

Environmental Science Forum (ESF)  
Weedon Island Preserve Cultural & Natural History Center  
St. Petersburg, FL  
Thursday, 6 May 2010  
4:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

MEETING MINUTES

Approved by the Forum at July 15, 2010 Meeting

Attendees:

- |      |                   |  |
|------|-------------------|--|
| 1.   | Bruce Hasbrouck   | Forum Member, Co-Chair                               |
| 2.   | Cathy Harrelson   | Forum Member, Co-Chair                               |
| 3.   | Tom Muntz         | Forum Member   |
| 4.   | Mark Mueller      | Forum Member   |
| 5.   | Lindsay Cross     | Forum Member   |
| 6.   | Jeanne Murphy     | Forum Member   |
| 7.   | Dr. Randy Runnels | Forum Member   |
| 8.   | Robert McConnell  | Forum Member   |
| 9.   | Ray Wunderlich    | Forum Member   |
| 10.  | Barbara Hoffman   | Forum Member   |
| 11.  | Doug Robison      | Forum Member   |
| 12.  | Howard Rutherford | Forum Member   |
| 13.  | Joanne Shrewsbury | Forum Member Alternate for Joe Maier                 |
| 14.  | Libby Carnahan    | Forum Member Alternate for Randy Runnels (observing) |
| 15.  | William Davis     | Pinellas County Environmental Management             |
| 16.  | Andy Squires      | Pinellas County Environmental Management             |
| 17.  | Steve Harper      | Pinellas County Environmental Management             |
| 18.  | Jason Ester       | Pinellas County Attorney's Office                    |
| 19.  | Bob LaSala        | Pinellas County Administration                       |
| 20.  | Mark Woodard      | Pinellas County Administration                       |
| 21.  | Dennis Stotts     | Citizen  |
| 21.. | John Mulvihill    | City of Oldsmar                                      |
| 23.  | Lisa Rhea         | City of Oldsmar                                      |
| 24.  | Sidney Crawford   | Citizen  |

**Handouts:** Pinellas County Environmental Science Forum Agenda; ESF meeting minutes from October 1, 2009; Draft ESF Bylaws revised March 2010, List of (ESF) Voting Members and Alternates, Resume for proposed Alternate Patricia M. Smoot, City of Oldsmar Alternative Water Supply Project (description of project)

**I. Welcome and Introduction**

- Co-Chair Ms. Cathy Harrelson called the meeting to order with a general welcome. Each ESF member or alternate in attendance introduced themselves.

**II. Additional Agenda Items**

- None

### **III. Announcements**

- Mr. Andy Squires informed the original members and Ms. Lindsay Cross that they will receive an e-mail soon asking if they would like to continue serving as ESF members. New co-chairs will be nominated and elected at the next meeting

### **IV. Approval of October 1, 2009 Minutes**

- Two last names were not spelled correctly in the minutes (Wunderlich and Compton). Ms. Lindsay Cross made a motion to approve the October 1, 2009 meeting minutes with the spelling errors corrected. Ms. Barbara Hoffman seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

### **V. Revision of ESF Bylaws**

Mr. Andy Squires summarized each proposed revision to the ESF bylaws. ESF members agreed with the revisions and had no additional changes. Mr. Squires noted that a final copy of the revised bylaws will be presented at the next ESF meeting for approval by vote. Then the bylaws would be effective at the following meeting.

### **VI. Proposed New Alternate**

- Mr. Tom Muntz summarized the resume and background of Ms. Pat Smoot. Mr. Tom Muntz, Ms. Joanne Shrewsbury, and Ms. Lindsay Cross all agreed that Ms. Smoot is a hard working and dedicated person who would be a good addition to the ESF as an Alternate to Mr. Tom Muntz. She currently serves as Secretary for the Friends of Weedon Island Preserve, has been on the Friends board for several years, and is very active. Ms. Shrewsbury made a motion that Ms. Smoot be recommended to serve as an ESF Alternate. The motion was seconded by Ms. Barbara Hoffman. The motion carried unanimously.

### **VII. Remarks on ESF Role and County Budget**

- Mr. Bob LaSala began by thanking the ESF Members and Alternates for their service to the County. He asked them to continue to meet, but at a lower frequency. He said that due to budget reductions, the County support for future meetings would be less but that the essential support by County staff necessary to hold as-needed meetings will continue. He recommended that the ESF continue meeting based on demand as viewed by ESF members.
- He proceeded to discuss the County Budget and how Environmental Management functions will be handled. He said that FY2011 reductions represent the second of possibly three years of dramatic reductions. Reductions will be made by restructuring departments, expanding roles, reducing the ratio of managers to employees they supervise, and examining alternative ways to offer service. He mentioned that he expected the Education Centers will continue to operate on a limited schedule and that the County will continue to live up to its obligations in terms of responsible and appropriate management of our

environmental lands and other resources. For the rest of the Environmental Management, the core services will be maintained and placed in various areas of interest. He said the situation is not necessarily ideal, but is necessary to meet the budget. He said that the ESF input is still important and wants the ESF to continue as a valued body that can be called upon when needed. He stated that the level of administrative support for the ESF cannot continue and will be diminished.

- Mr. LaSala then opened the floor to questions.
- ESF co-chair Ms. Cathy Harrelson asked how often ESF should meet. Mr. LaSala said the ESF should meet when necessary to discuss compelling issues but with reduced administrative support from the County.
- Ms. Lindsay Cross expressed concern of how the ESF can bring up issues to the County but still abide by Sunshine provisions? Mr. LaSala said nothing will change with respect to Sunshine provisions and stated that the law must be followed. ESF members then discussed possible additional revisions to the bylaws to allow ESF members to take meeting minutes.
- A concern was raised that “free” access to parks and preserves was more important than ever given the economy and asked if volunteers could fill roles formerly held by County staff. Mr. LaSala said the possibility will be examined, and he has set a target for the County to increase the use of volunteers by ten fold. When asked if entry fees to parks will be implemented to help fund their continued operation, Mr. LaSala said an \$8 entry fee to Ft. DeSoto Park and the option to purchase an annual pass will be proposed to the Commission. Other questions and concerns expressed by ESF members included the ability to meet expanding regulatory mandates, the value of keeping an “Environmental Department” in name given the increasing focus on surface water quality and associated regulatory requirements, and keeping critical obligations to environmental lands in terms of existing management plans and other obligations. Mr. LaSala acknowledged the concerns. He said the Environmental divisions will be shrunk and moved to other areas of interest (departments). After due consideration and listening to advice from senior staff, the plan is to keep air and surface water divisions, because of their enforcement functions, at arms length organizationally from Public Works and Utilities whose activities are sometimes subject to enforcement of air and water regulations.
- Dr. Randy Runnels expressed concern, based on his experience, that when preservation and active recreation functions are merged that limited resources for conservation are siphoned off to support active recreation. Mr. LaSala stated that this will not be a concern because the Department of Culture, Education and Leisure is also facing dramatic budget cuts.
- ESF co-chair Mr. Bruce Hasbrouck asked how well the County is prepared to handle the gulf oil spill. Mr. LaSala explained that the United States Coast Guard has the lead, the State will handle volunteers, and the County will help with volunteer efforts as well. He mentioned that based on current projections, the Tampa Bay area would not see much oil for at least 5-10 days and that the State has received \$25 million from British Petroleum to prepare for oil spill impacts.
- Mr. LaSala closed by once again thanking ESF members for their service and contributions to the County.

## **VIII. Alternative Water Supply Project, City of Oldsmar**

- Mr. John Mulvihill and Ms. Lisa Rhea from the City of Oldsmar explained the ongoing water supply project being undertaken by the City. The project idea originated in 1996. The project will serve as a long term solution to providing an independent source of potable water for the City. The City currently uses about 1.54 mgd of potable water purchased wholesale from Pinellas County. The design capacity of the system will be about 3 mgd. Mr. Mulvihill and Ms. Rhea explained the project details including the evaluation process, pilot study, monitoring well sampling requirements and environmental impacts, production wells, the reverse osmosis process, and the by-product injection well. It is anticipated that once operating the cost per 1000 gallons of potable water will be \$2.95. Forum member Ms. Barbara Hoffman noted that the cone of influence for the wellfield drawdown is within the border of the Brooker Creek Preserve and the highest potential drawdown for the whole project is within the Preserve. More information about the project can be found at [www.ci.oldsmar.fl.us](http://www.ci.oldsmar.fl.us).

## **IX. Bylaws Revisited**

After hearing Mr. LaSala's comments about the future role of the ESF, members expressed an interest to revise Bylaw 3.1 so members can create meeting minutes. Mr. Squires, with assistance from Mr. Jason Ester of the County Attorney's Office, offered to revise the bylaws accordingly including Article Nine to shorten the time between ESF approvals of amendments and when they become effective. A revised set of written bylaw amendments will be presented to the ESF at the next meeting.

## **X. Miscellaneous Comments**

Dr. Randy Runnels noted that the State recently discovered they owned two 40-acre parcels adjacent to and just north of John Chesnut Park in Pinellas County. He wanted to make it known that he was looking for an organization willing to manage land and suspects that the County, due to the budget crisis, would not be able to take on the responsibility.

## **XI. Public Comment**

Mr. Sid Crawford mentioned that Audubon members were asked to assist the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to update shorebird nesting areas in preparation for possible oil spill impacts.

## **Adjourn**

Mr. Tom Muntz made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion was seconded by Mr. Mark Mueller. Meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.