

SOUTH LEE COUNTY WATERSHED INITIATIVE MEETING

June 22nd, 2017

South Florida Water Management District

2301 McGregor Blvd. Fort Myers, FL

Additional materials available at <https://www.chnep.org/south-lee-co-watershed-initiative>

Attendees

Jim Beever- SWFRPC

Joanna Taylor- Hole Montes

Josh Evans- JR Evans

Don Eslick- ECCL

Stephanie Long- ADA Eng.

Phil Food- SFWMD

Michael Cook- Lehigh Acres MSLD

Mary Lusk- UF IFAS

John Cassani- Calusa Waterkeeper

Scott Manhan- WSP

Steve Sentes- SFWMD

Jennifer Hecker - CHNEP

Rick Orth- Collier County

Roger Copp- Water Science

Sam Lee- Lee County

Pete Cangialosi- ECCL

Lee Flynn- AIM Eng.

Allison Conner - CHNEP

Participant Objectives for SLCWI

- Collier County would like more information on where to acquire land for water resource restoration.
- SWFRPC would like updated project list focused on restoration.
- UF would like to know what regional priorities are, to explore potential research opportunities.
- Village of Estero would like to possibly expand its modeling east and north.
- Lee County would like regional watershed plan for planning (transportation and development)
- There was also discussion that a model could be important tool for understanding potential impacts from proposed land use changes.

CFP Grant Proposal for Regional Watershed Modeling

- Cooperative Funding Program (CFP, by SWFWMD and SFWMD) guidelines and requirements were reviewed including for the three project types funded; stormwater management, alternative water supply, and water conservation.
- Reviewed highlights from previous discussion on need for a regional watershed model for integrated surface/groundwater and water quality, as well as the need for an impartial technical facilitator. Two options were discussed: whether it is better to expand upon the Estero modeling effort or do independent regional model of historic and current conditions.
- Discussion on stakeholders who could potentially cover a portion of the cost, as well as the estimated cost of the modeling.
- CFP is estimated to fund \$8-9 million for the SFWMD and will open October 1 and money awarded likely in April. Won't know how much money available until budget is finalized in September.
- Prioritizing project list to decide on one to three projects to submit to CFP will highly increase chances of funding.
- The SLCWI has a high chance of funding itself for the entity that it is, as well as historical projects already completed to prove commitment to restoration.
- Edison Trust Farms (or other land acq.) was mentioned by a few members and generally agreed upon as important to mention, and even to use as match if completed in time.
- Funding is awarded across the district with a general split for project priorities. There is an estimated \$4.5 million for alternative water supply and \$4.5 million for conservation/restoration in the SFWMD.
- Cost-effective and matched funds are an important factor for CFP funding. Mitigation is not considered a matched fund.

- Strong CFP applications highlight partnerships and hit on key objectives such as storage, water quality, TMDL/BMAP projects, passive recreation, etc.
- Modeling would not be a study, so much as “analysis”. Would be best to pair a request for modeling funding with a turn-dirt project (if completed same fiscal year, can be used as match) – whole proposal could be titled “South Lee County Watershed Initiative”.

Identifying Watershed Projects

- CHNEP provided a project master spreadsheet compiled from the projects identified in numerous previous studies in the study area - to determine priority projects to prepare Cooperative Funding Program (CFP) application(s) and pursue legislative funding.
- The group went through and removed projects that were completed or outside SLCWI study area boundary.
- There was some confusion around the focus of the project study area. Projects are to be selected from within the SLCWI designated study area boundary. However, this does not negate the importance of projects that feed a majority of its location into the study area.
- There was a suggestion to do GIS mapping to determine project opportunities that have already been lost to development. This endeavor was volunteered to be completed by Jim Beever.
- There was a request that CHNEP try creating map to put project locations on a map for reference and visual.

Prioritizing Watershed Projects

- There was consensus to focus on ecological and water resource restoration projects.
- Some attendees suggested narrowing down list by feasibility, and adding new projects/potential projects.
- CHNEP offered to revise project list and send back out for people to add input to online. CHNEP also offered to send out online survey to poll participants in scoring each project to aid prioritization.

Next Steps

- The consensus of the group present is that they want to meet again in August. CHNEP offered to send out poll to schedule and facilitate the August Meeting.
- There was also a group (Mike, Josh, Pete, Sam, Steve, and Jennifer) who offered to form a working group to meet in the interim to begin drafting the CFP application for the Initiative.

Action Items

By Friday July 14th, SLCWI stakeholders and participants are asked to:

- Input project updates and additional projects into master project spreadsheet at https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1rKQP23zKdNKf8LUjpaVyMGrd_FEUbNswENE-Sr2lltg/edit#gid=449973494
- Prioritize SLCWI projects in https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSclKpgVZmGF9g6sBLWc1ND7xh5GGtggl6OakK5_QX_fu1STgw/viewform?usp=sf_link form
- Fill out doodle poll to schedule general SLCWI August meeting at <https://doodle.com/poll/834v7ngvfmrqa3kf>