Wakulla Springs Alliance

**Friday, February 22, 2019 Board Meeting Minutes**

This section provides information on what you and others can do to support research-based actions to enhance water quality and quantity in Wakulla Springs and springshed and to improve related environmental, economic and social systems. Efforts by all, produce results!

**Background on Wakulla Springs**

• Wakulla Springs Information

• WSA Purpose and Plans

• WSA Action Resources

**Strategic Opportunities**

* Nominate yourself or others for, 2019 WSA Chair, Secretary, board member or advisor, by emailing ttaylor@fsu.edu. The success of the WSA depends on its leadership, members, advisors and supporters; make a commitment and make a difference.
* Take the lead on updating the WSA bylaws.
* Provide WSA website management (It is easy, training will be provided).
* Attend these WSA meetings: 3-22, 4-26, 5-24, 6-28, 7-26, 8-23, 9-27, 10-25, 11-22, 12-13, all meeting are 9:00 to 12:00 (Nov 22, 9:00 to 11:00). Put on your calendar.
* The legislature is in session and there are significant springs related bills being considered. Everyone is encouraged to make your voices heard. Go to the [1000 Friends of Florida](%E2%80%A2%09http%3A/www.1000friendsofflorida.org/2019-florida-legislative-session) and <https://www.wearefcc.org/>websites to learn about the bills and sign up for news blasts and action opportunities.
* Doug Barr and Sean McGlynn will be meeting with DEP on Nitrogen Target Revisions.
* Leon County has selected the contractor for the Comprehensive Wastewater Facilities Plan to be completed by December 2019. [This is a major accomplishment for the WSA.
* Attend [Springs Academy](https://floridaspringsinstitute.org/springs-academy/?utm_source=FSI+News&utm_campaign=ad478c1961-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2017_11_03_COPY_03&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_1610aea1ed-ad478c1961-98086349) classes and/or review past classes.
* State Nonpoint Source Education Collaboration: Low Impact Development: How to Grow Community Support Through Education, Tallahassee, April 9, 2019. To register, email Emily Brown
* Attend Comp Plan Update Workshops from 6:30-8:00
* Workshop on Goal 2: A Healthy Community Tuesday, 3/26 Renaissance
* Public Open House Tuesday, 4/02 Senior Center 1400 N. Monroe St.
* Workshop on Goal 3: A Robust Economy Wednesday, 4/03 Renaissance Ctr, 2nd Fl Conf. Rm 435 N. Macomb St.
* Workshop on Goal 4: Housing Options for Our Diverse Population Thursday, 4/11 Renaissance Center
* Workshop on Goal 5: A Balanced Transportation Network Tuesday, 4/16 Renaissance Center
* Take the Comp Plan Update [SURVEY](%E2%80%A2https%3A/urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=http-3A__www.SurveyMonkey.com_r_SharedObjectives&d=DwIFaQ&c=HPMtquzZjKY31rtkyGRFnQ&r=5VSOSvrRzToVE7HVNfgg2A&m=i13hXXiP6NubIKUYU2FubzkzdlpWXSKCITFFm6UrnMc&s=X-rYFYzHPUHC5TH99n94WO-6dYkRT_lgDHjfWxEY57s&e=).
* Participate in the Comp Plan [Digital Workshop](Finally%2C%20a%20digital%20workshop%20is%20available%20online%20at%20https%3A/urldefense.proofpoint.com/v2/url?u=http-3A__www.SurveyMonkey.com_r_SharedObjectives&d=DwIFaQ&c=HPMtquzZjKY31rtkyGRFnQ&r=5VSOSvrRzToVE7HVNfgg2A&m=i13hXXiP6NubIKUYU2FubzkzdlpWXSKCITFFm6UrnMc&s=X-rYFYzHPUHC5TH99n94WO-6dYkRT_lgDHjfWxEY57s&e=)

**WSA January 25 Board Meeting Minutes**

**Overview**

The Wakulla Springs Alliance held their regular Board meeting on February 22, 2019 at the Renaissance Building. The agenda and participants are in Appendices A and B. Review the action items underlined for your commitments and actions you can help with. Our success in protecting and enhancing Wakulla Springs depends on the actions of the WSA board, advisors and supporters. This report is based on the recorder’s notes and does not capture everything or exactly what was said.

**Opening**

* Welcome and meeting agenda review (Seán McGlynn).
* Introductions (Board, advisors and guests – See Appendix B).
* The Secretary’s Report was made by Tom Taylor, acting secretary. The motion to approve the minutes was made by Howard Kessler, seconded by Gail Fishman and passed unanimously.
* There was no treasurer report. Howard Kessler will get estimates for printing the brochure that has already been approved.

**Springs Protection and Restoration Funding Programs**

Brett Cyphers, the Director of the Northwest Florida Water Management District, provided an update on the Springs Protection and Restoration Funding Programs. His handouts are in separate files. The following are notes from his presentation and the discussion.

* + We have done $50 m in funding and may request another $50 m this year.
	+ Much is for land acquisition and easements.
	+ See draft long-time funding sheet in a separate file.
	+ Localities are doing wastewater management master plans, which will help prioritizing projects.
	+ Wakulla is in the procurement process for a consultant.
	+ Leon County has selected a contractor and the plan is scheduled to be completed by 12-31-19.
	+ All projects are in PF1 or 2.
	+ WSA needs to advocate for projects that have the most benefit to the springs.
	+ There is a concern about the Wakulla Gardens project for $20 m that is in PF2. It may not have as much benefit as from projects further north. This was a project that was proposed by Wakulla County and there is some benefit. The WSA needs to advocate for the best projects.
	+ Having the master plans required by the BMAP will help prioritize the projects.
	+ The City and County have 319 funds and other sources in addition to the Springs funds. Each source has strings attached. The City has 6+ projects funded.
	+ It would be good to have a pilot projects for cluster and nitrogen reducing septic systems. It would help us understand the permitting and other issues. A pilot is in the works in the St. Johns WMD.
	+ Wakulla is focusing on Wakulla Gardens. They are also preparing a change in zoning that will increase units per acre and the number of standard septic systems, not performance based systems. There is money to fund upgrades for existing systems, but people don’t know about it.

**Guest Speaker -** Julie Hauserman

Julie Hauserman presented a PowerPoint and talk based on her book, *Drawn to The Deep,* about Wes Skiles. She has been writing about Florida for more than 30 years. She is a former Capitol bureau reporter for the St. Petersburg (Tampa Bay) Times and reported for The Stuart News and the Tallahassee Democrat. She was a national commentator for National Public Radio’s Weekend Edition Sunday and The Splendid Table. She has won many awards, including two nominations for the Pulitzer Prize. Her work is featured in several Florida anthologies, including The Wild Heart of Florida, The Book of the Everglades, and Between Two Rivers. Her new book is Drawn to The Deep, a University Press of Florida biography of a man who swam inside the planet - Florida cave diver and National Geographic explorer Wes Skiles.

Wes Skiles was a renowned cave explorer and underwater film maker. Jim Stevenson, Florida’s State Parks Chief Naturalist for 20 years, was Chairman of the Florida Springs Task Force and ‘The Father of Springs Restoration in Florida,’ regarded Wes Skiles as a close personal friend. They worked together on the Florida Springs Task Force. Wes and Jim’s wife Tara Tanaka were members of the National Geographic dive team that explored the Wakulla Spring Cave system in 1987.

Wes Skiles’ films, "Polluting the Fountain of Youth" and "Waters Journey: Hidden Rivers," informed the public about the vulnerability of our springs to pollution. Some of his adventures included being trapped in a flooded cave in Australia, filming Great White Sharks, and filming beneath an ice berg in Antarctica. The second most popular cave diving spring in the world, Peacock Spring, was named "Wes Skiles Peacock Spring State Park" in his honor. He drowned while filming Goliath grouper off the Florida coast. Wes Skiles work (photography and videos) was a big inspiration for cave divers around the world, irresistibly drawing them to Florida’s springs and the mysterious underwater cave systems that form them. Wes instilled people with the wonder and glory of Florida’s springs. His ultimate message to us was the necessity of preserving these rare and diverse Florida geological features for posterity. Incidentally, a large spring on the Suwannee River was also named for Jim Stevenson.

**Mitigation for the Hwy 319 Widening Project**

* Seán McGlynn reported that we received a response on the mitigation strategies

**BMAP, TMDL Nitrogen Targets**

* Doug Barr and Sean McGlynn will meet with DEP this afternoon to discuss Nitrogen Target Revisions.
* Doug has done an analysis that suggests setting it at .27 rather than .35, which almost doubles the required reduction in nitrogen loading.

**FWC Herbicide Use Moratorium** (see letters from FSI and FLMS in Appendices C&D)

* No herbicide has been used for several years.
* It is a tool that may be used at times.
* Bob Deyle asked to postpone the ppt.

**Canopy Development and Related Issues**

* Terry Ryan gave some history on the project and problems including a breach in the berms of stormwater facilities.
* The WMD filed a lawsuit that resulted in $112,000 fine, the largest to date.
* Terry challenged the permit. The new permit has more teeth.
* Stan Rosenthal and others have helped address the change in water levels in the canopy protection zone. Water levels have contributed to trees falling along Centerville Road.
* New homeowners in Canopy are having foundation problems.
* Percolation is still an issue. Suits may be needed to force the City to enforce permits.
* We want responsible development. We are not anti-development.
* There are also traffic problems.
* Homeowner associations are working with us.
* Raw sewage spills are a concern citywide. We have dates, amounts and recovery effort information. The City is under costly consent orders that few people are aware of. There are infiltration issues, especially in old clay pipes. We may recommend consent order amendments. At one point there were over 200 spills per year. That number is down but we also look at the amounts. There were 16 spills related to Hurricane Michael. They are improving generators and taking other measures. Projects can be used to mitigate fines.
* There is an unnamed environmental group working on this. We have former DEP executives and experts. They may align with CONA.

**Springshed Status** Cal Jamison reported:

* Creeks are flowing
* We did a submerged aquatic vegetation survey last week. There is a washout in the channel with 60-80 feet of exposed sand and there are objects that have been exposed that are of interest to archeologists.
* There is less hydrilla and more sage and val. Algae seems to be washed away.
* Highway 319 new ponds are holding water. The projects are moving fast. The road is raised 4 feet.
* The Ferrell property has a 30 acre pond approved. They may be selling fill for Hwy. 319.
* Cal talked to the Camp Indian Springs owner about a diversion pond that has been filled in. He is dealing with out of compliance septic systems.

**Comp Plan Update**

* The land use element is being revised now and this may have critical impacts on Wakulla Springs. Pam Hall is working on this.
* Everyone is encouraged to attend the Comp Plan Update workshops. The schedule is in Appendix E.
* This is a value not data driven update. We need practical data and specifics on what will change. The problem needs to be defined.
* There will be a presentation on Tuesday to the County Commission.

**Grants update** Seán McGlynn reported:

* The Springs Institute is funding more equipment and funding for new work at Wakulla Springs.
* We are continuing WSA work under the current grant.

**The St Marks Minimum Flows and Levels, MFL** (see Doug Barr’s comments attached

* Sean attended a meeting and we are encouraged to still make comments.
* Doug Barr wrote a letter on the draft of the report.
* There will be a WMD governing board approval this month.
* The St Marks Preserve doesn’t focus on the St. Marks River.

**Legislative Season** Vivian Young reported:

* 1000 Friends is following 43 bills.
* There are many bills that may not be passed. The good ones need support.
* There are septic tank and conservation bills that 1000 Friends is supporting.
* There is a bill to prohibit the use of herbicides without trying biological solutions first.

Appendix A

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Wakulla Springs Alliance

**Friday, February 22, 2019**

**9 am to 12 pm, Renaissance Center**

**435 N. Macomb Street, 2nd Floor Conference Room**

**WSA February Board Meeting**

**9:00 Opening**

Welcome and meeting agenda review (Seán McGlynn)

Introductions (Board)

Secretary Report (Tom Taylor, substitute secretary)

Treasurer Report(Jim Davis, treasurer)

**9:15 Discussion-General Business (Tom Taylor)**

*Do you love Wakulla Springs?*

*Wakulla Springs is our environmental gem*

*It is many faceted*

*It is a source of wonder and enjoyment*

*It is the canary in our coal mine*

*The spring pollution and flow levels*

*Are measures of our economic, social and environmental health*

*The Wakulla Springs Alliance is an organization*

*And a collection of individuals that care*

*We have and can make a difference*

*Consider the WSA’s strategic opportunities*

*What part will you play in Spring successes in 2019?*

* + Officers

**9:30 Discussion-General Business (Brett Cyphers)**

The Director of the Northwest Florida Water Management District will give us an update on the Springs Protection and Restoration Funding Programs.

**10:00 Guest Speaker** Julie Hauserman

**11:00 What’s New**

* Mitigation for the Hwy 319 widening project (Seán McGlynn)
* Meeting with DEP on Nitrogen Target Revisions. Monitoring water quality at Wakulla Springs (Doug Barr)
* FWC herbicide use moratorium (comments, see attached letters from FSI and FLMS)
* Springshed Status (Cal Jamison)
* Grants update (Seán McGlynn)
* Wakulla Comp Plan Amendments (banning Advanced Treatment Septic Systems)
* The St Marks MFL (comments, see attached letter by Doug Barr)
* Leon County Water Quality Initiative (comments)
* BMAP (law suits)

**11:45 Items from the floor**

**12:00 Adjourn**

**Meeting dates for 2019**

01/25/19, 02/22/19, 03/22/19, 04/26/19, 05/24/19, 06/28/19, 07/26/19, 08/23/19, 09/27/19, 10/25/19, 11/22/19, 12/13/19. All begin at 9:00 and end at 12:00, except for the November meeting, it will end an hour early at 11:00, on 11/22/19. Meeting location, the Renaissance Center, 435 N. Macomb Street, 2nd Floor Conference Room.

Appendix B

**Board, Advisors and Guests**

\* Indicates 2-22-19 Participants

Board Members

Doug Barr \*

Jim Davis, Treasurer \*

Gail Fishman \*

Albert Gregory \*

Jamie Hughes

Cal Jamison \*

Howard Kessler, V-Chr. \*

Debbie Lightsey \*

Sean McGlynn, Chair \*

Jim Stevenson

Vivian Young \*

WSA Advisors

Bob Deyle

Anthony Gaudio

Pam Hall

Julie Harrington

Chuck Hess \*

Todd Kincaid

Bob Knight

Terrance McCaffrey

Pam McVety

Dan Pennington

Bob Thompson \*

Guests

Bart Bibler \*

Bruce Chapman \*

Kathleen Coates \*

Brett Cyphers \*

Shelby Green \*

Andreas Hagberg \*

Mark Heidecker \*

Carlos Herd \*

Mary Beth Litrico \*

Brian Lupiani \*

Ellen Newell \*

Johnny Richardson \*

Terry Ryan \*

Tom Taylor \*

Paul Thurman \*

Anne Van Meter \*

Richard Wieckowicz \*

Appendix C

**Florida Springs Council Letter**

**Recommendations for an Improved Aquatic Herbicide Program in Florida**

Presented by the Florida Springs Council (FSC), February 18, 2019

On January 28, 2019, the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) announced a temporary

“pause” of its aquatic herbicide treatment program throughout the state.

According to FWC, invasive plants degrade and diminish Florida's waterways by displacing native plant

communities. Some invasive aquatic plants pose a significant threat to human welfare and cause economic

problems by impeding flood control and affecting recreational use of waterways.

FSC Members are concerned that the FWC’s existing aquatic plant management program does not include

safeguards to minimize the effects of aquatic herbicides on ecological and human health. In that regard, the

following comments and recommendations are offered for revision of the existing program.

Comments:

● Florida springs research has provided evidence that spraying floating and emergent plants in springs

and spring runs results in a significant sag in dissolved oxygen due to the creation of dead, rotting

vegetation, and a significant decline in aquatic productivity. This decline in productivity results in a

direct reduction in aquatic wildlife habitat structure and function.

● One common result of repeated aquatic herbicide treatments is the selection of primitive hardy

bacteria like blue green algae over vascular macrophytes, resulting in uncontrollable algae blooms in

natural water bodies.

● Aquatic herbicides accelerate the deposition of organic, flocculent sediments which in turn inhibit

growth of native submerged aquatic vegetation.

● Some herbicides are known or suspected of being carcinogenic either in original form or as a result

of formation of degradation by-products.

● Aquatic herbicides result in chemical pollution of surface and ground waters with poorly understood

chemical interactions, degradation products, and persistent compounds causing detrimental effects

on aquatic organisms and possibly humans who contact herbicides through recreation or in drinking

water supplies.

● Application of herbicides often ignores non-target effects on recreation and aesthetics in

downstream and downgradient water bodies.

Recommendations:

● FWC’s mandate for using aquatic herbicides for "navigation and flood control" must be fully

explained and put within definable boundaries.

● Alternatives to chemical control of aquatic plants should be thoroughly investigated and included in

FWC’s “tool kit” for navigation and flood-control.

● Whenever herbicide use is justified based on either recreation or habitat benefits, an impartial

environmental assessment must be conducted to quantify environmental impacts. This assessment

should compare pre and post aquatic ecosystem structure and function and compare any

detrimental changes to the cost and benefits of the herbicide application.

● FWC must evaluate possible impacts of aquatic herbicide use on aquatic recreation.

Appendix D

**FLMS Position on Current FWC IPM Pause**

February 15, 2019

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Mr. Eric Sutton

Executive Director

620 South Meridian St. Tallahassee FL, 32399

Dear Executive Director Sutton,

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission’s (FWC) invasive plant management program has a history of successful management of Florida’s natural resources, through the scientifically sound implementation of best management practices. The Florida Lake Management Society (FLMS) supports protecting our native aquatic communities from invasive plant species through the use of best management practices and utilization of all available tools to achieve this goal.

FLMS is a professional society established in 1987 and represents over 300 lake managers and researchers statewide. The mission of FLMS is to provide environmental professionals, students, and citizens support in their efforts to protect and preserve Florida’s fragile aquatic ecosystems. This is accomplished by promoting and providing a forum for exchanging information and experiences on scientific, administrative, and financial aspects of lake and watershed management. Two primary objectives of FLMS are to assist in the development of local lake protection and restoration programs in accordance with appropriate management strategies, and to foster a partnership for the mutual benefit of organizations, agencies, local and regional units of government, and individuals concerned with lake and watershed improvement and protection.

Based on the missions and objectives of FLMS and in response to the FWC directive to “pause” the aquatic plant management program, the FLMS Board of Directors has adopted the attached resolution position statement in support of the FWC invasive plant management program. Further, the FLMS Board encourages decision and policymakers to use the vast scientific research available to make informed and scientifically based recommendations. We thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on this important matter.

Sincerely,

Florida Lake Management Society Board of Directors