

Peace River Resource Management Plan Stakeholder Meeting Summary

Richard Cantrell, Deputy Division Director of DEP's Division of Water Resource Management opened the meeting and discussed the Cumulative Impact Study and Resource Management Plan. Each attendee introduced himself and stated affiliation to an agency or group. Mr. Cantrell invited each group to discuss concerns it had in regards to the Peace River Basin and how the Management Plan would impact their group. Concerns or issues presented by each group are detailed below:

Charlotte County - The health of Charlotte Harbor is critical to the county's economy. It is also a main source of drinking water for the county.

Sierra Club – Their organization is concerned with wetland encroachment and degradation, upland habitat, and lack of minimum aquifer levels.

IFAS – Water issues are a major concern now and will be even more so in the future.

Mosaic – Maintain/Improve resources

Farm Bureau – Protection of property rights and production of agriculture

Protect Our Watersheds – Health and productivity of river/harbor, wetlands, fish habitat and maintain flows

CF Industries – Need to differentiate historic impacts of past mining practices as to current practices. Need to analyze impacts of phosphate mining, agriculture and urbanization.

Water Resources – Alternative potable water supply possibilities, water quality and quantity, hydroperiod and cost of water

FFWCC – Fish and Wildlife habitat remain the focus for the commission, corrective measures for northern portion of the basin, perhaps incentives to landowners and continual funding of these programs

Peace River Citrus – Concerned with the continued citrus production and the health of the river and harbor

Sarasota County – Water quantity and quality supply for county

Hardee County – Supportive of the study and management plan

Polk County – Reconnection of mined lands

Department of Agriculture Office of Water Policy – TMDL, non point source pollution reduction, water conservation, alternatives for water use sources

Central Florida Regional Planning Council – balance water resources and ecological aspect as well as economic and use aspect of the basin

Richard Cantrell discusses the Non Mandatory Trust Fund. The fund is empty as funds have been used to close the Mulberry and Piney Point gypsum stacks. There are eligible non-mandatory parcels that are eligible for reclamation funds, but their funding is questionable. Historical groundwater withdrawals in the basin were masked by surface discharges to the river.

Don Ross discussed regulatory effectiveness throughout the basin. There are gaps in regulations.

Rick mentions that the DEP has been working toward maintaining buffers for the 100 yr flood plain for major systems in the basin. Fortunately, the main portions of the Integrated Habitat Network (IHN) remain unimpacted in the basin. However, restrictions need to be place on the development of these areas. Land acquisitions within the basin should be considered by the counties.

Rick discussed the potential merging of chapters 373 and 378 of the Florida Statutes that affect phosphate mining.

Rick discussed the CARL/Florida Forever Fund. The First \$10 million from the severance tax goes to this fund. However, only a small portion of Florida Forever monies have been used on the Peace River basin. Management plan can suggest funds purchase lands in this region.

There are two more workshops to discuss the Peace River Cumulative Impact Study: July 26th in Punta Gorda and August 9th in Wauchula. Please go to the SWFWMD or DEP websites for updated information.

The next management plan meeting will be at the Hardee County Health Department on September 7, 2006.

Stakeholders were asked to email any comments to PRCIS@dep.state.fl.us

More information regarding the Peace River Cumulative Impact Study and the Resource Management Plan can be found at the Department's website at <http://www.dep.state.fl.us/water/mines/prcis.htm>

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