

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

Monday, March 6, 2023

1:00 pm – 2:31 pm

Participants

Becky Allenbach, USEPA
Irene Arpayoglou, DEP
Christian Avila, SFWMD
Bill Baker, MacVicar Consulting
Evelyn Becerra, DEP
Adam Blalock, DEP
Patricia Burke, SFWMD
Laurene Capone, Citizen
Stacy Cecil, DEP
Angela Chelette, FDACS
Carolyn Ciarlariello, DEP
James Condon, AECOM
Derek Cox, FWC
Kelly Cranford, Culpepper & Terpening
Casey Darling Kniffin, Florida
Oceanographic Society
Tedd Darnell, USFWS
Sara Davis, DEP
Amy Eason, City of Port St. Lucie
Christine Eastwick, USFWS
Rebecca Elliott, FDACS
Katherine English, Pavese Law
Julie Espy, SAS
Veronica Fasselt, USEPA
Jessica Fetgatter, DEP
Sabrina Fischer, DEP
Jake Fojtik, Florida Farm Bureau
David Frady, DEP
Marcy Frick, Tetra Tech
Glen Gareau, SFWMD
Cristina Gauthier, SFWMD
Rebecca Groover, FOWA
Chris Guth, Federico & Associates
Sam Hankinson, DEP
Maddy Hart, FDACS
Kenny Hayman, DEP
Janet Hearn, ATM
Nenad Iricanin, SFWMD
Jeff Iudicello, SFMD
Megan Jacoby, SFWMD

Chuck Jacoby, SJRWMD
Greg Janiec, Sovereign Consulting
Johnny Jones, DEP
Bret Kaiser, Port St. Lucie
David Kaplan, UF
Elizabeth Kelly, Martin County
Ken Kniel, Citizen
Natalie Kraft, FPL
Kathy LaMartina, SFWMD
Jacob Landfield, SFWMD
Kristin Larson, SFWMD
Ivette Leiva, FDOT
Eduardo Lopez, Stantec
Andrew Luering, DEP
Amanda McDonald, SFWMD
Nikki Morgan, DEP
Jessica Mostyn, DEP
Stacey Ollis, SFWMD
Melanie Parker, SFWMD
Amanda Peck, DEP
Mark Perry, Florida Oceanographic Society
Irene Quincey, Pavese Law
Kai Rains, USF
Jennifer Reynolds, SFWMD
HM Ridgely, Evans Properties
Andrew Seibel, FDOT
Alycia Shatters, DEP
Patrick Shearer, RES
Kimberly Shugar, DEP
Jordan Skaggs, DEP
Gil Smart, Friends of the Everglades
Jerry Smith, Citizen
Janelle Strong, DEP
Jennifer Thera, FDACS
Diana Turner, DEP
Rachel Vitek, RES
BH Welch, SFWMD
Benita Whalen, Dispersed H2O
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 http://publicfiles.dep.state.fl.us/DEAR/BMAP/StLucie/Meetings/2023/03_06_Annual_Meeting/.

Questions and Answers

Question on the DEP presentation: Reduction estimates come from project implementation rather than measured load reduction, is that right?

Answer from Nikki Morgan, DEP: There are a number of different ways that we look at reductions. Some of them are by measured changes in concentrations from larger projects. Some of them are by estimated reductions that we typically get. Maybe some are those baffle boxes that use media, we know that has an efficiency to it that we then can estimate a reduction from that and the loading in the area that we have from measurements and models. Each project has its own unique way of being measured for reductions, so it really depends on what we are looking at.

Question on the DEP presentation: Could you please go back over the total nitrogen (TN) and total phosphorus (TP) reduction slides?

Answer from Nikki Morgan, DEP: For TN, using completed and ongoing projects, this is those 230 plus the 40 projects, so not the full 308 projects in St. Lucie, we have the cumulative reductions on the y-axis and then each year the amount of reduction that we have measured. Each year we have a value for how everyone's projects are doing towards reducing the total nitrogen loading for the basin. At the end of 2022, we had just under 875,000 pounds per year of total nitrogen reductions. Then, for TP, again for every year we have the total value summed up for everyone's completed and ongoing projects and we got the amount of reduction on the y-axis. We are over 190,000 pounds but we are still under that ten year milestone. These slides will be available to you and I am happy to answer any more detailed questions that might need more time to go over through emails and phone calls.

Question on the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) presentation: The SFWMD critical wetland acquisition list does not include any properties in Martin County. Can you speak to why that would be given the benefits of wetland conservation to improving filtering capacity in the watershed?

Answer from Marcy Frick, Tetra Tech: I think Stacey needs to go back to talk to the folks that put this together and can circle back to the person asking the question.

Follow up answer from Stacey Ollis, SFWMD after the meeting: The Florida Legislature passed a law in 2022 requiring all of Florida's Water Management Districts to identify critical wetlands within our agencies' boundaries for possible acquisition using funds from the State's Land Acquisition Trust Fund. To develop the list, SFWMD reviewed existing project footprints that have undergone a public planning process. Note that the current proposed list includes some properties within St. Lucie and Martin counties.

Question on the DEP presentation: What are the anticipated reductions if you include the projects that are under construction? How many of those projects are scheduled to be complete by the end of 2023?

Answer from Nikki Morgan, DEP: I do not typically look at the estimated reductions for underway and planned projects. We really like to make sure that the construction is complete for a lot of things. We know that plans versus full construction can have quite a bit of change between them. For some of our stakeholders, they have quite a few planned and underway projects so once those are completed, there can be a big jump in reductions. While some stakeholders have done a really good job getting

projects completed and are looking to start planning new ones. I do not have a great idea of the estimated amount from those projects. We tend not to really focus on those until we get the completed data from them. I also do not have a good idea, right now, of the estimated number that will be complete this year.

Question on the DEP presentation: Does the Statewide Annual Report (STAR) compare estimated impact of projects with actual measured or only cumulative reductions?

Answer from Nikki Morgan, DEP: This is related to the measured versus estimated question that was asked before. It is not only cumulative. Each project has its own reduction value and that data are all available for download in STAR. If you have interest in any specific project reductions that are credited, you can see that information. We only report the cumulative here in the annual meeting because we are really interested in how the BMAP is doing overall rather than any specific project reductions.

Question on the DEP presentation: Any explanation for the jumps/plateaus? What project occurred in 2019 that resulted in such a large reduction in TN and TP?

Answer from Nikki Morgan, DEP: I cannot point to any one specific project for any of those changes. We usually get big jumps when some of the large regional projects come fully online and we have measured data to look at those reductions. A lot of those reservoirs do need measured data to get the reduction values for those so once we get that information, and that is fully active, you will see those big jumps for those big regional projects. For TN, we also see some of those jumps when septic-to-sewer conversions are complete in the areas, and they are able to give us how many they were able to complete over the course of three or four years. It is multiple years of work that is given to us all in one year.

Answer from Marcy Frick, Tetra Tech: There are likely several projects happening in that jump.

Question on the DEP presentation: So, if all these load reductions are calculated based on project projections, why can't you verify the loadings by using actual monitoring data showing actual loads from the SFWMD?

Answer from Nikki Morgan, DEP: For some of the projects, there would not be monitoring data directly in the area of those smaller projects, so that one we would need to be using the expected reductions based on known efficiencies for some of the types. We would not have a really good location that would be a good outfall from some of those specific projects. For some of the projects, we do use actual monitoring data from South Florida Water Management District.

Answer from Marcy Frick, Tetra Tech: While this progress is showing the project estimated loads, we do measure progress doing some trends and some other evaluations that Nikki will speak to next.

Question on the DEP presentation: The St. Lucie BMAP started in 2013. We are 10 years into the 15-year implementation to achieve the TMDL. Did you say that a 2023 recommendation is to extend this implementation milestones out 20 years?

Answer from Nikki Morgan, DEP: It is to extend it out to 20 years instead of 15 years.

Answer from Marcy Frick, Tetra Tech: So, not adding another 20 years on top of the 10, but instead of saying we will meet it in another five years, we would be meeting it in another 10 years from now.

Question on the DEP presentation: For the targeted restoration area (TRA), was that measured or estimated loads?

Answer from Nikki Morgan, DEP: That is using measured data.

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

presentation: How is FDACS tracking the conversion from agriculture to another land use?

Answer from Jennifer Thera, FDACS: Annually, we use the property appraiser data and we have water management district and state owned land use. Biannually, we use our implementation verification (IV) site visits and ground truthing.

Question on the DEP presentation: If the property owner refuses to come into compliance do they lose their agricultural exemption until they comply?

Answer from David Frady, DEP: We have no authority to revoke anyone's agricultural exemption. That is wholly within the purview of the local property appraiser. They do not lose their agricultural exemption; however, there are significant civil penalties up to \$50,000, depending on the size of the properties. There is a significant financial penalty for not coming into compliance but we have no authority to revoke any agricultural exemptions. That is within the purview of the local, elected property appraiser.