



## **LAKE WORTH LAGOON INITIATIVE (LWLI) HABITAT WORKING GROUP**

### **Meeting Notes - February 24, 2009**

#### Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 AM by Mr. Daniel Bates, Environmental Director, Palm Beach County Department of Environmental Resources Management (ERM).

#### I. Attendance and Introductions

Richard Walesky - ERM; Robert Robbins - ERM; Daniel Bates - ERM; Julie Bishop - ERM; Paul Davis - ERM; Carman Vare - ERM; Ginny Powell - ERM; Alyssa Dodd - ERM; Miao-Li Chang - South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD); Greg Graves - SFWMD; Rod Braun - SFWMD; David Rathbun - Bird Island Trust; Rob Patten - Bird Island Trust; Sue Dingwell - Florida Native Plant Society; Cynthia Plockelman - Audubon Society; Tom Twyford - WPB Fishing Club; Timothy Gray - FDEP; Mary Truglio - FWC; Ron Miedema - EPA; Carolyn Farmer - Sceda Ecological; Fred Rose - PPB; Kelly Logan - NOAA; Scott Markwith - FAU

#### II. New Business

##### ○ Lake Worth Lagoon Initiative – Daniel Bates

- Mr. Bates reviewed the Lake Worth Lagoon Initiative. For detailed information, refer to the Lake Worth Lagoon Initiative website: [www.LWLI.org](http://www.LWLI.org).

##### LWLI Guidelines

- The LWL Management Plan is a guiding document for the Habitat Working Group.
- The Habitat Group will meet approximately eight times a year and will report to the LWLI Executive Committee four times a year. The group will meet again in March.
- The next update to the LWLI Executive Committee is April 2.
- Suggestions can be e-mailed to be included in the agenda for the next meeting.
- The Habitat Group's goals are to work together to improve the efficiency of projects, reduce costs, locate funding for projects and provide for better communication on permitting issues and monitoring.
- The group will be copied on ERM's Monthly Project Status Reports and Artificial Reef & Estuarine Enhancement Committee meeting minutes.

##### Habitat Working Group Membership

- The Habitat Group is encouraged to provide names of individuals who should be included in the group who are knowledgeable of what is happening with the LWL, work with permitting issues, or have resources and/or experience that they can bring to the group.

##### Interfacing with other LWLI Working Groups

Four Working Groups have been established which meet separately: 1) Habitat; 2) Water Resources; 3) Pollution Prevention; and 4) Public Outreach. The Habitat Group will interface with the three working groups above-referenced.

[www.LWLI.org](http://www.LWLI.org)

- Refer to this website which provides LWLI goals, LWL Management Plan and resources.

- LWL Habitat Restoration Project Prioritization – Julie Bishop

Ms. Bishop gave an overview and slide presentation of items included in the outline below-referenced. For detailed information, refer to the LWL Management Plan located at: [www.LWLI.org](http://www.LWLI.org) to locate these resources.

State of the LWL – Habitat Overview

- Discussed opportunities available for LWL enhancement and restoration.

LWL Management Plan

- See Chapter 5 & Appendix C for Habitat Enhancement Action Plans and projects.

Current ERM Habitat Projects

- Discussed projects in permitting and construction phases.

LWLI FY 2010 \$5.5M Legislative Funding Request

- Mr. Bates discussed a funding package submitted to the Legislature for FY09.
- Background – in the last decade, approximately \$56 million has been spent on LWL projects, including approximately \$17 million of grant funding.

Future Habitat Projects and Funding Sources – Open Discussion

Mr. Bates discussed LWL grant partnership funds for this year.

- ERM solicits for grant applications in May and plans to stay on this time schedule in anticipation that funding will become available.
- Federal funding – the County will strive to push Legislative packages to fund the current projects.
- Stimulus grants – staff may approach group representatives for letters of support to obtain grant funding.
- Bird Island Trust Project – a presentation was suggested for the next meeting.

Oyster Habitat Project – Daniel Bates

- This would be primarily a volunteer project on which Public Outreach Working Group and Habitat Working Group could work together.
- ERM has an area where materials can be assembled but needs to find locations that are good for oyster habitat, can be accessed, and can be permitted.
- County permitted sites – Snook Islands has easy access for volunteers to place oysters, etc. Curry Park is another possible location. There are other areas that are accessible by boat.
- Next group meeting - review possible sites for oyster habitat projects. Group input is encouraged.
- Next group meeting - review permitting issues.
- Suggest mapping out areas of the LWL most likely to sustain oysters.
- Further discussion/questions and answers occurred.

Biological Monitoring Studies – Paul Davis

- Mr. Davis gave an overview of items included in the outline below-referenced.

Completed Studies - Brief Overview

- Using funding primarily through the LWL Partnership Grant Program, LWL baseline work began in approximately 2000. Studies included:
  - Bathymetry.
  - Muck mapping.
  - Muck chemical analysis.
  - Evaluation of sedimentation rate in vicinity of C-51.
  - Evaluation of 10 dredged holes.
  - Water quality sampling network using DEP and SFWMD assistance.
  - Sediment transport study of sedimentation coming out of C-51.
  - Seagrass has been the highest priority with mapping done in 1985, 2001 and 2007.

Current Monitoring Studies

- Studies are ongoing. Results will be posted at [www.LWLL.org](http://www.LWLL.org).
  - a. SAV
  - b. Oysters
  - c. Turtles
  - d. Substrate Characterization
  - e. Sediment Sourcing

FY 2010 Biological Monitoring Priorities – Open Discussion

- Mr. Bates asked for input from the group. Discussion/questions and answers occurred regarding areas of interest which are listed as follows:
- Ms. Cynthia Plockelman stated that the Great Backyard Bird Count was completed by the Audubon Society. At least four counts pertained to the LWL. Data is available and can be provided.
- National Audubon Society concerned about global warming affecting changes in birds and bird habitat.
- An update on bird count data was requested for the next meeting.

RECOVER Projects – SFWMD

- Mr. Greg Graves discussed:
  - Salinity monitoring and water quality network - major stressors in the system. Consider extending funds to establish high-frequency salinity monitoring.
  - Important to establish a linkage between watershed component and water quality.
  - Important to make sure that information reported, and how it is reported, is accurately translated.
  - New SAV monitoring program – no problem with that continuing in the foreseeable future.

Identify Data Gaps

- Discussion occurred as above-referenced.

Potential Monitoring Projects and Funding Sources

- Mr. Davis had previously discussed potential monitoring projects and funding sources (above-referenced.) He asked for input from the group as to what should be done next. Discussion/questions and answers occurred regarding areas of interest which are listed as follows:
  - Seagrass monitoring.
  - Fish monitoring.
  - Benthic macro-invertebrates.
- Mr. Tom Twyford of the West Palm Beach Fishing Club suggested a fishing tournament to collect data if there is a methodology for which the data would be useful in a scientific capacity.
- Consider how research can be used to make better resource management decisions.
- Affects of global warming on habitat.
- Mangrove planters. The group could focus on what can be done to work with other groups to improve native habitat.
  - The West Palm Beach Fishing Club has promoted a Backyard Mangrove Program. There is tremendous potential to work with waterfront property owners to enhance their waterfront property with mangroves, oysters, etc.
  - Forming a partnership with waterfront property owners to enhance their property could be a win-win situation for the property owners and the County.
  - There is an opportunity and tremendous potential to expand environmental enhancement along the Lagoon with waterfront property owners.
  - Hold workshops with citizens, scientists and regulatory agencies to improve understanding and promote working together to enhance the Lagoon.
  - Promote public/private/municipal partnerships.
- Review upstream water quality and restoration projects planned by the SFWMD that impact the Lagoon. An example is SFWMD dredging of the C-51.
- A presentation by the Florida Inland Navigation District dredging in the County was suggested.

Reporting to LWLI Executive Committee – Daniel Bates

- Mr. Bates will provide The Habitat Working Group update to the LWLI Executive Committee on April 2.
- Ms. Bishop advised:
  - The Public Outreach Working Group meeting will be held Friday, February 27.
  - The Water Resources Working Group meeting will be held March 5.
  - DEP is in charge of the Pollution Prevention Working Group meeting. It is hoped that their meeting will be held prior to the next LWLI Executive Committee meeting.
- Mr. Bates requests the following feedback from the group:
  - Feedback from DEP on permitting issues with coastal mangrove planters and oyster habitat volunteer projects.
  - Possible locations for future Lagoon projects.
  - Potential Lagoon project sites for oyster habitat.
  - Review Appendix C of the LWL Management Plan regarding priority projects (refer to the LWL Management Plan at [www.LWLI.org](http://www.LWLI.org)).
  - Funding issues are anticipated to change rapidly over the next couple of weeks.

- Advise ERM of any possible grant opportunities.
- Ms. Bishop discussed:
  - Upward trends of resource increases.
  - Opportunities to turn the system around.
  - Results of existing habitat projects.
  - People are now making a living fishing the Lagoon and also being guides.
  - Request DEP and SFWMD streamline permitting for habitat (oyster or mangrove planters) projects.
  - Future e-mail correspondence will be through: Dee Brodbeck, ERM, at [dbrodbec@pbcgov.org](mailto:dbrodbec@pbcgov.org).
- Mr. Bates discussed:
  - Expanding membership (legislative staff, municipalities, individuals with interest/experience with the Lagoon). Forward names/e-mail addresses to be included in the e-mail distribution list to either Dee Brodbeck @ [dbrodbec@pbcgov.org](mailto:dbrodbec@pbcgov.org) or Julie Bishop@ [jbishop@pbcgov.org](mailto:jbishop@pbcgov.org).
  - Update on stimulus funding will be provided.
  - Brief discussion/questions and answers occurred.

### III. Next Meeting

- A. March 24, 2009 (same location – Vista Center Room VC-1E-60).
- B. Thursday, April 2, 2009: Update Executive Committee on Habitat Working Group Priorities.
- C. Action Items:
  - FDEP input/assistance on permitting mangrove planters and oyster reefs.
- D. Possible Sites for Oyster Habitat Projects:
  - Review County and Municipal park sites.
  - Review permitting issues.
- E. Update on Bird Count Data – Audubon Society.
- F. Update on SFWMD upstream projects that impacts the Lake Worth Lagoon.
- G. Update on FIND dredging in Palm Beach County.

### Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:00 PM by Mr. Bates.