be permitted, there will be a lag time for training staff.

Roxanne stated that FOWA is developing training materials now for the OSTDS industry contractors and engineers.

Julie Bortles stated that Orange County will need to make presentations to the Board of County Commissioners and homeowners very soon. Tiffany stated that DEP is willing to participate in the meetings, if that would be helpful. Kim stated that Seminole County would like to see the PFA prior to scheduling the meetings, so she can have an understanding of what could be required by the county. Julie added that ordinances will need to be drafted.

Tiffany asked for constraints for sewer projects. Kim stated that the same level of education, presentations, and funding would be needed for sewer projects. Julie stated that the county may be limited by existing ordinances. Megan Nelson stated that new development is straightforward, but retrofitting areas with sewer could be more difficult. There is also a need for funding.

Tiffany stated that the legislature has dedicated springs funding that could be used for these projects. The DEP can help subsidize retrofit projects and sewer projects. DEP is also open to springs funding requests to create subsidy programs at the local level. Kevin stated that a pilot project has been funded in Leon and Wakulla Counties to subsidize sanitary sewer hookups through the local governments. Moira stated that conceptual projects can be added to the list in the basin management action plan (BMAP), so they will be prioritized for funding. Tiffany added that DEP is looking for projects to fund.

Public Education -- Tiffany stated that DEP understands public education may evolve over time. She displayed a slide of draft stakeholder OSTDS education priorities displaying input from stakeholders in the basin. The table reflects audience, message, and materials priorities for each entity. The request was sent to stakeholders and DEP compiled the feedback. She requested additional feedback. Moira will send the request again and will ask the key stakeholders to fully populate the tables. She stated that the table can be used for ideas to share information and ideas

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with others. Moira thanked attendees that have submitted feedback to share in time for the meeting.

Julie asked if Moira is requesting details about the six percent education credit in the BMAP or more specific efforts. Tiffany responded that the request is for OSTDS-related education information, so if your existing BMAP efforts include any activities related to OSTDS education, please include them in your table. Moira added that these also can be conceptual projects for 5-, 10-, and 15-year plans.

Bart stated that there are a number of stakeholders and messages. He asked if there would be a review process to ensure consistency. Tiffany responded that this is not required, but if a coordinated effort is desirable to the committee then that is fine. She stated that the committee might be interested in including a pilot project for an education. The Tampa Bay Estuary Program has a successful public education campaign for fertilizer use. This type of effort requires a pre- and post-campaign efforts and is a larger effort than individual public education items. She displayed an example pilot project table developed by DEP. She added that the group does not have to do an education campaign or could choose to conduct a campaign on a smaller scale, but the pilot campaign is a suggestion that could be included in the BMAP with a local entity as the lead.

Julie asked how an entity could express an interest in conducting an education campaign or leading an effort. Tiffany stated that they could add it to their table, or they contact Moira or her, or it could be added to a future agenda and discussed at a future meeting. Roxanne stated it will be crucial to have a consistent message including all options. Kim thought it would be great to use an existing campaign rather than create a new one. Tiffany suggested it might be a good idea to do an initial campaign for awareness and then another campaign in a few years focusing on options. Roxanne added that this would be a good idea to think of the campaign in phases since this is a complex issue.

Robert stated that the homeowners are the main audience and we are spending their tax dollars. He requested a coordinated message that is clear, concise, and consistent. Kevin agreed and added that we do not want competing messages.

Quinten stated that he would like to get started with public education as soon as possible because there will be a need to educate the public about ordinance changes in the near future.

Bart stated that he would like a consistent message as well. He stated that the FDOH receives daily calls about septic tank questions.

Tiffany asked attendees to continue sending their thoughts.

Funding

Moira displayed a slide with information for the federal 319(h) grant. She stated that she would include a link to the funding in the follow up email. She stated that there are two pots of money available now. The first is for education by local governments and the other is for typical stormwater projects. The required matching funds can be in-kind funding. The second pot of

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funding is for construction projects with an education component. She displayed the grant schedule. The solicitation for project proposals is posted on the website and Moira will send the link in the follow up email.

Kim asked if the \$1 million education funding is the dollar amount available statewide. Tiffany responded that this is correct.

Annual Progress Report

Moira stated that the BMAP was adopted in October 2015 and it is time to prepare an annual progress report. The reporting period is from November 1, 2015 until October 31, 2016. She stated that the request for project updates will be sent by email on December 28, 2016. She requested responses by January 27, 2017.

The next meeting will include an annual update for all sources in addition to the OSTDS Advisory Committee meeting.

Public Comments

Tiffany offered an opportunity for public comment and announcements.

Next Meeting Date

The next meeting has been scheduled for Wednesday, February 22, 2017 at the same meeting location.

Tiffany stated that urban fertilizer is a source of nitrogen in this basin too and might be another good candidate for public education efforts. Robert stated that many homeowner associations have bylaws that may need to be altered. He suggested providing public education to the homeowner associations.

Bart stated that he reviewed some of the homeowner questions on the sheet provided by Robert. He stated that many of the questions are general to all systems and not specific to this basin. The questions might be helpful with public education statewide.

Xueqing asked if state agencies can apply for the federal 319(h) grant funding. Moira and Kevin responded that they would check with the funding group. Xueqing stated that it might be helpful for the DEP and FDOH to work cooperatively on a website to answer some of the basin septic system questions. Robert and Charles stated that the homeowner questions were not submitted to the group as a task to the group. The questions were submitted to give the group an idea of the concerns of homeowners. Bart stated that the FDOH is available to meet with homeowners.

Nick Mcray asked if the PFA document and files would be ready by the end of the year. Moira responded that this is a realistic timeframe.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 11:20 am.

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Action Items

1. Moira will send the PFA document and files to stakeholders once complete.
2. Robert will send an electronic version of the homeowner questions to Moira.
3. Moira will send the homeowner questions to stakeholders.
4. Moira will request the Wekiwa OSTDS study from Rick Hicks upon completion.
5. Bart will send a 2017 report from FDOH.
6. Roxanne will request from a manufacturer the final report for a study in Wekiwa Springs State Park.
7. Moira will request from Rick Hicks a report from a pilot septic system project using lined septic fields in the Wekiwa basin on Orchard Drive.
8. Julie will share data as it becomes available from groundwater monitoring wells in the basin.
9. Erin will contact the publisher, *Environmental Earth Sciences*, for a copy of the article based on a study by the University of Central Florida that researched boron and total Kjeldahl nitrogen (TKN) in 21 septic tanks in Volusia County
10. Bill will send an Apopka study prepared by MACTEC for SJRWMD to Moira.
11. Bart will send county-specific FDOH septic tank failure rates and installation rates to Moira.
12. Xueqing will send the final report for the Florida Water Management Study to Moira once finalized.
13. Moira will collect the scientific information in a public file.
14. Moira will send the public information request to stakeholders for input.
15. Moira will send the link to the federal 319(h) grant funding.
16. Moira/Kevin will provide feedback to FDOH on their eligibility for the education portion of the Section 319 funding.
17. Moira will send a save the date for the next meeting scheduled for February 22, 2017.
18. Moira will post a link to the presentation for the "Be Floridian" residential fertilizer campaign.
19. Roxanne will send the septic tank maintenance bill language to Moira to send out.