

St. Lucie River and Estuary Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP)

Webinar Summary

Friday, December 20, 2019

9:30 am – 10:38 am

Participants

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William Griffin, City of Stuart
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Kenny Hayman, DEP
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Mark Perry, Florida Oceanographic Society
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Chris Powell, City of Port St. Lucie
Irene Quincey, Pavese Law
Ted Saltos, DEP
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Jose Vega, St. Lucie County
Rachel Vitek, E Sciences
Pam Wade, SFWMD
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The full webinar recording and supporting materials are posted to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) file transfer protocol (FTP) site at
http://publicfiles.dep.state.fl.us/DEAR/BMAP/StLucie/Meetings/2019/12_20_Draft_BMAP_Webinar/

Questions and Answers

Question: The total maximum daily load (TMDL) is more stringent than the numeric nutrient criteria (NNC). TMDL was developed as a comparative to the Indian River Lagoon. I understand this is the route we are currently under but should the TMDL be re-evaluated?

Answer: We don't have any plans to reevaluate the TMDL. If you feel there is a reason that the TMDL should be reevaluated, you can get in contact with our TMDL folks to talk about that. We don't have that on our radar and, as you mentioned, this timeline to update the BMAP is going off of the current TMDL.

Question: How can you not account for the Lake Okeechobee inflows when even if the lake meets the TMDL for phosphorus, it will still be giving a major load of nitrogen, 1,000 metric tons per year?

Answer: We do account for that load. The only thing that was mentioned is that we're not accounting for it in the allocations, and that is because that is not load that can be controlled by an entity within this watershed. We do account for it in other places, including the targeted restoration area (TRA) evaluation that was discussed, and looking at our water quality analyses, in the trends that we talked about. The only place it is removed is in the allocations because there is no way for any of the entities to control

that load. Also, if you look at the water quality network that is included in the BMAP update, you can see that we have the S-308C structure station listed as a Tier 1 station because we do collect and evaluate that information, so we are accounting for that. For purposes of allocations only, we're making that assumption for the Lake Okeechobee loading.

Question: Are you comparing the calculated existing loads to the actual load data provided by the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD)?

Answer: We compared the calculated existing loads to basin loads and overall loads reported by SFWMD in the most recent South Florida Environmental Report that was released in March 2019.

Question: You addressed "finding sources of funding" for the various BMAP projects. The Governor's budget recommendation includes a large sum for targeted water quality projects. Would the general pathway for the project funding be through DEP with funding targeted to this budget category?

Answer: There has been a lot of money requested by the Governor again this year. Some of the money that was dedicated this past year was focused on these Northern Everglades watersheds so that has been really great. I don't think that we're assuming that any specific funding source would be the primary funding source. I think we're looking to identify all different types of funding sources. We do hope that the Governor is able to get some of that money that he has requested but we don't know what that is going to look like so we're not banking on that solely.

Question: Has DEP changed the TRA prioritization method since the last BMAP meeting?

Answer: No, that has not changed. The TRA approach is the same but the schematic shown in the presentation and in the report was created so that the ranking steps can be better visualized by everyone. I think it was presented at the last meeting but the table that shows the individual results for each individual basin within the BMAP area may not have been presented. The schematic that shows the steps was presented and walked through in greater detail so if you want to take a look at that and compare it to this you may get a better understanding of the TRA approach.

Question: Will we be able to view the data in the Watershed Information Network (WIN) and, if so, can we get instruction on how to review?

Answer: The WIN data are available and we can get you in touch with our WIN staff to get that process moving. Whatever data you are interested in, they can get that together. You also need to be granted access to view the data. It's not open where anyone can pull it. Let us know what you're interested in and we can get you touch with them.

Question: For the proposed monitoring stations, will flow data be collected or just concentration data?

Answer: For those 15 proposed stations, there are just concentration data. We had discussed potentially adding stations that would also collect flow data in some of the basins but given our resources and having to make decisions on that, ultimately the 15 stations selected were the best way to allot our resources for those basins. Those will just be concentration data.

Question: There were 30 something responses to the request for information (RFI). What is the process for some of those suggestions to be turned into actual projects? Are the suggested projects intended to be developed as "top down" as in DEP originated projects or is DEP relying on "local entities" to develop these projects?

Answer: We don't have any intentions to do anything specific with these. Local entities are more than welcome to partner with any of these RFI submittals for technologies or projects. It is quite possible that there will be some interest either within DEP or other agencies to look at some of these projects. The purpose of that RFI was to get the information together so it can be put in one place for people to review. There are no specific intentions for developing projects at this point.