

Big Cypress Watersheds Restoration Coordination Team

Friday, September 18, 2009 – 9:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.
Florida Panther National Wildlife Refuge Roger Roth Work Center

Meeting Minutes

1. Welcome/Call to Order

- ◆ The meeting was called to order at 9:50 AM
- ◆ Larry Richardson and Ben Nottingham welcomed everyone to the Panther Refuge.
- ◆ Ben Nottingham announced that Layne Hamilton will be moving to the Merritt Island Wildlife Refuge and discussed the “Wildlife First” management strategy of the Panther Refuge.
- ◆ Ben and Larry informed the group about the construction of their new Environmental Education Center at McBride’s Pond and what to expect to see on the field excursion. They also described many of the research projects being performed in the Panther Refuge and the Ten Thousand Islands Refuge.
- ◆ Bob Sobczak told the group that he tuned into the USGS webinar series on Manatee winter refugia in the Ten Thousand Islands, which was informative and a great way to get the agencies talking together about resource issues.
- ◆ Minutes from the last meeting were reviewed and accepted.
- ◆ Ed Hanlon announced that he has received funding to develop a new farming systems model which would include ecosystem services.
- ◆ Bob presented Sarah Davis with a gift in honor of her hard work over the past few years with the BCW-RCT, generously donated by the Conservancy of Southwest Florida.
Thanks Sarah for all the dedication and creativity you brought to our watershed team!

2. Introduction of Members

Mike Bauer, City of Naples
Laura Gibson, Collier County
Mike Savarese, FGCU
Mike Bush, Audubon
Juliana Da Frota, SWMD
Sarah Davis, FGCU
Ed Hanlon, UF IFAS
Mac Hatcher, Collier County
Katie Laakkonen, City of Naples
Ben Nottingham, US FWS

Molly Meadows, SFWMD
Shane Collier, FWC/FWRI
John Aquilino, Conservancy SWF
Annji Greenwood, US FWS
Ananta Nath, SFWMD
Larry Richardson US FWS
Bob Sobczak, Big Cypress NP
Daryl Thomas, US FWS
Megan Andresen, FGCU/BCW-RCT

3. Swamp Tour of McBride’s Pond with Larry Richardson

- ◆ The group caravanned to McBride’s pond to see the new Environmental Education Field Station and take canoes out for a swamp tour.
- ◆ Larry gave an amazing tour of the swamp, including discussion of:
 - Orchid restoration efforts
 - Orchid habitat preferences
 - Strategic Habitat Initiative

- Barron River Canal Plug
- Multiple research projects
- Exotics removal
- ◆ Larry also showed the group:
 - Multiple orchid species (Cigar, Night Smelling, Leafless, etc.)
 - Multiple fern species
 - Very old/large cypress trees
 - Apple snail eggs
 - Exotic snail eggs
 - AND MUCH MORE!

Everyone took lots of photos – Be sure to bring them to the next meeting if you can, or pass them around by email to individuals who appear in your photos!

4. Coastal Strategies Website Introduction – Megan Andresen

- ◆ Megan briefly presented the Florida Coastal Strategies Website: www.floridacoastalstrategies.org, noting that the website was launched by the Coastal Training Programs within Florida's National Estuarine Research Reserves as a tool to better inform decision makers on environmental management issues.
- ◆ Website topics include:
 - Water Quality and Quantity
 - Land Use Density and Intensity
 - Shoreline Management
 - Coastal Erosion with
- ◆ Subtopics under each topic:
 - Model Ordinances
 - Best Management Practices
 - Case Studies and Demonstration Projects
 - and Current Research.
- ◆ Megan has been asked by Rookery Bay to help with the website and to integrate the BCW-RCT group.
 - The group was asked to check out the website and think about some best management practices they would like to know more about or ones that they would find beneficial to add to the website as a resource for policy makers, prior to the November 20 meeting.
 - Mike Savarese suggested it would be important for our group members to routinely (quarterly) submit ideas and information to the website. We can make this website into a training portal for keeping us all up to date on information we should be familiar with, and use as a spring board for discussion at our quarterly meetings.
 - Megan's plan is to update material on the website in step with our quarterly meetings, which is a logical and sustainable schedule for incorporating it into our team.

5. Coastal Watershed Institute, FGCU and the BCW-RCT – Mike Savarese

- ◆ Mike introduced the Coastal Watershed Institute (CWI) at FGCU which brings together scientists to research coastal environments and coastal watershed problems.
- ◆ CWI is looking for new ways to reach out into the scientific community, and so Mike is proposing the use of CWI as a broker of graduate students who could do their thesis research on highly needed projects which may have little funding. Agencies could define highly needed projects and possibly sponsor graduate student work for those projects.
- ◆ The group agreed to explore this idea further at the next meeting.

6. Water Quality Network – Bob Sobczak

- ◆ Bob presented a map of the hydrologic monitoring site locations and duration of sampling in Big Cypress National Preserve.
- ◆ He noted the location of a collaborative site with the SFWMD and that the hydrologic monitoring has created a large, useful dataset.

7. Other Watershed News

- ◆ Ananta Nath announced that the Picayune Strand Pump Station groundbreaking will be in December, with construction beginning in January, and discussed Lake Trafford Dredging.
- ◆ Bob saw a bear in the top of a cypress tree and proposed the idea of conducting a future meeting down Loop Road and into the Everglades, with Lunch at the S-12B structure.
- ◆ Bob also enlightened the group about the hydrologic history of the Turner River with a powerpoint presentation which is currently in the works. Among the more riveting questions he raised during the presentation was “why exactly is it called a river and not a creek” and “what’s the best way to graph rainfall data?”

8. Set Next Meeting Date and Adjourn meeting

- ◆ The meeting was adjourned at 1:45 p.m.
- ◆ **Next Meeting Friday November 20, 2009 – Gordon River Water Quality Park**