

***SOUTHWEST FLORIDA REGIONAL RESILIENCY
COALITION***

Meeting 2

Facilitator Summary

October 27, 2022

Summary prepared by
The FCRC Consensus Center

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BACKGROUND

The Southwest Florida Regional Resiliency Coalition (name was changed from Compact to Coalition as an outcome of this meeting) met for the second time on May 27, 2022 at the Collaboratory in Ft. Myers, Florida. The specific objectives of the meeting were to:

- Provide updates on Compact-related and resiliency-related developments since October Meeting
- Explore possibilities for continuing resiliency-related collaboration among Compact members
- Plan for next steps

Participants included representatives of 10 of the 11 cities and of one of the three counties that signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) establishing the compact and the Seminole Tribe. The two additional counties (Lee and Collier) sent observers. The list of participants can be found in Appendix A of this summary.

WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS AND AGENDA REVIEW

Dr. Michael Savarese, of the Water School at FGCU welcomed participants and asked them to introduce themselves. Facilitator Hal Beardall reviewed the agenda and noted that the order of items had been rearranged to accommodate a late start due to technical difficulties with the teleconference arrangement for the presentations. The agenda as modified in the course of the meeting was as follows:

9:30	Welcome – Dr. Mike Savarese, The Water School, FGCU Introductions and agenda review – Hal Beardall and Rafael Montalvo, FCRC Consensus Center Exploring a model for the Compact moving forward Perspectives from other resiliency compacts and alliances Compact-Related developments since October Straw model for discussion and refinement
10:30	Break
10:45	Resilient Florida grant activities SB 1954 -- Initial requirements and recent revisions Grant activities to-date (2021-2022 grants) Gap analysis and compilation of climate indicators Other possibilities under current grant Educational and training activities (identify interested jurisdictions) Planning for possible 2022-2023 Resilient Florida proposal Vulnerability analysis (identify interested jurisdictions) Other Possibilities for 2022-2023 grants Next Steps
12:00 pm	Adjourn

PERSPECTIVES FROM OTHER RESILIENCY COMPACTS AND ALLIANCES

Representatives of three differently structured regional alliances provided an overview of each group's origins, organization and activities. Participants then engaged in a question-and-answer discussion with the

presenters. The overviews and subsequent discussion were intended to provide a point of departure for participants later discussion of possible approaches to continuing collaboration in Southwest Florida.

Southeast Florida Regional Climate Change Compact

Lauren Ordway Evans, Institute for Sustainable Communities

- Southeast Florida was an early leader in resiliency compacts. There are now seven across Florida and upwards of fifty across the country. The compact follows jurisdictions and municipal lines.
- The structure of the compact was developed more than a decade ago in a somewhat organic way. It would probably have a somewhat different structure if we were designing it now, knowing what we know now.
- Engagement on a day-to-day basis is at the staff level. We wanted to keep it bipartisan and not subject to election turnover. There is staff leadership from four counties: each is a voting member through its chief resiliency office. Each of the counties also provide dedicated staff time.
- Other partners include one municipality from each county. In theory those slots rotate but not in practice.
- It has been a challenge to engage all 112 local governments in the area, although some have been more involved than even some of the counties. Also, the South Florida Water Management District and Regional Planning Council have been engaged at a regional level.
- There are academic liaisons from Florida International University and the Florida Climate Institute. The latter brings together university programs from across the state. The Nature Conservancy has also been at the table from the beginning. They initially played the role of representing Monroe County but continue involved today. There is also staff from Sustainable Florida.
- The Compact engages key stakeholders to coordinate climate related action and to collaborate on efforts. The Compact developed its first Regional Climate Action plan in 2012 and updates it every five years. It has twelve chapters covering vulnerability assessments, sea-level rise, heat impacts, etc. We bring together a technical committee to update the plan, and we run a series of implementation workshops to support implementation of the Action Plan.

Tampa Bay Regional Resiliency Coalition

Sean Sullivan, Executive Director, Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council

- The initiative that led to the formation of the Tampa Bay coalition began in January 2018 with a workshop to hear the story of the Southeast Florida Compact. We formed a committee that has met once a month since. By October of 2018 we had a signing ceremony for a MOU with the objectives of the coalition.
- We now have 32 participants. It doesn't cost anything to join. Each staff member designates a staff member to serve as point of contact.
- We have a Resiliency Climate Action Plan that guides our efforts. It is on our website, 100 pages, and has buy-in from local governments.

- We applied for a competitive grant from EPA for resources for a full-time position/coordinator. That is a key cog in the wheel. The management and planning committee meets once a month.
- COVID actually allowed further outreach through online connection. We have up to 150 people participating in meetings remotely.
- The Compact has seven counties and 25 city jurisdictions.
- We have testified to the legislature on impacts of sea-level rise. The RPC continues the effort.
- Elected officials are onboard and provide key leadership on policy direction.
- We also have good relationship with the state resiliency office. That helps us be aware of grant opportunities.
- There are more available dollars now than ever. We currently have four pending grants.

Palm Beach County Coastal Resilience Partnership

Rebecca Harvey, Sustainability Coordinator, City of Boynton Beach

- The Coastal Resilience Partnership provides an example of a different approach to resiliency compacts.
- It addresses climate adaptation in seven neighboring municipalities and immediately adjacent portions of Palm Beach County.
- All are in the southeast part of Palm Beach County with the 2nd, 3rd and 7th largest cities in the county. It provides capacity to the other smaller cities who would not otherwise have had the capacity needed to tackle the issues.
- Collaboration and interlocal agreement took time but were worth the effort to reduce costs for each municipality, leverage knowledge base, compete for funding, develop a consistent methodology to assess vulnerability, and foster synergies in developing adaptation strategies.
- We started in 2017, then applied for funding together in Phase One. We completed an interlocal agreement and obtained a grant to hire a consultant. We continue to work together on grants from the State of Florida.
- At the beginning, we had a Harvard center provide assistance in creating an interlocal agreement.
- The final agreement brought in legal and finance departments and established a working group, cost sharing, and designated a fiscal agent.
- We set up a cost sharing framework with a weighted formula. Municipalities contributed \$22,000 - \$85,000. Palm Beach County contributed an additional fixed amount. We also received grant funds in the amount of \$400,000.
- We developed an interactive platform for vulnerability assessment and used that to apply for Florida grant funds to show vulnerable areas.
- The Partnership has identified a portfolio of adaptation strategies.
- We expect to continue the Partnership using updated data and information.

Participant Comment and Discussion

- On Captiva we struggle with being unincorporated and relying on the county. We are interested in a Climate Action Plan, but we don't want to duplicate efforts on vulnerability assessments. I'd be very interested to hear how you addressed collaboration.
- The structure used by the Southwest Florida Compact may or may not work for you. Keep in mind that whatever structure you set up needs to respond to local needs to have value and staying power. The Institute for Sustainable Communities reports on various structures and how they function. We did not do a multi county assessment – each county did its own assessment. The Southeast Compact has helped build capacity for municipalities in the region. Start with sharing information, especially for under resourced entities.
- From my perspective at the Partnership, it is not an either-or choice among the three models. Each is different for different needs. The key is to network, share information, and raise awareness. With Florida legislation mandating certain work that helps focus. It makes sense to organize on either a broad or micro regional basis to meet basic state requirements.
- At Tampa Bay, communication and networking with each other have been important. But we had inconsistent sea-level rise data. We worked with the University of South Florida to set a common denominator as a model for the region.
- What about staff payroll for participation by municipalities?
- In the Tampa Bay Coalition all counties pay dues voluntarily. That is 50% of budget with the rest from grants. There is a paid position and RPC coordinates. A similar arrangement may not work here.
- The Southeast Compact is staffed by the Institute for Sustainable Communities. The Compact started with philanthropic funds and counties then stepped in once the value was established. The last three years have been funded by the four counties – \$400,000/year equally divided among the four counties even though the population of each county is very different. You can set up your own rubric. We may ask a small membership fee from municipalities in the future.
- A central tenant for Southwest Florida is the Water School has committed to no cost initially. In the future we may ask for investment.
- The context in the Southeast is a compact working together for more than a dozen years.
- Most of our coast is owned by the county. Our concern is river front flooding.
- Yes, inland flooding is addressed in the Tampa Bay Coalition's action plan. Pasco County has a similar problem during the rainy season.
- We hoped we would be working with the county. We are small, only nine staff. How do six municipalities in Lee work with the County?
- Why did the cities in Palm Beach County form a micro-region?
 - For two reasons. Those engaged with the compact saw activity in other counties and felt a need to prepare for our micro-region. And, as grant funding became available, we decided to seek funding for the micro-region. Resilient Florida money is available for regional efforts.
- I'm trying to think about how these models fit in our area. One involves counties, another involves cities with common borders. The latter is not applicable to us. We may need to be included in the county assessments rather than separately.

- It is not essential to have shared borders, but to use common models for assessments? You need assessments for the state model. Information can be applied across the region to produce economy of scale and develop common scenarios.
- In the Partnership example, did cities work with the county?
 - Yes, we worked with the County and they contributed costs, but the assessment was for the seven city footprint, not the full county. The County has since expanded on the effort with additional grants to build on the effort and scale up the effort using the same methodology for the whole county.
- Sticker shock will come from lack of regional effort. Our collaboration is in its infancy and is already facing some division. How do we balance and foster large and small jurisdiction collaboration?
- In the Partnership, four jurisdictions have dedicated resiliency staff. The smaller ones contribute to the cost of consultants but not staff. We vet decisions by the four who do have dedicated staff with the other smaller partners.
- Start with a vulnerability assessment. The Southeast Compact does not focus on a priority of just one county but finds needs for the regional broadly. Initially, build the relationship between staff.
- The Tampa Bay region is very different. Citrus County was the first to join the regional effort: the first city was in Manatee County. Elected officials recognize the need to fit together and create our own approach.
- Regarding the Resilient Florida program – does each municipality work independently or go through the regional entity and vet what they do?
 - In the Tampa Bay Compact some jurisdictions sought grants individually, but we applied for grants for two counties. We try to coordinate and help each other.
 - In the Partnership the projects are shared. It makes it easier to learn from each other.
- Did I understand correctly that in Tampa Bay jurisdictions originally had different models for sea-level rise and the Coalition brought uniformity?
 - The Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council formed a Climate Science Advisory Committee in 2015. In 2016 we began working with NOAA to use the latest data to create a uniform prediction to present to the RPC for the region to develop consistency assessments and plans.
 - The state legislation requires the use of the NOAA curves. The 2022 data varies from earlier 2017 data. We were originally told to use 2017 curves.

SWFL COALITION-RELATED DEVELOPMENTS SINCE OCTOBER 2021

Facilitator Hal Beardall reviewed Coalition-related developments since the October meeting. These developments collectively provide additional context for the discussion of possible organizational models for the compact going forward. He noted that:

- All three counties reached out to the Southeast Compact, as discussed at the October meeting, in December of 2021.
- Subsequently, Lee County staff communicated with the facilitators to state that:

- They believed that it made more sense for the County to complete its vulnerability assessment and better understand what projects it would need to undertake before committing to any collaborative efforts. Staff estimated that this could take up to eighteen months.
- They would continue to communicate and coordinate with Collier and Charlotte County throughout this process and consider what collaborative efforts might be warranted once all three counties had complete their assessments as well.
- Consistent with these conclusions, therefore, the Lee County Commission has suspended its participation in the alliance until further notice.
- Collier County staff indicated that Collier County may be considering similar action. [Note: Since the May 27 meeting, while this summary was being prepared, Collier County, through an action by their Board, has also suspended its participation.]
- Charlotte County has indicated its continued interest in participating in the Coalition.

STRAW MODEL FOR COMPACT ORGANIZATION

Michael Savarese presented a set of possible principles and a possible organizational design for the alliance. The possible principles and organizational design would be intended to provide a framework for continued collaboration among alliance members in light of developments since the October meeting.

Possible Alliance Straw Principles

- Change name to SWFL Regional Resiliency Coalition
 - “Compact” sounds too authoritative.
- Function as an informal group without any decision-making authority.
- Work in two capacities:
 - As an “alignment network”: jurisdictions develop shared plans and align priorities, when appropriate, but produce outcomes independently.
 - And as a “connectivity network”: share knowledge when alignment isn’t appropriate.
- No obligations and employ the alliance to overcome problems associated with the “economy of scale”.

Possible Alliance Straw Design

- All jurisdictions have a seat, a voice, but no vote; call this a “working group”.
- The Water School serves as facilitator of whatever technical / science needs are required. Builds teams to bring the talent together.
- Jurisdictional, agency, university, and not-for-profit professionals engaged on an ad hoc basis to tackle problems.
- Products provided to individual or aligned jurisdictions.
- Funding pursued by individual or aligned jurisdictions.
- No ask for financial support, at least initially, until the effort is grounded and successful.
- First steps . . . Identifying priorities / identifying opportunities for alignment.

- Perhaps this conversation can begin today, if time permits.

Participant Comment and Discussion

- I appreciate the straw design to help focus on definition of the role of the coalition: what should it be and look like? I also appreciated the panel of the mature programs. That was very helpful. My comfort level is better. I don't know what the rub is with counties working with cities, but there is nothing to lose in collaborating. Collaboration is missing currently. We want to communicate, collaborate, and be at the table. We are not trying to break away. We have a common problem to address -- climate change. Collaboration is important to us as a barrier island that serves to protect inland areas. It is in the latter's interest to help protect barrier islands. I would like to turn toward better engagement.
- At my level (staff) there is a lot of cooperation between cities and staff in Lee County on many issues – utilities, road network, etc. Staff works well together – this framework would work well.
- Collaboration is instrumental to working together. There is no cost. I like the outline as a staff member, and our new city manager supports the concept.
- I like the concept and agree we need a seat at the table. I would like to have a vote. We want to collaborate with the County. We need to be contacted and part of team effort. The County did a humongous report of 1000 pages of issues on waterways but we were not included. We need transparency and want a deeper voice.
- The Seminole Tribe is unique. We are spread across South Florida. The Steering Committee would be a good step but there needs to be regional level coordination across counties and municipalities. Issues impact South Florida as a whole. I am concerned if two counties back out. I want them to be included at the table. It is time to move forward, but we want the commitment of the full region.
- It may be okay for the time being. But how long will we be just voices at the table? If this progresses, then we will need to have a vote in the process and be an integral part of it.
- The overall concept behind the straw principles and organization is an informal group to move forward together, with the desire to reach out to the counties too.
- Where are the two counties now?
- At Lee County we recognized we needed to move forward and were the first do a vulnerability assessment. We are using DEP guidance to define and apply for funding, built on a physical model for Lee County. We have reached out to the staff of each city to be included and welcomed them to participate in that process. Each jurisdiction was interested. DEP will fund it, and we are in the process of selecting consultants to do the assessment. We will go back to city staff to participate in developing the vulnerability assessment. We intend it to be open to all the jurisdictions in the county.
- It makes sense to work with the County. There may be some duplication. The County has been a good resource. For those of us in Lee County, it is important to work together with the County and to work with forming this coalition. We are willing to work together here and with the County. And the counties should be welcomed to the table if they choose to return. We should keep meeting quarterly to share information.
- In the region we need to talk about community resiliency beyond just flooding and sea-level rise to include drinking water and other regional issues. Each city and county have resources and all need to rely on each other.

- I like the strawman. Being less formal hopefully makes it more acceptable to Lee and Collier to come back and participate. Meeting together as coalition could be valuable.
- This is similar to our initial communication. Maybe less formal structure will help us move forward.
- The general idea is good. However, be careful to invite everyone. The County has to lead to some degree because they have the budget and because of the limited capacity of smaller cities. We may have to have weighted voting whenever we get to that point like the MPO. It is important that modeling is required. It needs to be the best model, and we need use the same model.
- Do your jurisdictions need formal action?
 - Yes.
 - Yes. We appreciate that staff works well together. The challenge is for elected officials to represent constituents. We are experiencing that the collaboration is not happening at the leadership level.
- I want to emphasize that our staff and county staff work well. Our city council has members who do not cotton to sea-level rise or climate change but are concerned about storm surge and flooding protection.
- We need to review what council passed before and see if this is a modification.
- The name changes and the original MOU said each jurisdiction had one vote.
- We may need a rephrased MOU to take back to council?
- We crafted the MOU based on the Tampa Bay MOU. We can change and tweak a new draft.
- I'm not a city attorney, but the informal structure proposed may not need an MOU since there will be no votes or monetary commitments. You may be able to use a resolution.
- Can you rewrite and send a new draft?
 - Yes.
- We would like this group to have conversation about needs and direction while boards confer.
- Focus of group on resiliency, not climate change – that is not changing.
- I would suggest using the word resiliency, not climate change.

RESILIENT FLORIDA AWARD NEWS AND RELATED ACTIVITIES

Dr. Savarese noted that there were several activities and issues for members to address. These are outlined in a PowerPoint presentation available on the website and may be addressed in future discussions. For this meeting, he provided information and asked for feedback on one possibility in particular:

- Charlotte County is fiscal agent on two Resilient Florida DEP grants, one concerns the development of a vulnerability analysis tool for the region (an expansion of ACUNE, presently being used by Collier County) and the compilation of jurisdictions' critical assets; and a second that accomplishes a series of tasks to move the coalition forward, which were identified in earlier meetings.

- Currently, the Water School has staff assistance, supported financially by one of the DEP awards, to facilitate the collection and mapping of critical assets. Savarese would like to know which jurisdictions are interesting in participating. The work needs to be completed by middle August; he will reach out to jurisdictions individually.

Participant Comment and Discussion

- Sending out critical asset information may be an issue due to confidentiality issues. The city can share the information with the county but not with the university. Water and sewer for example the city cannot share. [An aside: There are a number of jurisdictions where this is not an issue. And assets will be shared with DEP and not the university.]
- Our ability to share the information may depend on the detail you need.
- Charlotte County is the fiscal agent and willing to continue collaborating with the group. The grant is for the region.
- University of Florida is developing the vulnerability analysis tool (ACUNE); Florida Gulf Coast University has offered help with training and the running of the analysis.
- We would be onboard if this provides for our analysis.
- What time frame is relevant here?
 - Probably need a response by June 6th. [Since the May 27th meeting, DEP has reopened the portal for proposals through September 1.]
- This could be discussed in a virtual meeting with staff participation?
- We would like to confirm that this group is okay with Charlotte as the fiscal agent?
 - Yes
- FGCU and Charlotte County may need to communicate with the group to develop the next proposal, if one is developed.
- Not sure can commit my council to its involvement in a new proposal.
- We will have a conversation with DEP Program Director regarding compliance with Resilient Florida Act.
- Can you give us an idea of what the unique features of ACUNE are? [This can be added as an agenda item in the next meeting.]
 - It looks at how the landscape and what is on the landscape attenuates the impacts of sea-level rise and storm surge. It looks at how green infrastructure could attenuate impacts. It uses updated elevation information and also models storm surge on top of sea-level rise, but does not deal with freshwater flooding. Lee Co. is accounting for that.

NEXT STEPS

- Lots of communication
- Jurisdictions have until the end of June next round of grant requests. [This now extended until Sept 1.]

- Mike Savarese and Claire Jubb will make needed adjustments to the MOU and send around to the jurisdictions.
- Savarese will check with staff on interest in participating in next round of grant proposals.
- Savarese will check with Everglades City to see if they'd like assistance with their vulnerability analysis and critical asset compilation.
- We need a calendar to schedule future meetings.

APPENDIX A – PARTICIPANT LIST

Name	Organization	Position
Governments:		
Claire Jubb	Charlotte County	Assistant County Administrator
Natalie Hardman	Naples	Director of Natural Resources
No representative present	Marco Island	Council Member
Tony Pernas	Everglades City	Council Member
Fred Forbes	Bonita Springs	Council Member
Jacqueline Genson	Bonita Springs	Planning & Zoning Manager
Jennifer Nelson	Cape Coral, CEPD	Council Member, Technical Director
Maya Robert	Cape Coral	Environmental Resources Manager
Katy Errington	Estero	Mayor
Richard Thompson	Fort Myers	Stormwater Resource Manager
Bill Veach	Fort Myers Beach	Council Member
Richard Johnson	Sanibel	Vice Mayor
Dana Souza	Sanibel	City Manager
Holly Milbrandt	Sanibel	Natural Resources Manager
Joel Caouette	Sanibel	Natural Resources
Bernard Howard	Seminole Tribe	Assistant Directory HERO

Observer	Collier County	
Steve Boutelle (Observer)	Lee County	Natural Resources
Harald Beardall	FCRC Consensus Center	
Rafael Montalvo	FCRC Consensus Center	
Michael Savarese	FGCU Water School	
Ana Puszkin-Chevlin	Growing Climate Solutions	Regional Director