

Lake Okeechobee Basin Management Action Plan

Technical Meeting Summary

Wednesday, April 16, 2014

10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Williamson Conference and Education Center

2229 NW 9th Avenue, Okeechobee, Florida

Attendees

Nagel Altrui, Kissimmee	Mitch Katz, Orange County (<i>phone</i>)
Beth Alvi, FDEP	Chad Kennedy, FDEP
Rick Baird, Osceola County	Kimberly Lawrence, Osceola County
Lesley Bertolotti, SFWMD	Claudia Listopad, Applied Ecology
Vanessa Bessey, FDACS	Lisa Lotti, Orlando
Karen Bickford, Lee County	Steve Madden, Conestoga-Rovers & Associates
Julie Bortles, Orange County (<i>phone</i>)	Cherise Maples, Seminole Tribe of Florida
Tiffany Busby, Wildwood Consulting	Linda McCarthy, Lykes Brothers Inc.
Marisa Carrozzo, Conservancy of Southwest Florida	Kim McCue, Royal Consulting
Kevin Carter, SFWMD	Stacy Myers, Seminole Tribe
Audra Corson, Okeechobee Soil and Water Cons. (<i>phone</i>)	Melodie Naja, Everglades Foundation (<i>phone</i>)
Linda Crane, Two Jacks	Julie Neurohr, FDEP
Courtney Davis, UF-IFAS Okeechobee	Steffany Olson, SFWMD
Joseph DeCerbo, Spring Lake Improvement District	Kelly O’Nan, Hendry County
Kim Dinkins, FDEP	Fernando Pleitez, E Sciences (<i>phone</i>)
Holly Edmond, FDACS	Marcy Policastro, Wildwood Consulting
Steve Edmonds, One Florida Foundation	Robert Potts, E Sciences (<i>phone</i>)
Clell Ford, Highlands County	H.M. Ridgely, Evans Properties
Stan Ganthier, FDEP	Gary Ritter, SFWMD
Xueqing Gao, FDEP	Brian Roy, Royal Consulting Services
Jane Graham, Audubon Society (<i>phone</i>)	Chad Rucks, SFWMD
Paul Gray, Audubon Society	Charles Shinn, Florida Farm Bureau Federation
Katie Hallas, FDEP	Jeff Sumner, SFWMD
Noah Handley, Lykes Brothers	Hilary Swain, Archhold Biological Station
John Hayford, Okeechobee Utility Authority	Jim Threewits, Okeechobee County
Janet Hearn, ATM	Debbie Tyson, Gunster Law Firm (<i>phone</i>)
Ray Hodge, Southeast Milk	Eva Velez, AECOM
Clegg Hooks, FDACS	Garrett Wallace, Alico Inc.
Dianne Hughes, Martin County (<i>phone</i>)	Bonnie Wolff Pelaez, FDACS
Catherine Johnson, Orange County (<i>phone</i>)	

Welcome and Opening Remarks

Tiffany Busby welcomed everyone to the Lake Okeechobee Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP) meeting. The participants introduced themselves and the entity they represent. Tiffany asked if there were any edits to the March 19th meeting summary. Steffany Olson responded that on page five of the summary where it notes that there are performance measures for south of the lake, this should be modified to say draft performance measures for the lake.

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Modifications to the Load Estimation Tool Based on Stakeholder Feedback

Xueqing Gao stated that the Florida Department of Environmental Protection received comments from the stakeholders about the load estimation tool that was presented at the last few meetings. The Department used this feedback to refine the tool. The tool includes the six sub-watersheds north of Lake Okeechobee: Upper Kissimmee, Lower Kissimmee, Lake Istokpoga, Indian Prairie, Fisheating Creek, and Taylor Creek/Nubbin Slough. The tool was developed based on the output from the Watershed Assessment Model (WAM). The purpose of the tool is to evaluate the spatial distribution of nutrient loads in the watershed, which helps to determine if one pound of total phosphorus (TP) load from the Orange County area has the same impact as one pound of TP load near the lake. The tool is also used to determine the nutrient load reduction from different projects. The tool is a Geographic Information System (GIS) shapefile that includes the sub-watersheds, land use type, land use area (in hectares), land use-specific areal loads from WAM, attenuation rate, and total load going to Lake Okeechobee. The land use area times the areal specific load is the total load that is generated at the source. When this load is transported downstream to a waterbody, attenuation occurs. The final load reaching the outfall of the sub-watershed is the load at the source times the attenuation rate.

Xueqing stated that the first refinement made to the model since the last meeting was to remove the downstream attenuation factor. The Lower Kissimmee, Indian Prairie, Fisheating Creek, and Taylor Creek/Nubbin Slough sub-watersheds discharge directly to Lake Okeechobee without going through any major downstream rivers or stream segments. The Upper Kissimmee and Lake Istokpoga sub-watersheds go through the Lower Kissimmee sub-watershed before discharging to Lake Okeechobee. Therefore, the load from these sub-watersheds goes through the attenuation within the sub-watershed and also downstream attenuation through the Lower Kissimmee sub-watershed. The loading with this downstream attenuation factor applied was presented at the last meeting. Using this approach, the total load to the lake is 420.2 metric tons per year (MT/yr) of TP. This total load includes a 4% contribution from the Lake Istokpoga sub-watershed and an 11% contribution from the Upper Kissimmee sub-watershed. The low level of contribution from these sub-watersheds is due to all the lakes within each of these sub-watersheds, which means the sub-watershed has a high attenuation rate, plus the additional downstream attenuation through the Lower Kissimmee sub-watershed.

The Department talked with the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) and Del Bottcher (Soil and Water Engineering Technology), and they both noted that the downstream attenuation factor overestimated what was actually occurring. The downstream attenuation rate in the tool was about 30%, which is the attenuation rate for the Lower Kissimmee sub-watershed. Based on past studies, SFWMD and Del noted that the rate should be about 5%; however, there were no measured data to support this number. The 30% attenuation factor includes not only the in-stream attenuation but also the overland attenuation in the Lower Kissimmee sub-watershed, so the Department agreed that applying this factor is overestimating the additional attenuation from the Upper Kissimmee and Lake Istokpoga sub-watershed loads as the loads moved through the downstream sub-watershed. Since there are no available data to support a different attenuation factor, the Department decided to remove the downstream attenuation factor from the model. The tool will be refined in the future, once the WAM is refined. Removing the downstream attenuation factor did not affect the loading from the other four sub-watersheds because they discharge directly to the lake and not through a downstream sub-watershed. Based on these adjustments, the resulting total load to Lake Okeechobee is 448.3 MT/yr of TP. The Lake Istokpoga contribution is now 6%, and the Upper Kissimmee contribution is 15% of the total TP load, respectively.

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Paul Gray noted that the loads running off the watershed are a combination of the legacy load and the load added by the current land use. He asked if these sources are lumped together in the land use specific areal TP loads or if the model shows what is legacy versus new loads. Xueqing responded that he talked with Del about the legacy loads in the model. In WAM, a certain amount of legacy loading was added as a starting load, and this factor was used to calibrate the model to measured data. Therefore, the original amount of legacy load included to the model can be identified. Once the load goes through all the processes in the watershed, the legacy load becomes mixed with the new loads, so the amount of each that reaches the lake cannot be teased out. Hilary Swain asked if the amount of legacy load that runs off in the model changes during higher rainfall conditions. Xueqing responded that the total amount of legacy load is fixed and added as a starting load. However, the contribution of this load varies depending on the hydrological conditions. If there is more rainfall, then more of the legacy load runs off and if there is less rainfall, then less of the load runs off. This is not a linear relationship in the model.

Xueqing stated that the second refinement to the model is related to the hot spots map. In past meetings, a map with the TP load distribution across watershed has been shown to identify hot spot areas. The map shows the total TP load from each land use polygon per year. In talking with the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) and Del, they noted that the total load from a land use polygon could be influenced by the size of the polygon. Therefore, even if the land use had a low TP concentration, it could be shown as having a high load because it is a large area. FDACS noted that there is an area with an improved pasture where the loading is not as high as the tool is showing. The Department has been looking into what is causing this inconsistency between the tool and what is actually occurring in the watershed. To do this, the Department first compared the loading to the general land use types in the watershed (natural, open water, urban land, and agriculture). From this comparison, it seems that the TP distribution generally fits the land use type. Hilary stated that part of the problem is that the model is not differentiating between semi-improved pasture that does not have a history of fertilizer use and an improved pasture where there was fertilizer use. Xueqing responded that this was also a comment from FDACS.

Xueqing stated that Del had also noted that the map coloration depends on the number of classification groups, and changing the number of groups used could change the hot spot locations. The Department did this comparison, but did not see a difference in the hot spot locations. Another possibility for the difference is what is defined as a hot spot. A hot spot should probably be defined as an area with high unit loads. The Department looked into this option by mapping the loading potential at the source without any attenuation applied. This resulted in a very different map because the Upper Kissimmee and Lake Istokpoga sub-watersheds now include hot spots. If the attenuation factor in each sub-watershed is applied to the source load, the Upper Kissimmee River and Lake Istokpoga sub-watersheds are no longer big contributors. When this map is compared to the general land use map, there is good correlation. Based on this evaluation, the Department decided that the areal unit load after attenuation is the best way to represent the loading that is occurring in the field. The future refinement of WAM will include ground-truthed data, which will help to correlate further the model hot spots with the hot spots in the field.

Clell Ford noted that while it is nice to see the hot spots for the entire watershed, the individual stakeholders do not work at that scale. He asked how refined a scale the model can produce. Xueqing

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responded that when the WAM is refined, it will include more water quality calibration points, so that the model could be calibrated using more than just the water quality and hydrology data from the main tributaries. However, to use this model on a local scale, local data would be needed to calibrate the model.

Paul stated that in looking at the unattenuated load map, while it makes sense to capture the load right near Lake Okeechobee in order to meet the total maximum daily load (TMDL) in the short-term, failing to treat the load from the Upper Kissimmee could create a worse situation. For big rain events, such as Tropical Storm Fay, a more distributed treatment system will be needed to control the loading. Adding treatment in the upper part of the watershed would help to meet the TMDL goal in the long-term and prevent nutrient saturation in those lakes. While this approach would take longer, it would be better. Xueqing responded that while the loading from the Upper Kissimmee and Lake Istokpoga sub-watersheds is not significant for Lake Okeechobee, the load will have an impact on the lakes in those areas. These loadings will be addressed through other TMDLs, such as the four that were recently adopted for some of the lakes in the Upper Kissimmee sub-watershed. For Lake Okeechobee, once the hot spots in the lower part of the watershed are addressed, if the TMDL is not being met, the Department would reevaluate the loading in the northern part of the watershed. Katie Hallas and Kim Dinkins have already collected projects from the upper part of the watershed. Xueqing agreed that, in the long-term, the upper part of the watershed should be included for overall management of the loads to the lake.

Status Report- Agricultural Best Management Practice (BMP) Implementation in the Lake Okeechobee Watershed

Bonnie Wolff Pelaez stated that Florida Statutes gives agricultural producers two options in a BMAP: (1) monitor discharges at their own expense to prove compliance with state water quality standards, or (2) participate in an approved FDACS BMP program and receive a presumption of compliance with the water quality standards. FDACS staff work with the producers to determine the appropriate BMPs that should be implemented. By definition, BMPs must be practical and cost effective, and they must benefit water quality while maintaining or enhancing agricultural production. The implementation of BMPs shows agriculture's commitment to water resource protection.

Agricultural BMPs fall into two categories: management practices and structural practices. One aspect of management BMPs is nutrient management, which is common to all of FDACS' BMP programs. When producers sign notices of intent (NOIs) for BMPs, all NOIs include a requirement to implement nutrient management practices. Bonnie noted that as the state's department of agriculture, FDACS cannot ask growers to not use nutrients because they are essential to plant growth. However, FDACS does ask each producer to justify their use of nutrients and to keep records of how much fertilizer is applied. Other management BMPs include irrigation management and recordkeeping, which help to reduce nutrient movement. Bonnie showed an example of how soil moisture probes were used for a citrus grove located on the ridge. The grove was irrigating every three days, and running the water for about three hours. When the soil moisture probes were added, they were able to determine the recommended amount of soil moisture and reduce their irrigation to about one hour every three days. Therefore, they were able to reduce their water use and diesel fuel for the pumps, while also keeping the nutrients where they were needed at the root zone.

Structural practices include BMPs such as alternative livestock watering systems to keep cattle out of watercourses. These systems could be a livestock pump or a solar pump that goes to a trough, and there

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are also artesian wells in this area that can be set up to supply water to troughs without a pump. Other structural practices include interior ranch fencing, sediment and erosion control measures, and structures for water control. Structures provide the best bang for the buck for TP reductions, although most of the structures in the watershed are small. Additional structural practices include chemigation/fertigation systems to better place fertilizer near the root zone, variable rate technology/precision agriculture systems that determine how much fertilizer is needed and how high it should be sprayed based on the plant height, and weather stations to help with water conservation and nutrient runoff reduction.

Bonnie stated that the agricultural BMP enrollment process uses manuals for different commodity types. Each manual includes a checklist of items that need to be implemented. The adopted BMP manuals include cow/calf, citrus, vegetable and agronomic crops, sod, commercial equine, and specialty fruit and nut crops. In addition, a container nursery BMP manual will be released in early June. Bonnie noted that in the Lake Okeechobee Watershed, the landscape is very variable. In the southern part of the watershed where the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) is located, the land is very flat, the property is divided up, and water stays at set levels. The rest of the watershed has a significant amount of slope. Therefore, FDACS evaluates each property to determine what BMPs are needed and where. This is especially important for cow/calf properties. FDACS makes a map of the property, which is used when staff goes out to talk with the producers about where water enters and leaves the property and any opportunities for storing water on the property.

Bonnie noted that all participants in the Florida Ranchlands Environmental Services Project (FRESP) were required to implement BMPs on their properties as part of their agreement to be part of FRESP. The process for the cow/calf assessment includes determining the availability of cattle water, reviewing feeding box placement, and completing the checklist and determining if additional BMPs are needed. Bonnie noted that FDACS usually does not find a problem that needs to be addressed; they are mainly looking for opportunities for other BMPs. After a producer signs a NOI, FDACS will follow up with the producer after 90 days to verify that he/she is following the BMP manual. For structural BMPs, FDACS will help the producer secure an engineer and find funding. FDACS will also assist producers with setting up a record keeping system to organize the necessary information. In addition, FDACS will help producers manage construction projects. FDACS has an implementation assurance process to report to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection about BMP implementation. Bonnie presented a map showing agricultural BMP enrollment in the watershed through December 2013. There are opportunities for enrolling additional producers in the northern portion of the watershed, and FDACS is also working on re-enrollments in the revised citrus BMP manual. Bonnie noted that FDACS also has to re-enroll farms in the BMP program as owners change over time. For producers that have gone through the entire BMP process with FDACS and are satisfactory with recordkeeping and projects, FDACS notifies the Farm Bureau, and they provide a specific award to the producer as part of the Farm Bureau's County Alliance for Responsible Environmental Stewardship (CARES) Program.

Bonnie stated that FDACS has been working to map all the cost-share projects that they have funded since the beginning of the program. The cutoff date for this initial mapping effort was June 30, 2013. The current map, which is still under development in Google Earth Pro, includes water control structures, dairy program BMPs, water retention/detention, and weather stations. The map also includes the NOI coverage. The map has markers for each project, and details are shown when the user clicks on the marker. FDACS will be adding more project details to the map, including the dollars spent and the estimated storage capacity of the project.

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Clell asked how the stakeholders could obtain a copy of the Google Earth file. Bonnie responded that FDACS could provide this file, but it is not complete. The purpose of this effort was to give the Florida Department of Environmental Protection some information about the cost-share BMPs in the watershed. Clegg Hooks added that the local FDACS staff have been working with GIS staff in Tallahassee to create this file. The results had a big “wow factor” when FDACS could see some of the projects they have cost-shared in over the last eight years. This file is still in draft form since all the projects and information have not been added yet. FDACS has talked with Del about determining the potential water storage from the projects, and they need to work with the cooperating agencies to determine the criteria to calculate the storage. The structures, along with their sizes and costs, should be added to the Google Earth map within the next six months. Adding the storage information will take longer. Tiffany noted that the map was developed in Google Earth Pro, so this software would be needed to use the map.

Rick Baird asked if there is any state law that compels all agricultural operations to enroll in the BMP program. Bonnie responded that there is no law requiring all operations to enroll. Rick asked if FDACS or another entity has the ability to go out and inspect the BMPs on agricultural properties. Bonnie responded that FDACS does this through the implementation assurance process. Rick asked if the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the counties can go out to ensure that the agricultural producer is implementing what they are supposed to be doing. Clegg responded that producers are not directly required to implement a FDACS BMP program. However, at the point in time when a BMAP is adopted, agricultural producers only have two choices: implement BMPs or monitor water quality. SFWMD would like to expand their Works of the District Program to all of the Northern Everglades, which would give producers in this watershed another option. Rick asked if all the producers in the watershed, including in the Kissimmee area, will have to implement BMPs. Clegg responded that all producers in the watershed will have to implement BMPs over time. The BMAP is implemented in five-year increments. Towards the end of the first five-year iteration, after giving the producers a few years to adopt BMPs, FDACS and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection would send a letter to remind the producers what they need to do for the BMAP. If any producer does not respond, enforcement actions can be taken.

Rick asked if the agricultural erosion and sediment control plan is the same as the Florida Department of Environmental Protection’s inspector certification program. Beth Alvi responded that the agricultural plan is not the same as the construction program. Kim Dinkins added that the agricultural plan is implemented through FDACS field representatives working with the producers. Clegg noted that in response to the earlier question about other entities inspecting agricultural BMPs, FDACS has access to agricultural lands where the producer is enrolled in a BMP program. If someone wanted to go to a farm to look at the BMPs, FDACS could try to arrange this with the producer, but this could not be done without any notice. FDACS is not a regulatory agency, so they do not have the ability to go out and conduct unscheduled inspections.

Paul stated that he is trying to find out about the level of agricultural BMP implementation. He has heard that 80% of the agricultural lands are enrolled; however, the TP reductions have not been seen in the lake. He would like information on how many producers are enrolled but have not implemented BMPs, and how many producers are implementing cost-share BMPs. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection is assuming a certain level of reductions from agricultural BMPs, but this may not be accurate. He asked if this information could be obtained from the implementation assurance form

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when it is mailed back to FDACS. Bonnie responded that the form is not mailed to FDACS; instead, FDACS field staff go out to the farm to verify that BMPs are being implemented. Vanessa Bessey added that FDACS could put together information on how many BMPs were implemented last year. Paul noted that he would like to see cost-share BMPs on 100% of the agricultural lands, but he does not know how much acreage already has cost-share BMPs implemented. This would be useful information to determine how much more money is needed to realize more reductions from agricultural land uses. Clegg responded that there is no firm answer on how much money is needed. FDACS has an estimate of about \$60 million to cover the entire Northern Everglades area, and they could receive part of this funding from the legislature this year. Paul stated that the Audubon Society sent a letter to Senator Joe Negron supporting the \$10 million that FDACS asked for in this legislative session. Audubon's director would like to know how much additional funding is needed, so that Audubon can help support future requests. Clegg responded that he understands Paul's point, but the funding needs are larger than agricultural BMPs because there are also the regional SFWMD and federal projects. There is not enough funding to implement every effort that has been identified, so the agencies are focusing on those that provide the biggest bang for the buck.

Department Funding Sources and Opportunities

Katie Hallas stated that a handout was provided with a list of funding opportunities in the state. The funding sources that will be presented during the meeting are included in the handout. The handout has been updated recently for those stakeholders who have seen this information in the past.

One funding option is the Section 319 grant, which is a Clean Water Act federally funded grant that is administered by the Department with oversight from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This grant is awarded on an annual basis. Of the national Section 319 funding, Florida receives about 4%, which is between \$5 million to \$6 million each year. The deadline for submitting applications for this year is May 23rd. The stakeholders should have received an email about the funding process in February or March. If anyone did not receive this notice, they can contact Katie or Kim or the contacts listed in the presentation to be added to the notification list. By September 30th, the applicants will be notified if their project was selected, and the list of projects will be sent to EPA. In fall 2015, EPA will approve the projects and the grant recipients will receive a letter. All projects that receive funding must be completed by September 30, 2019; therefore, it is important to ensure that the necessary permits are in place, monitoring is designed, and questions are answered by Department staff before applying for funding.

The eligible project types for Section 319 funding include urban stormwater retrofits, septic tank pollution abatement, low impact development, and agricultural BMPs (which is different from most funding sources). The eligible applicants include state agencies, local governments, colleges, universities, non-profit organizations, public utilities, and state water management districts. The project evaluation criteria include BMP effectiveness monitoring, cost effectiveness per pound of pollutant removed, cooperative projects, and innovative BMPs. Section 319 funding can be used for construction, project-related monitoring, and project-related public education. This funding cannot be used for design, engineering, land acquisition, activities required by federal permit, and urban stormwater activities directly related to a permit. This funding has a minimum 40% non-federal match. In-kind services can be used for the match, as well as funding for design, engineering, monitoring, and education. Alternative federal funding and land acquisition cannot be used for match.

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The TMDL Water Quality Restoration grant is another funding option. Application deadlines are March 1st, July 1st, and November 1st each year, and applications can be submitted year round. This grant is funded through annual state legislative funding to the Department for implementation of BMPs that reduce urban stormwater loads. The Department typically receives about \$3 million dollars a year for this grant. If a project is not selected for funding, it will remain in the ranking pool for one year. The project match funds can be spent after notice of award. This funding can be used for urban stormwater retrofits or research and demonstration BMPs. The project must be at least at the 60% design phase, have a permit or have the permit scheduled for approval at the next governing board or Department meeting, include storm event monitoring to determine the actual load reduction, and be completed within three years of receiving funding. Katie noted that if any of the criteria are not met, the Department will set the application aside, but the entity can let the Department know within one year if all the requirements have been achieved. The same entities are eligible for funding as under the Section 319 grant. The evaluation criteria include effectiveness monitoring, located in an area with a BMAP or TMDL, cost effectiveness, innovative BMPs, project-related public education, and a dedicated stormwater funding source. Funds can be used for construction, monitoring, and public education but cannot be used for design, engineering, salary, and land acquisition. The project match must be at least 25%, and can come from in-kind services, design, engineering, monitoring, public education, and land acquisition. Stakeholders can contact the Department to be added to the grant notification list. It is important that the entities know the deadlines and submit the correct application form.

The Clean Water State Revolving Fund (SRF) is Florida's largest financial assistance program for water infrastructure. This program provides low-interest loans to local governments for stormwater and wastewater facilities. The fund has about \$200 million annually, with a \$25 million segment cap. The interest rates are below market rates and vary based on the economic wherewithal of the community. There are several program goals, including one related to water quality, which is consistent with the goal of the TMDL and BMAP. Funding can be used for wastewater, reuse, stormwater, nonpoint source pollution control, and estuary facilities, as well as certain agricultural BMPs. Local governments and non-governmental parties can apply for a loan. The loan term length varies from ten years for non-governmental sponsors up to 30 years for financial hardship communities. Repayments begin six months after project work is scheduled for completion. Applicants must show that they have a dedicated income source to repay the loan.

The Small Community Wastewater Facilities Grants Program is funded with legislative appropriations and half of the interest from loan repayments. The program is designed to work hand-in-hand with the SRF program. Grants are provided to fund the construction of wastewater facilities for incorporated municipalities with 10,000 or fewer people, and that have per capita income levels below Florida's average per capita income. A local match for the loan is required. This program is highly competitive. The Drinking Water SRF Loan Program provides low interest loans to local governments and certain private utilities to plan, design, and build or upgrade drinking water systems. The loan provides about \$70 million annually with a \$20 million segment cap. Discounted assistance for small communities may be available, and interest rates are usually about 40% below market rates.

In addition, there is an opportunity to receive funding directly from the legislature through a Community Budget Issue Request. This funding can be used for water projects, and the funding is included in the state budget. Entities can contact their local legislative delegation to determine if a project can be included in their funding request. Katie noted that the handout includes information on other programs.

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Rick stated that the Department used to supply a spreadsheet of pollutant load reductions for a particular BMP. He asked if that information is available. Beth responded that the table of BMP efficiencies is posted on the FTP site.

Jane Graham noted that Audubon wants to do as much as they can to obtain funding for projects at the state legislature level and federal level. Audubon's director recently sent a letter to Senator Negrón supporting the \$10 million for Lake Okeechobee agricultural BMPs. Audubon believes that funding 100% agricultural BMP implementation is worthwhile.

Kimberly Lawrence asked if the Section 319 funding can be spent before the project receives the funding award. Katie responded that the match funding can be spent, but the grant funding cannot be spent. Kimberly noted that is an issue that the project must be designed and permitted to be eligible, but then the project has to sit for two years to wait for funding. Katie responded that the Department has heard this concern from several stakeholders, and she believes they are trying to work through this issue with EPA as part of ongoing coordination efforts regarding the Section 319 program. Katie stated that the Department encourages the stakeholders to identify other funding sources because without the stakeholders' help in obtaining funding, it would be more difficult to implement projects in the watershed. The Department appreciates the stakeholders' assistance.

Questions, Comments, and Discussion

Kim stated that the Department will send an email letting everyone know about the location for the next BMAP meeting, which will be held on Wednesday, May 21st. There is a statewide hurricane exercise scheduled on that date, which is a conflict for some stakeholders, so the email notification will also note if the meeting date has changed.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 12:03 PM.

Action Items

- The Department will update the March 19th meeting summary to reflect Steffany Olson's edits. – *Completed.*
- The Department will continue to work long-term with the cooperating agencies to refine and calibrate the WAM model, particularly related to predicting TP loading hot spots.
- FDACS will provide the draft Google Earth Pro file of their cost-share projects to interested stakeholders, upon request.
- FDACS will provide information on the BMPs implemented during the last year.