

**Outstanding Florida Springs
Basin Management Action Plans (BMAPs)
Annual Meeting
Questions and Answers
July 14, 2021, via Teams
1:00 pm to 2:32 pm**

Attendees*

Ginger Adair
Jim Ailes
Erica Alachua
Beth Alvi
Stephanie Armstrong
Bryce Bachmann
Alyssa Baldridge
Lisa Bally
Maurice Barker
Matthew Bearden
Doug Beason
Evelyn Becerra
Connie L. Becker
Alys Brockway
Stacy Burke
Blair Burleson
Derek Busby
Tiffany Busby
Lauren Campbell
Tom Carey
Jimmy Carrell
Stacie Causey
Stacy Cecil
Allison Chancy
Mario F. Chavez
Angela Chelette
Carolin Ciarlariello
Jennifer Claypool
Kathleen Coates
Steven Collins
Kevin Coyne
Caryn Crabb
John Davis
Sara C. Davis

Dennis Davis
Paul Davis
Gregory DeAngelo
David Demaree
Dave Dewitt
Robert Deyle
Lauren J. Diaz
Kimberleigh Dinkins
Melisa Diolosa
Kim Duffek
Jeffrey Earhart
Yesenia Escribano
Kristine Eskelin
Nawfal Ezzagaghi
Eka Febrina
Allison Fetigan
Emily Forinash
Tiare Fridrich
Xueqing Gao
Anthony Gaudio
Tina Gordon
Wendy D. Graham
Bill Graham
Stacie Greco
Daniel Happel
Hugh Harling
E. Bart Harriss
Madeline Hart
Kenneth Hayman
Janet Hearn
Mark Heidecker
Theresa Heiker
Erica Hernandez
Melissa Hill

Robert Himschoot
Josefin Hirst
Robin Holland
Mitch Holmes
Moirra Homann
Glenn Horvath
Alyse Howell
Joy Jackson
Nathan Jagoda
Donald James
Loran Jordan
Dennise Judy
David A. Kaplan
Mitchell Katz
Rick Kirby
Traci Klepper
Natalie Knowles
Tricia Kyzar
Greg Lang
Todd Leibfreid
Nicolette A. Lundie
Mary G. Lusk
Celeste Lyon
Robert Mattson
Nicholas Mcray
Sarah Menz
Lucinda Merritt
Michelle Metcalf
Alissa Meyers
Jessica Mostyn
Sue Mullins
Amy Munizzi
Alexis Negron
Bryan Nelson
Edward Northey
Jarek Nowak
Alan Obaigbena
Kevin O'Donnell
Kim Ornberg
Gregory Owen
Joe P. Quinn
Bob Palmer
Mary Paulic

Amanda Peck
Somer Pell
Christopher Pettit
Jesse Pfadenhauer
Nicolas Pisarello
Robert Potts
John S. Quarterman
Terri R. Lowery
Erin Rasnake
Joanna Reilly-Brown
Dr. Derek Reiners
Johnny Richardson
Eb Roeder
Ellen Rogers
Michael Roth
Kristin Rubin
Charles Shinn
Vladimir Simonovski
Rachel K. Slocumb
Mailin Soto Longo Lopez
Robin S. Speidel
Blake Spencer
John Spencer
Claire Stapley
TJ Staten
Jim Stevenson
Ron Stewart
David M. Sumner
James Sutton
Jim Tatum
Jennifer Thera
Hugh Thomas
Elizabeth Thomas
Paul Thorpe
Debby Tipton
Mark Tomczyk
Kathleen Toolan
Tiffany Trent
Diana M. Turner
Stacy Vancamp
Gabriel Vicari
Trina Vielhauer
Christine Vrabic

Edgar Wade
Donna Walsh
Coleen Weaver
Scott P. Wesson
Shannon Wetzel
Kaylene Wheeler
Patricia Wilbur

Barton Wilder
Christopher T. Williams
Catherine Wolden
Katrina Yancey
Sharon Yeago
Kelly Young
Yilin Zhuang

**Please note that there were some additional attendees, but they are not listed either because they called in without providing a name or their login information in Teams did not provide their name.*

Tiffany Busby notified everyone that the meeting was being recorded.

Funding Updates

Question: Stacie Greco asked if Alachua County is considered to be a springs county for grant purposes.

Answer: Trina Vielhauer responded that Alachua County was not part of the feasibility study grants, but it is still a springs county in regard to the \$50,000,000 recurring springs funding and some other springs grant funding.

Question: Lucinda Merritt asked if there is a chance that the federal money will be rejected by Governor DeSantis.

Answer: Kevin Coyne responded that it is outside the scope of this meeting.

Question: Migdalia Hernandez asked if entities may apply for multiple grants for the same project.

Answer: Trina stated that by submitting a grant application through the Protecting Florida Together portal, entities are submitting one form for all funding sources, and it does not differentiate for which grant they are applying. Once that form is submitted, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) will assess for which funding the applicant is eligible. She added that for match requirements, such as the 50 % match for wastewater grants, entities cannot use one DEP grant to match another DEP grant. They can, however, use low interest loans, legislative appropriations, or grant funding from other agencies. So multiple funding sources can be used, but they can't fulfill the match requirements if they are both DEP sources. Amanda Peck noted there is also funding available through the Florida Resilience and Coastal Protection program for planning and implementation of resilience grants. She added that they also have a portal on the ProtectingFloridaTogether.gov website.

Question: Migdalia noted that Volusia Blue is not an available choice for project area on the *Protecting Florida Together* funding portal.

Answer: Kevin stated he would make sure to notify the funding portal staff.

Question: Kim Ornberg asked if the wastewater funding for septic to sewer upgrades can be used for economically disadvantaged communities, even if they are not actual “rural areas of opportunity” or “fiscally constrained counties.”

Answer: Section 403.0673, Florida Statute (F.S.) requires projects to either be in a basin management action plan or alternative restoration plan area **OR** a rural area of opportunity as that is defined in 288.0676, F.S.

Question: Todd Leibfreid asked when the \$10,000,000 funding for upgrades will be available and when can those in a priority focus area (PFA) apply again?

Answer: The \$10 million in state appropriation was effective July 1, 2021. This program will be run through grant agreements with the springs county governments. County governments with feasibility studies in place that are ready for this grant funding can contact Sandy Waters at 850/245-2815.

Question: Lucinda Merritt asked if DEP could comment on the new study on springs funding that has been put out by the Florida Springs Council.

Answer: Kevin replied that this group will not be commenting on the study.

Question: Lucinda also asked if there are any plans for DEP to link water supply with water quality and to treat these as related, instead of separate, issues.

Answer: The role of the springs BMAPs is specifically to promote the implementation of projects that reduce nitrogen load to groundwater. Minimum flows and levels (MFLs) are established for specific springs to address water flows and levels and to find the balance between meeting public water supply needs while maintaining healthy natural systems. The importance of both elements of spring health is reflected in the proviso language associated with DEP’s springs grant funding program. This proviso states that the funds must be used for land acquisition to protect springs and for capital projects that protect the quality and quantity of water that flows from springs. As projects are evaluated for DEP springs funding, consideration is given to their impact on both water quality and quantity. To maximize efforts between the two programs, spring protection projects should provide both water quality and quantity benefits. DEP encourages projects that include the reuse of treated wastewater for irrigation as a water conservation measure. The expansion of reuse water for irrigation can reduce reliance on the Floridan aquifer for water supply.

BMAP Updates

Question: Mary Lusk asked what the reasoning is for the petitioners to appeal the final order for the contested springs BMAPs.

Answer: At this time, we do not have this information.

Question: Todd Leibfreid asked for a correct link for the statewide annual report.

Answer: The following link was provided in the chat: <https://floridadep.gov/dear/water-quality-restoration/content/statewide-annual-report>.

Question: Stacie Greco asked what the effective date of the new BMAPs is.

Answer: May 18, 2021 is the effective date for the BMAPs that were challenged (Suwannee, Volusia Blue, Wekiwa, Santa Fe, and Rainbow/Silver).

Question: Robert Deyle asked who enforces requirements for agricultural operations to enroll in best management practices (BMPs).

Answer: The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) works with applicable producers within each BMAP to enroll and implement BMPs. Agricultural producers not enrolled in or following appropriate BMPs for their operations are referred to DEP for enforcement action.

Onsite Sewage Program Updates

Question: Anthony Gaudio asked if anyone has done a study to look at the performance of the inground nitrogen reducing biofilters (INRBs).

Answer: Kevin replied that a study has begun to look at this technology which involves two systems in Leon County, so they will be providing testing of those systems.

Question: Stacie Greco asked if there are any data to share from the INRB study.

Answer: The study is just now getting underway so there is not any data to share at this time.

Question: Melissa Hill asked what the process would be to reach out to stakeholders to get feedback and participation in BMAP implementation.

Answer: Tiffany responded in the chat that stakeholders can sign up for meeting notices and select the BMAPs or areas that they would like notifications for at <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/FLDEP/subscriber/new>.

Question: Stacie Greco asked what features the feasibility studies are looking at.

Answer: Kevin responded that they were part of the original BMAPs and required some stakeholders to look at the Onsite Sewage Treatment and Disposal System (OSTDS) and wastewater contributions in their area and develop a plan on how they would address those.

Question: Mary Lusk asked from what document the summary table for OSTDS remediation plan policies was taken.

Answer: Kevin responded that the summary table was developed for this presentation.

Question: Mary Lusk asked where she could get the data regarding the number of nitrogen-reducing systems documented by type and location.

Answer: Please contact Debby Tipton at Debby.Tipton@FloridaDEP.gov.

Question: Kim Ornberg asked for a listing of acronyms being used.

Answer: Kevin provided the following acronym definitions—in-ground nitrogen reducing biofilters (INRBs), performance-based treatment systems (PBTs), and National Sanitation Foundation (NSF) 245, which is a nitrogen treatment standard.

Question: Stacie Greco asked if liners are now allowed in INRBs.

Answer: Debby Tipton clarified that liners are not allowed in INRBs under the current rule. There is a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Leon County that allows them to install and study two INRB systems with liners.

Question: Alyssa Baldrige asked what is meant when a “liner” is referred to for the INRBs.

Answer: A liner is an impermeable material that is below the denitrification layer along the base of the INRB. The purpose of the liner is to hold in moisture to promote anaerobic conditions conducive to denitrification.

Question: Kimberleigh Dinkins asked if the Florida Department of Health (FDOH)/DEP five-year agreement is available.

Answer: The Interagency Agreement link can currently be found [here](#). Once the website content has fully be moved to the DEP site, the new link will be available at the [DEP OSTDS Transfer page](#).

Question: Terri Lowery asked what using liners does to the space requirements for the INRBs.

Answer: In the proposed rule, there are two designs of INRBs with liners. Both designs would generally require more space than the unlined INRB in the current rule. Note that this rule language has not yet been finalized.

Question: Kim Ornberg asked if there are data available for INRB using bioactivated media (BAM) or wood chips.

Answer: There are water quality data available for the lignocellulose (denitrification) layer and the sand (nitrification) layer from the Florida Onsite Nitrogen Reducing Strategies (FOSNRs) study. There are also water quality data available from DEP studies of INRBs. If you would like more information, please contact Debby.Tipton@FloridaDEP.gov.

Question: Mark Heidecker suggested a central location for OSTDS permitting data and spring specific information would be helpful.

Answer: Thank you for this suggestion.

Question: Migdalia Hernandez stated that as DEP is taking over FDOH OSTDS program, it may be a good idea to get a sewer geographic information systems (GIS) database from counties and cities and create a BMAP compliance GIS layer to assist with linking and implementation for permitting purposes.

Answer: Thank you for this suggestion.

Question: Michael Roth asked for those in the springs BMAPs where septic is less than 10 % of the loading and agriculture is over 60 %, is there evidence that BMPs will get those BMAPs to an acceptable level within a reasonable time.

Answer: Kevin stated that those BMAPs will need BMPs and cost-share to achieve their water quality restoration goals.

Monitoring Reports, Springs Bioassessment, Green Stormwater Infrastructure, and Education

Question: David Kaplan asked how the 15 well number was arrived at in the monitoring reports.

Answer: Based on the size of the spring BMAPs and other regional monitoring efforts, the sampling of at least 15 groundwater wells in the springshed/ PFAs have been recommended in order to provide sufficient spatial coverage with respect to nutrient sources, as well as sufficient data for statistical analysis of nitrogen loading trends.

Question: Wendy Graham asked how locations and screened intervals of new monitoring wells is being determined.

Answer: We are working closely with the contractor for this project to perform a detailed analysis using multiple data sources to identify data gaps in groundwater monitoring regarding land use changes and nitrogen loading. Some of the data sources that were used to determine this were the current monitoring site locations and groundwater nitrogen loading trends, the Florida Statewide Land Use Land Cover layer, and groundwater recharge data.

Question: Madeline Hart asked what the source of land use data used was to determine well placement in the Suwannee basin.

Answer: We are using the Florida Statewide Agricultural Irrigation Demand (FSAID) Geodatabase and the Florida Statewide Land Use Land Cover layer to identify data gaps in groundwater monitoring.

Question: James Sutton asked how the isotopic analyses are going to be used.

Answer: Mary stated that the isotopic analysis can help identify nitrogen sources from organic and inorganic sources.

Kevin Coyne suggested that attendees with additional questions on the Monitoring Gap Report look through them and then contact their basin coordinator with specific questions not addressed in the reports. Monitoring Gap Reports can be found here:

https://publicfiles.dep.state.fl.us/DEAR/DEARweb/BMAP/WW_Projects/BMAP%20Monitoring%20gaps.Final%20Report.pdf.

Question: Blair Burleson stated that groundwater remediation projects sometimes inject chemicals into the groundwater. It would be interesting to consider how that should be addressed in a sensitive groundwater area, like if chemical erosion occurs to a karst feature if the injectant is acidic.

Answer: Kevin agreed that is something that should be considered but is outside the scope of what this division does.

DEP Portal

Question: Mitchell Katz asked if local programs would be able to query the portal to see projects and costs peers are implementing.

Answer: Kevin stated that the statewide annual report data (under the "Contacts and Data" tab) provides the full set of data from the state on BMAP projects. The project data are available now.

The meeting summary and presentation will be available here:

<http://publicfiles.dep.state.fl.us/DEAR/BMAP/Outstanding%20Florida%20Springs%20BMAPs/Meetings/July%202021/>.

Adjournment

The meeting ended at 2:32 pm. The meeting was recorded.