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**Wakulla Springs Alliance**

**11-20-15 Board Meeting Minutes**

The Wakulla Springs Alliance held a Board meeting on November 20, 2015 at the Renaissance Center. The draft agenda and list of participants can be found in Appendices A and B. Review the action items underlined below for your commitments and actions you can help with. This report is based on the secretary’s notes and does not capture everything or exactly what was said.

**11-20-15 WSA Board Meeting Highlights**

1. The WSA needs to be involved in the BMAP OSTDS Committee and work with Leon and Wakulla Counties, the City and Sustainable Tallahassee to advocate for the wastewater management study and necessary actions to nutrient loading from septic systems ASAP.
2. All should print/handout or email the state parks protection points in Appendix E.
3. Charles Pattison will check with Rob Williams to see if there are next steps for the WSA, possibly another letter on the Water Bill-SB 552.
4. Bob Deyle will follow-up with FDOT on the Hwy 319 letter WSA sent regarding stormwater treatment ponds and mitigation for State Park impacts.
5. Sean McGlynn will ask John Outland to document recent karst lake conditions at the next meeting and post the information on the website.
6. We will not have a meeting in December. The WSA annual membership meeting with election of board members will be January 15; followed the same day by the board meeting including election of officers.
7. Please send board and officer nominations (self or others) to the nominating committee: Debbie Lightsey, Jim Stevenson and Tom Taylor. A slate of nominations must be sent to members 14 days before the January Annual Membership Meeting.
8. Seek Springs license grants in the next round
9. Recruit more to take tours of Wakulla Springs Basin. The next one is Dec 19. Invite Sustainable Tallahassee board and members and others.
10. Solicit tax-deductible donations. Set up a PayPal account.
11. The Florida Department of Transportation (FOOT) will hold a public information meeting concerning proposed improvements for Woodville Highway from Paul Russell Road to Capital Circle on Tuesday, December 8, from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. EST at the N. FL Fairgrounds, Bldg. 2, 441 East Paul Russell Road.  Please plan to attend to speak about the project, especially stormwater treatment.

**Opening**

The meeting began with the showing of a 7-minute film by FSU students called “Fighting for Wakulla. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H7NXvdlonTU>). Chair Sean McGlynn welcomed everyone, reviewed the meeting agenda and everyone introduced themselves. The minutes of the last meeting and treasurer’s report (Appendix C) were approved.

**The BMAP is here, what now?**

Tom Taylor reported that the [Wakulla BMAP](http://publicfiles.dep.state.fl.us/DEAR/BMAP/Upper%20Wakulla/BMAP%20Final%20Order) has been adopted and signed by the Secretary. The next step is the creation of OSTDS committee in January. We need to be involved to advocate for the RME, sewering, cluster systems, etc. These are comments from the meeting.

* See the article by Bruce Ritchie that was attached to the agenda.
* The final BMAP is not as bad as it could have been and it could be much stronger.
* The Counties resisted responsibility for nutrients from septic tanks.
* The RME is listed in the BMAP.
* Nothing from the OSTDS Committee will be binding.
* We need to get Sustainable Tallahassee to take up this issue. It will be a long haul.
* Next steps will be affected by legislation that allows or restricts action on septic systems.
* Crystal River, Indian River Lagoon and Wekiva have BMAPs.
* We can focus on a RME for Leon for the rather than a 2-county RME.
* Counties are not restricted from acting on septic systems but most counties opted out and can’t change now.
* Debbie reviewed the BMAP and it speaks to the BMAP and DOH OSTDS study that indicates that an act of the legislature is needed.
* Sarasota County has banned septic tanks, which forces building near sewer lines.
* We can ask Leon to start the wastewater management study today. It includes stormwater study for Theresa Heiker. It can be a facilities plan and how to set up the RME. There is a project approved by the City and County, and included in the BMAP. Pam Hall, Bob Henderson and Debbie Lightsey will refine the proposal and then the WSA can recruit supporters:
* The study can be tie into the Comp Plan revision that is under way.
* Charlotte County has a 319 grant for a RME and an automated system for septic system management. There was political upheaval at the time.
* The Lombardo study has RME options laid out. EPA has been supporting RMEs for many years.
* We need confirmation that DEP will permit cluster systems before we advocate a pilot project.
* WSA can advocate for a 319 grant as agreed to in the tri-party agreement. Katie Britt and Kate Bracket replaced Patti Sansone as contract managers of the 319 grants. Sean will check with her on the grant cycle and we may invite her to a future meeting. It could include a literature review of what has been done in the state and elsewhere.
* There is a fight in Martin County over septic and agriculture responsibility for nutrients. They are looking for hotspots for priority action. Ocala has removed 3000-4000 septic tanks.
* Legislators are concerned that there will be inspections and requirements on property owners with septic systems.

**Parks in Peril**

Jim Stevenson gave an overview of what is happening. These are notes from the discussion:

* See the article: “Keep Hunters-Loggers-Ranchers Out” in the Orlando Sun Sentinel.
* There is an article by Leslie Pool coming out in the Orlando Sentinel soon. She has also written a book about women environmentalists. Julie Hauserman will write a similar article.
* Dana Bryan and Phil Werndli have joined Jim and Albert’s team.
* Women’s Clubs, Paynes Prairie, Myakka and other groups are active.
* There have been many articles and cartoons. We have a 9-point handout and ones for specific parks; see Appendix E. Everyone needs to pass these out.
* DEP Secretary Steverson is moving toward confirmation in the legislature. Senator Dean did not allow debate.
* Hunting can be a good issue to fight on.
* A bill has been introduced. There is a question about reductions in park entrance fees and where the money would come from. This may be incorporated into a tax holiday bill.

**Senate Bill 552**

Charles Pattison reported on recent activities and these are some of the comments:

* See attached summary: Water Bill-SB 552 SUMMARY (Appendix D).
* A WSA letter on SB 552 was sent to Sen. Montford. It is available upon request.
* There were amendments yesterday that seemed OK. The bill is similar to last year. It may pass the first week of session in January. Dean may consider amendments. Montford may propose a RME amendment based on our letter.
* Charles Pattison will check with Rob Williams to see if there are next steps for the WSA, possibly another letter.
* Debbie questioned why the NWWMD has a 2026 deadline rather than the same as the rest of the state.
* Bill Howell has met with the NWWMD and they have agreed to include groundwater in Georgia and karst data in their analysis.
* Section 23 is the FL Springs Protection Act section of the combined bill.

**US Highway 319 / Crawfordville Road Widening**

Albert Gregory provided an update on related activities. These are the discussion notes:

* See Bob Deyle’s written report in Appendix D.
  + WSA letter endorsing comments by Defenders of Wildlife and the Florida Wildlife Federation on FDOT's mitigation plans for taking state park lands was sent to FDOT General Consultant Project Manager Noelle Warren under Sean's signature. Receipt acknowledged.
  + WSA letter calling for additional geotechnical analyses at multiple proposed stormwater management facility pond sites sent to FDOT Project manager, April Williams, under Jim Stevenson's signature. Receipt acknowledged. Awaiting further response from FDOT.
* The WSA letter endorsing FWF comments is available upon request.
* The letter did go out and receipt has been accepted. We have not gotten reactions. Bob will follow-up with them.
* DEP has not taken action on mitigation. The original list of mitigation provisions has been revised and DEP is waiting on a response from FDOT.
* DOT is in the PDE stage and is seeking federal funding.
* Other projects in the state have had fewer lanes and/or narrower cross sections in environmentally sensitive areas.
* Cavern mapping of the area is underway by WKPP and they are finding new caves but nothing yet for the pond in question.
* There have been NEPPA discussions between DEP and feds regarding impacts on park properties. It has been determined to be minimal impact. This may be challenged. There can still be a 1-1 swap at the state level. We used to get 2-1 and lots of other mitigation.
* We need to send our letter to DEP, Department Directors, and ARC members. Debbie Lightsey made a motion, seconded by Cal Jamison with unanimous approval. Sean will send them
* Biologically Active Materials, BAM, could be required in the detention ponds to remove nutrients.

**The Next Meeting**

* We will cancel our December Meeting
* Debbie Lightsey, Jim Stevenson and Tom Taylor will be the nominating committee. A slate of nominations must be sent to members 14 days before the January 15th Annual Membership Meeting. We need to seek gender and age diversity.

**Proposed Streamlining of Writing, Signing and Storing Final Copies of Letters**

* Post letters to the web.

**Proposed outreach and fundraising**

* Seek Springs license grants in the next round
* Recruit more to take tours of Wakulla Springs Basin. The next one is Dec 19. Invite Sustainable Tallahassee board and members and others.
* Solicit tax-deductible donations. Set up a PayPal account.
* Have tables with sign-ups for our member/email list, e.g. FOWS events.

**FOWS new contract with FDEP**

* They have an endowment fund. The CSO agreement allows friends groups contracts to be dissolved and the funds could go to the park. This may only apply if the 501C3 is dissolved.
* The FOWS agreement has not been signed. Some parks in the state do not have contracts.

**Leon County Extension Event**

* They will do a 2-day event at Wakulla Springs. The agenda has 3 one-hour presentation blocks and at least one can be open to the public. There will be a hike at Leon Sinks, a visit to Cherokee Sink, a boat ride and a paddle in the afternoon of the second day. It will be in February.
* Will Sheftall would like to do this in partnership with WSA. Bob Deyle will be the contact.
* Cal Jamison made the motion, Albert Gregory seconded it and the vote was unanimous.

**Karst Lake Updates**

Seán McGlynn showed photos and reported:

* Upper Lake Lafayette (Fallschase) filled.
* Buck Lake drains, these are the first sink holes
* FDOT Stormwater Pond on Mahan drains to the aquifer
* We need a record of the new sinkholes, groundwater levels and rainfalls.
* Harley Means FGS and others have gone out there.
* There is a DEP statewide groundwater monitoring system that may have information.
* The County has been doing monitoring. Buck Lake went down in 2 days. The pond is functioning as designed. All of our lakes have sinks. Buck Lake is owned by the Stewart family that donated land for the pond for DOT, the charter school, and a residential development.
* John Outland will be asked by Sean to document these situations at the next meeting and post the information on the website.
* Michael Hill sent an email with photos of the new sinkhole and one in Lake Miccosukee.

**Light and Dark Water Studies**

Seán McGlynn’s and others’ comments:

* Wakulla Springs has not gotten darker.
* Spring Creek will be checked today. The flow may be changing direction regularly.
* Native grasses are coming back; there is more bare bottom and less algae and hydrilla. The algae may be killing plants. Sag can be planted now. There is nothing growing in the swimming area because staff pulled it all up.
* DEP should be monitoring this as part of the BMAP.
* Nitrates are up a little recently but still failing over time.
* UCF has been doing a crawfish study.
* Bob Knight has done a fish study.
* Pam Hall and Bob Deyle have been discussing what we know and don’t know.
* We need to schedule a session on what we know and don’t know about conditions, trends, etc.

**Springshed Updates**

* Cal Jamison reported that the swallets are taking lots of water down and there is flooding in places from recent rains.
* It will show up in Wakulla Springs as dark water in about 10 days after a rain event.
* Debbie has only seen a small rise given the heavy rains at Lake Harriet.

**Woodville Highway Widening**

* The Florida Department of Transportation (FOOT) will be conducting a public information meeting concerning proposed improvements for Woodville Highway from Paul Russell Road to Capital Circle. The meeting will be Tuesday, December 8, from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. EST at the North Florida Fairgrounds, Building 2, 441 East Paul Russell Road, Tallahassee.  Please plan to attend the meeting to learn more or to speak about the project**.**
* The intent of the project is to improve the traffic flow through the Four Points area of State Road (S.R.) 363 (Woodville Highway) and S.R. 61 (Crawfordville Road), and to widen S.R. 363 (Woodville Highway) from two to four lanes with buffered bicycle lanes between Capital Circle and Gaile Avenue. Improvements also include re-alignment of the St. Marks Trail, sidewalk construction, widening of Ross Road and Tram Road, the extension of Tram Road, and the construction of five stormwater ponds and a closed storm sewer system.  Bike lanes will be added as part of the design for Ross Rd and Tram Rd.  Segment 4 (S.R. 263 to Gaile Avenue) is funded for right-of-way acquisition beginning fiscal year 2018. Segment 5 (Gaile Avenue to Paul Russell Road) is funded for right-of-way acquisition beginning fiscal year 2019. Neither segment is funded for construction in the current FOOT Five-Year Work Program.

**Georgia-FL Grant**

* Bill Howell of the Leon County Soil and Water Council met with the GA D of Ag and GA SWC about getting a USDA grant on irrigation like the one for the ACF. The grant would involve 5 countess in GA and 4 in FL. Casey Cox, will help write the grant application. NRCS will get the money to reduce ground water pumping in GA. Retrofitting center irrigation pivots can cut water consumption by 2/3.
* Suwanee River WMD has documented the drop in ground water levels of 1 ft. / yr. for 20 years.
* This is related to salt water intrusion. There has been some salt water in Wakulla Springs.

**Adjournment**

* Cal Jamison made the motion to adjourn and Debbie Lightsey seconded it. It passed unanimously.

Appendix A

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**Wakulla Springs Alliance**

Agenda

11/20/15

9 am to 12 pm, Renaissance Center

435 N. Macomb Street, 2nd Floor Conference Room

**9:00 Opening**

Welcome and meeting agenda review (Seán McGlynn)

Introductions (Board)

Secretary Minutes (Tom Taylor)

Treasurer Report(Howard Kessler, will not be present)

**9:10 The BMAP is here, what now? –** Rob Williams and Tom Taylor

Septic to Sewer **-** how do we get optimal project plans

See attached: final BMAP

See attached article: Bruce Ritchie

***9:25 Questions***

**9:30 Parks in Peril -** Jim Stevenson

See attached article: Keep Hunters-Loggers-Ranchers Out Sun Sentinel

***9:45 Questions***

**9:50 Senate Bill 552 -** Rob Williams and Charles Pattison

See attached summary: Water Bill-SB 552 (3).docx SUMMARY (1)

See attached WSA Letter to Montford: Williams-Water Bill letter

***10:05 Questions***

**10:10 US Highway 319 / Crawfordville Road Widening -** Albert Gregory

See Attached: letter endorsing FWF comments originally SEM 10-23-15

See attached: Draft WSA Comments on FPID 2204069.10-23-15

***10:25 Questions***

**10:30 – 10:55 Break**

**10:55 What’s new** (about 5 minutes each)

* + General Business **–** Tom Taylor and Seán McGlynn
    - Should we cancel our December Meeting
    - Proposed streamlining of writing, signing and storing final copies of letters
    - Proposed outreach
    - FOWS new contract with FDEP
  + Karst Lake Updates **–** John Outland and Seán McGlynn
    - Upper Lake Lafayette (Fallschase) fills
    - Buck Lake drains
    - FDoT SW Pond on Mahan drains
  + Aquatic Plant Survey  **-** Seán McGlynn and Cal Jamison
  + Light and Dark Water Studies **-** Seán McGlynn
  + Springshed Updates **-** Cal Jamison

**11:55 Items from the floor**

**12:00 Adjourn**

Appendix B

**Board, Advisors and Guests**

\* Indicates 10-16-15 Participants

Board Members

Bob Deyle \*

Albert Gregory \*

Cal Jamison \*

Howard Kessler

Todd Kincaid

Debbie Lightsey \*

Sean McGlynn \*

Charles Pattison \*

Jim Stevenson \*

Tom Swihart \*

Tom Taylor \*

Rob Williams

WSA Advisors

Anthony Gaudio

Pam Hall

Julie Harrington

Bob Henderson

Bob Knight

Pam McVety

Dan Pennington

Bob Thompson

Guests

Mark Heidecker \*

Appendix C

**WSA Treasurer’s report: November 2015**

Wakulla Springs Alliance

Treasurer’s Report for meeting: November 20, 2015

Checking Balance of statement ending October 31, 2015: $3,014.68

Activity this month on statement ending October 31, 2015:

None

**Current Balance September 30, 2015:** **$3,014.68**

**Note:** there was a typo on the prior statement for the meeting in October that resulted in an error of 0.60 cents.

Last month’s ending balance ending September 30, 2015 should have read: **$3,014.68**

Appendix D

**Water Bill – SB552 Summary**

Section 1 – Database of publicly owned conservation lands and which lands are publicly accessible.

Section 2 – Adds “self-suppliers” to “water resource development” definition. *Sets up funding for “self-suppliers” later in the bill.*

Section 3 – Consolidated water management district annual reports. Adds 5-year work plan, including projects, priority ranking for projects, estimated cost, estimated benefit, grade for each water body. *Unclear how grades will be assigned and there is no rulemaking proposed to create grading system.*

Section 4 – Alternative Water Supply Pilot Program. Allows SJRWMD, SFWMD and SWFWMD, in certain areas, to implement a pilot AWS project that provides water supply and environmental benefits. Permits inter-basin transfers of water by the sole discretion of one district even if project is located in an adjacent district.

Section 5 – MFLs. Requires MFLs to be adopted by July 1, 2017, except in NWFWMD, where the deadline is July 1, 2026. Leaves “significantly harmful” in the MFL definition. Allows WMDs to use emergency rulemaking powers to set MFLs, but they are still not exempt from challenge.

Section 6 – MFLs. Requires concurrent adoption of MFLs and recovery or prevention strategy. Recovery or prevention strategy may not rely solely on water shortage restrictions. *Major problem as currently drafted is the bill seems to not provide any way for water bodies with existing MFLs to adopt a recovery or prevention strategy at some future point.* Also includes provision requiring DEP to review WMDs water supply plan if a CUP permit is denied because it would violate an MFL and to mandate an update of the water supply plan. *Further assault on WMD autonomy. Idea: Why not require the WMDs to review their own water supply plans when a CUP is denied and have the plans updated annually. This would prevent further DEP preemption of WMDs while still maintaining the intent of the legislation.*

Section 9 – Outstanding Florida Springs CUPs. Requires the department to adopt rules for issuing permits, which prevent groundwater withdrawals that are “harmful to the water resources” and provide a uniform definition for “harmful to the water resources.” WMDs may use the Department rule or a more protection definition. *This is potentially good and seems to be the work-around to keeping “significantly harmful” in the MFL statute. Biggest concern is that Section 6 above will prevent WMDs from using this to deny permits for fear of DEP intervention. Question is, can a CUP application be denied based on the “harmful to the water resources” rule without the CUP violating the MFL statute?*

Section 10 – CUP monitoring. Requires monitoring of all new, renewal or modified CUPs that authorizes the withdrawal of more than 100,000 gallons per day and has an 8-inch diameter pipe. *Monitoring is good, but the 8-inch pipe condition would exempt many consumptive users. One six-inch pipe can pump 1.5 mgd. Under this statute a CUP holder with 10 six-inch pipes (capable of pumping 15 mgd) would not have to undergo monitoring, while a single 8-inch pipe pumping 100,000 gpd would have to monitor. Doesn’t apply to current CUPs.*

Section 11- Allows WMDs to identify “preferred water supply sources” for water users when development of new water sources is not technically or financially feasible.

Section 12 – Water Conservation. Allows CUP holders to maintain allocations if permit holder is using less water than authorized due to documented implementation of water conservation measures beyond those required as a condition of the permit. Has broad exemption for AG, basically allowing them to keep allocations regardless of use. *At, the very least AG should have permits reduced if they are being paid through a conservation easement or other arrangement (See Section 14 c. below) to change crop type or land use.*

Section 13 – Competing CUPs. Preference given to water user closest to source.

Section 14 – Public funds for ground water recharge (water farming) if it meets any of the following:

1. Store or treat water on private lands for purpose of enhancing hydrologic improvement, improving water quality, or assisting water supply
2. Providing critical water recharge
3. Provide for changes in land us to activities that minimize nutrient loads and maximize water conservation

*Would be better if bill required A and B or C. Instead of A or B or C.*

Section 17 – 5 year work plans. Water Resource Advisory Council is out of this year’s bill. Specifies additional requirements for 5-year work plan.

Section 18 – Allows private landowners to receive public funds (Water farming).

Section 19 - Adds a new criterion for getting primary consideration for state or WMD funding assistance: “reducing or eliminating the adverse effects of competition between legal users and the natural systems.” *Would be good if focus was on conservation.* Section also includes expanded cost-share for additional conservation practices. Good, but dependent upon annual appropriations by legislature.

Section 20 – Public funding for private alternative water supply development. *Currently does not require that self-supplier AWS projects, which receive public funding, are in the public interest.*

Section 21 – Requires WMDs to update regional water supply plans with new criteria.

Section 22 – Springs Act.

Section 23 – Springs Act.

Section 24 – Definitions - Outstanding Florida Spring (OFS) are all 1st magnitude and De Leon, Peacock, Poe, Rock, Wekiva and Gemini.

Section 25 - Creates “priority focus areas” but the definition requires a known connectivity which is a costly burden. Delineation of priority focus areas to be completed by July 1, 2018 and adopted in to BMAP.

Section 26 – MFLs for OFS. Concurrent MFL and recovery or prevention strategy adoptions. Creates conditions for recovery or prevention strategies. 20 year target to achieve MFLs.

Section 27 – OFS water quality. Initiate assessments of impairment by July 1, 2016, must be completed by July 1, 2018. No deadline for TMDL adoption, but upon adoption DEP must initiate development of BMAP. BMAP must be adopted within 2 years of initiation. Includes OSTDS remediation plan. Provides for 5, 10-year extensions for local governments. on individual projects. Requires local government adopt fertilizer ordinance (Sierra has problem with language).

Section 28 – Prohibited activities. New wastewater treatment that does meet AWT standards. New OSTDS in areas where a remediation plan is effect. New facilities for hazardous waste disposal. New Ag if no BMPS. *Overall the prohibitions section has been weakened and weakened. Needs amendment back to 2014 language. No longer includes prohibition on CAFO or industrial wastewater treatment facilities that do not meet AWT standards. Septic tank prohibition will only go into effect if the systems conflict with remediation plans. For some OFS remediation plan will not be in effect until 10+ years.*

Section 29 – DEP may adopt rules to implement bill, including pilot projects for protecting OFS.

Section 32 – Standards for collection and analysis of water quantity, water quality and related data to ensure quality, reliability, and validity of the data and testing results.

Section 33 – BMP verification. Rulemaking to adopt procedures to verify implementation of water quality monitoring and BMPs.

Section 34 – Annual reports on TMDLs, BMAPs, MFLs and recovery or prevention strategies.

Appendix E

**Standing for the Future of Florida State Parks**

State parks were established for the benefit of the people of Florida by preserving the state’s important natural and cultural resources and making them available for public use and enjoyment. Our elected and appointed officials are not providing leadership to fund, manage and expand Florida’s state parks. Citizens who care about Florida’s state parks stand together in supporting the following principles:

1. State parks will be managed for the primary purpose of conserving their natural and cultural resources and providing compatible resource-based recreation. Secondary uses will be approved only where they do not conflict with the primary purpose. (Wind turbines or solar farms, palm tree sales, etc.)
2. State parks will meet recreation demand by expanding the park system and developing facilities at under-utilized parks rather than by accommodating additional visitors at parks where visitation already meets or exceeds their ecological carrying capacity. Park improvements that degrade resources or visitor experiences will not be made.
3. State parks will receive annual appropriations adequate to meet the needs for management of natural and cultural resources and recreation opportunities.
4. Cattle grazing will be conducted only on improved pasture as a temporary maintenance activity until ecological restoration can occur. Cattle leases will not be issued in natural areas and parkland will not be converted to pasture.
5. Timber harvesting and thinning will be conducted only for resource restoration purposes. Sustained-yield forest management practices and commercial harvesting of forest products will not be conducted in state parks.
6. Recreational hunting will not be expanded beyond the three parks properties where it presently occurs: Cedar Key Scrub State Reserve; Rock Springs Run State Reserve and the Marjorie Carr Cross Florida Greenway.
7. “State parks” will be exempt from future legislation that requires agriculture or multiple-use to be approved on state conservation lands.
8. Public hearings will be conducted before any disposal of state park lands or transfer of parks to other management agencies.
9. DEP will be open and transparent to the public when considering changes in the way state parks are managed.  The public will have ample opportunity to review and provide oral and written comments before changes are adopted.

November 6, 2015