

Florida Water Resources Monitoring Council

October 11, 2006, Meeting One

Tallahassee, Florida

REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chris Brooks, Florida Dept. of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACS)
Paul Carlson, Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission
Kevin Carter, Florida League of Environmental Resource Agencies (FLERA)
Carlos Herd, Suwannee River Water Management District (SRWMD)
Nenad Iricanin, South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD)
Graham Lewis, Northwest Florida Water Management District (NFWFMD)
Ellen McCarron, Florida Department of Environmental Protection (Chair*)
Mark Rials, Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD)
Steve Richter, Saint Johns River Water Management District (SJRWMD)
Gail Sloane, Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)
Bob Vincent, Florida Department of Health (DOH)

Alternate Present:

Kate Muldoon, Florida Department of Environmental Protection

There were no observers.

*Denotes non-voting member

WELCOME

Secretary of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), Colleen Castille, opened the meeting by welcoming everyone to the first meeting of the Florida Water Resources Monitoring Council. Secretary Castille said she is a “scientist at heart” and as such was excited by this new Council. She told the Council that they would provide the knowledge needed to make policy and expressed the importance of water monitoring in assisting the Department in making policy decisions. She went on to voice her concern that a central place is needed for data to be accessed, not only by researchers but by the public in particular.

Secretary Castille used the recent example of the Wakulla County “goo” that had washed up on the shores of the beach causing the beach to be closed. No one knew what it was and there was no data on it. There was speculation that it was caused by sewage seepage but that does not seem to be the case; and in fact, this area is known for

having the least amount of human impact. She said the leaders in the State are appalled that no one knows what happened in Wakulla to cause this growth.

INTRODUCTIONS

Immediately following Secretary Castille's opening of the meeting, she introduced the meeting Facilitator Janice Fleischer, FLASH Resolutions, who led the group in an introduction exercise. Members of the Council were paired and asked to tell each other their name, agency affiliation and the answers to three questions: 1. What would I do if I was independently wealthy; 2. Who were the three people who most influenced me; and 3. What I like to do in my time off. After this exercise, the Council members introduced their partner and began to learn a little more about each other.

SETTING THE STAGE: OVERVIEW PRESENTATION AND Q & A

Ellen McCarron, Chair, FDEP Office of Coastal and Aquatic Managed Areas, delivered a presentation to set the stage and put the work of the Council in context (**Exhibit A**). Ms. McCarron announced that she was giving this presentation because Steven Wolfe, Council Liaison, had a family medical emergency and could not attend this first meeting. Ms. McCarron explained that, in her position with FDEP in connection with this Council, she would be Chair of the Council but that she would not be a voting member as the FDEP had a representative on the Council.

At the conclusion of the presentation, the members made the following comments:

1. What is our charge and what are we coming out with?
2. What is the definition of a "standard";

Answer: It is how we are going to share monitoring data not that we are going to decide what water quality standards should be.

AGENDA REVIEW/ INTRODUCTION TO FACILITATION, CONSENSUS, MEETING GUIDELINES

Ms. Fleischer told the members about her background and training. (see her website for more information: www.flashresolutions.com). She explained that the day's agenda was designed to introduce the members to the basics of the work to be done, begin to develop a governance structure and initiate the substantive work of the Council. She expressed her hope that members would enjoy themselves while accomplishing the tasks planned.

Ms. Fleischer reviewed the Agenda for the day (**Exhibit B**); explained the role of a facilitator (**Exhibit C**), the roles of participants in the process (in this case, the Council members) (**Exhibit D**) and the different methods groups can use to make decisions (**Exhibit E**). Ms. Fleischer introduced a method of making decisions that differed from a "majority vote" system. When the system used is "majority vote" there is always a "minority". The goal of using a "consensus based" system is to attempt to avoid a minority of those whose issues are rejected. Consensus is a method of having group

members collaborate with one another in coming to decisions. Participants assist their colleagues in gaining what they need while fulfilling their own needs. She introduced a draft set of consensus and quorum rules which were discussed and, using the consensus method, were adopted by the Council. (Exhibit F).

Consensus and quorum rules ranking

5	4	3	2	1
7	3	1	0	0

Adopted by consensus

The next item on the agenda was the adoption of the rules of respect or Meeting Guidelines for the Council (Exhibit G). These too were adopted by consensus.

Meeting Guidelines

5	4	3	2	1
11	0	0	0	0

Adopted by consensus

LUNCH

PRESENTATION: FLORIDA'S GOVERNMENT IN THE SUNSHINE LAW

In order to ensure that the members of the Council were informed regarding the rules and their responsibilities with regard to the Florida Sunshine Laws, Kelly Samek, Esq., Assistant General Council of the FDEP Office of the General Council, presented an introduction and explanation to the members of the Council (Exhibit H).

For further fully detailed information, go to:
<http://myfloridalegal.com/sun.nsf/manual> .

ISSUE GENERATION AND DISCUSSION

As a final exercise for the day, members were asked to generate a list of issues surrounding the work to be done by the Council. The text below reflects the results of this exercise and the comments of the members during the Plenary Discussion which followed the issue generation.

Member comments prior to beginning the exercise:

1. There was a data base done by FSU re: coastal monitoring, what could we add to this for the board that says: "Identifying Monitoring Programs"
2. Other programs are going on around the state and data is not known about or shared

3. There is a real need for a central clearinghouse/repository

ISSUE GROUPINGS:

#1: Identifying appropriate experts

Problems	Solutions
Does the creation of multiple work groups: this one, Oceans Council and Coastal Monitoring TAG serve too similar charges	One website with experts and their monitoring programs would be ideal
Experts change with changing responsibilities and reorganization	Utilize existing experts' organizations to convene with each other
Water Quality programs don't always know where experts are for advice	Produce a directory of experts with qualifications
Need to ID the questions	
Define "expert"	
Political issue	
Different disciplines often don't meet/converse	
Changes in staff over time	

Member comments:

1. Problem of how do you decide who really is an expert; technical or political
2. Want a short synthesized type of statement of what type of expert the person is and how do you know
3. Experts are already overtapped; dedicated position or function
4. Internal or external experts?
5. Could be all; university, private, agencies, etc.
6. Some experts don't want to work with you; it bores them
7. Within agencies, there are folks who worked in a particular area a long time ago but folks are not aware since they doing different work now
8. Fewer and fewer people with institutional knowledge; some have retired and that expertise/history is gone
9. Need diversity and minority concerns; if you have a state sanctioned list you must assure minority participation

#2. Determining gaps

Problems	Solutions
Gaps sometimes a result of limited agency responsibility	Use a GIS base system to inventory and determine gaps
We don't know where there are gaps (true gaps) in water quality data	Solicit input from around the state where/what gaps are and prioritize

Databases and locations have never been combined	
Need inventory	
What are the resource issues	
Comprehensive knowledge necessary to see gaps	
Gaps sometimes change with crisis	
No one assigned their task	
Need good inventory/map before identifying gaps	

Member comments:

1. First need an inventory of all data then you can see where the gaps are
2. Unless there is a crisis; then it is done for that crisis
3. Getting information that is only held by one person that no one else knows about; gathering that information and getting it into the data base
4. Local knowledge needs to be used
5. Knowledge of staff needs to be tapped as well; they might not pass their knowledge along; often they don't know others are interested
6. Develop an infrastructure that stores information on who is doing what; who the experts are and where they can be found; what information is needed/wanted; who does this type of work; etc. Implementation; which agency does it fall under?
7. We are never going to monitor throughout the state to be able to avoid incidents like the "goo"; we need a "response team" and response protocol

#3 Identifying existing monitoring programs

Problems	Solutions
No central repository of program identification	Consolidate different inventories under one umbrella and make permanent
Would like one central website so we could locate these programs	GAME* project inventory
Iterative, need management of site to update	SFWMD has such a coverage
Need a way to combine information from different agencies	Must have central clearinghouse managed by librarian and that is updated and solicited regularly. This must be funded.
Keeping list current	GAME survey from FWCC (similar programs to identify)
How can our Council help coordinate all the inventory solicitations	We have been monitoring fecal coliform levels in shellfish harvest

	areas for many years. Lots o' data! FDACS
	CERP monitoring inventory
	Fall 2005 coastal monitoring inventory

*Geospatial Assessment of Marine Ecosystems program

Member comments:

1. Centralizing it; maintenance and motivation are problems
2. it is an iterative and dynamic situation; must be constantly updated
3. What are the incentives to participate in a monitoring program
4. there are non-public monitoring programs; how to capture them
5. permit-compliance monitoring not thought of and some is very useful

#4 Distinguishing data

Problems	Solutions
Not all agencies maintain same level and amount of information	Develop consensus among all users what is feasible for metadata input
Sampling frequency issues	Identify data quality objectives
What should be done about locational accuracy standards? Have general levels?	
Research grade versus standard methods routines and their application	
Data objectives differ	
Metadata standards	
Should DEP attempt to characterize water quality data by levels of quality assurance (QA) applied?	
Different definitions for metadata	
High definition of location does not always seem needed	
Different data standards between agencies	
How does an agency "explain" data (context of objectives, QA, etc.)	
Detection limits	
How can a monitoring program expand its geographic extent by using other data	
How can we help the public understand a data point	

Member comments:

1. Related to sharing data; we must describe it first really well, maybe this should be combined with #6, sharing of data
2. If you are going to share your data you must be able to describe it
3. Describe the lowest common denominator of data put into the data base; how to make manageable so people will populate the database
4. Academics will only provide data that they worked up and they often don't have the will or time to provide how they got the data (or published)
5. Solutions to academic or contractors: require the data in electronic format as part of funding contract, then they have to provide all the information as they collect it
6. The next problem is that the agency may just "sit" on that data and it is not shared or centralized
7. Some contractors may correct data for themselves and not give the corrected version to you after providing it to you
8. SOPs-standard operating procedures; Universities often deviate from the SOPs that state agencies use; so if a University is doing the work you may get different data
9. Agencies are often behind in the data development
10. Research techniques are way out ahead of standardized things used by agencies (example: bacterial examples: genetic markers vs plate counting)

#5 Combining Data

Problems	Solutions
Incompatible data formats	Develop broad communication media between entities (e.g. websites, annual conferences)
Databases dynamic	Develop one database/standard for all agencies
Sometimes agencies report raw data and then describe using subjective confusing language (to public)	Must get modernized data management contract with Google and or ESRI
How do we determine what is being done	
Duplicate records	
QA levels	
Detection levels	
Each agency uses a different database program	
Research/permit routine monitoring	
Lack of defined standard	
Differing objectives for monitoring design	

Different techniques	
Groups do not always know where and why others are sampling	
Must get modernized data management contract with Google and or ESRI	

Member comments:

1. Data comparability; for example in a particular ecoregion techniques may differ; need to be able to reconcile the data differences
 - a. How to join the data
2. Incentive for combining data sets is very different at different government levels
3. Who is going to do it? And cost is an inhibiting factor
 - a. example is the TMDL program (stats used negative values and zeros)
4. Linking fresh water, estuarine and coastal networks

#6 Sharing data

Problems	Solutions
Must get modernized data management contract with Google and or ESRI	Must get modernized data management contract with Google and or ESRI
Data standard	Develop one database/standard for all agencies
Metadata standards	Must be web based, and managed with all generators trained
Incompatible data formats	Adopt core variable suite (subset) for sharing
What should an agency/monitoring program do if it wants to share its data with others that are outside the intended audience	Develop data format translation widgets
Other agency (DEP) asking for data in STORET when we don't have staff and ability	Develop consensus on data format and reporting
Universal databases are unwieldy	
Data not in same format, i.e. number vs text	
Definitions not consistent for metadata	
Format/unit issues	
Each agency uses a different database program	
Each agency's database follows a	

different standard	
Research/permit driven	
Data quality assurance objectives MDLs, PQLs	
Different techniques used	
Multiple requests for data from several agencies becomes tiresome	
Databases dynamic	
Groups/agencies use different software/formats	

Member comments:

1. enough problem sharing data internally within agency; within our agency there are three or more data bases; how do we then share across agencies
2. Are all data sets centralized (SFWMD)? Yes, but research has its own data base and not everyone has access
3. time and resources spent can be substantial to share data (STORET)
 - a. Storage and retrieval (STORET)

#7 Resource Inventory for Oceans Council

Problems	Solutions
	SFWMD has ramp coverage [is this a reference to the RAMP QC program?] what is RAMP stand for?
	We have GPS locations for all of our water quality sampling stations and shellfish monitoring stations plus legal descriptions of all shellfish harvest areas. FDACS
	Use a GIS system to produce map locations
	Identify and maintain list of key contacts throughout state
	Develop historic, current, and future maps of mutual resource features
	Utilize Ocean Observing Systems (SECOORA, SECOOS, GCOOS), Southeast Florida Coral Reef Initiative (SEFCRI), etc. advertise in publications

Member comments:

1. In making a map; data comparability within the agencies

2. Agencies can supply lat/long maps easily
3. You give us the format you want and the agencies will try to provide it in that format
4. The GIS person needs to tell Steve what format he/she wants and then Steve makes the request
5. Geographic extent of the data and the format

Other issues not under any category above:

1. What role should our Council have in interacting with impaired waters program (TMDL program)
2. Funding
3. Conflicting goals of data use
4. Link freshwater, estuarine, and ocean estuary observing in same watersheds
5. Who takes overall responsibility for other than state/local information

VISION BASICS

Ms. Fleischer explained that at the next meeting, the Council would be discussing and developing a Vision for the future of Water Monitoring. She directed members to their packets for a sheet explaining the basics of Visioning and asked them to review it before the next meeting. (Exhibit I)

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Fleischer introduced everyone in the room to the Public Meeting Guidelines (Exhibit J)

Public comment was invited. No one spoke.

The Facilitator announced she would be creating an e-mail distribution list for "Interested Parties". Anyone interested in having their name included on this list for announcements should contact Ms. Fleischer (see e-mail address below).

Note: Public comment is not recorded. If anyone from the public desires to have his/her comments appear in the Report of Proceedings, they can submit their comments in writing on the comment cards provided at each meeting or email the Facilitator, Janice Fleischer (janice@flashresolutions.com) within the first week following the meeting.

EVALUATIONS/ADJOURN

Ms. McCarron thanked everyone for their participation and support. She expressed her feeling that much good work had been initiated and she was looking forward to working with all members of the Council. Prior to adjourning the meeting, she asked

the members regarding their preferences for future meeting dates and days and received the following responses:

1. Avoid Mondays and Fridays if possible
2. Not a permanent Council but try to get what we can done in the time allotted
3. Next meeting in January; we should try to meet on Wednesdays if possible

Ms. Fleischer reminded members to please fill out their Evaluations. The meeting was then adjourned.
