

Results of May 26, 2010 Meeting: “Next Generation of Water Challenges: Setting the Agenda”

Summary of Topics: Consolidated and Interpreted by Watershed Council post-meeting

Five general topic areas will be suggested to SWFL Water Resources Conference Organizing Committee. The Committee plans to select areas of great interest for the coming decades, and invite speakers to address those areas during its November 2010 20th Anniversary Conference.

These topics might also be used in the long-term planning for Watershed Council consensus-building and cooperation activities.

The topics below were developed from the discussion on May 26th. The listing below makes use of the topics as proposed before the meeting; the topics as presented during the meeting; the post-presentation discussion; and the votes by all participants on Consolidation are based as closely as possible on the commentary and discussion provided by participants, but necessarily include some interpretation on the part of Watershed Council members who worked with these lists. We invite further comment that we could use to further refine, consolidate, and/or add aspects to these lists that would more completely capture the topics and priorities presented at the May 25 meeting. Comments will be accepted through June 30, 2010.

Items marked with *** and in **bold** are those receiving votes that placed them in the “top” items – Because these items represent varying levels of aggregation or conceptual levels (very broad vs very specific), the organization below attempts to group similar topics and attain similar levels of aggregation, and therefore the voting is not precisely mirrored in these topics. The list of major topics includes some topic areas where many individual items received a few votes, but in aggregate received a large number of votes. The topics naturally have much overlap and many of the specific topics could conceivably be grouped under a number of broader concepts; this analysis places each specific topic only once to avoid double representation. In many cases a number of different placements could be possible. The inter-relationships can serve only to intensify the importance of each topic, but for the most part they are not noted here.

As presented below, the topics may be used in a number of ways. At the Conference, the topics might be addressed at the broad level (Topics #1 through #5) in a broadly conceptual presentation, or some portions in specific state-of-the-science or state-of-the region talks. As guidance for the Watershed Council, the broad topics can be seen as long-term guidance, and the specific topics as areas where the membership would benefit from periodic state-of-the-science or state-of-the region talks during monthly technical meetings.

A. Governance and Decision-Making

1. Governance in general: rational, integrated water policy with long-term best interests of all

*****The broad topic above received the single greatest number of votes.**

- Comprehensive, meaningful policy reform

***** Unify land management and water management**

- Education (traditional school-based and public outreach education) and public involvement in water resources
- Gather public support for pending decisions: CERP, River of Grass, other resource protection measures
- *** **Legal protections for public resources such as water reservations, land acquired under River of Grass, etc.**
- Affordability of water quality / water management decisions
- *** **Profitability of water quality / water management decisions** – quantifying economic benefits and impacts of protecting the resource

2. Particular regulatory/government actions that should be continued, improved, or emphasized

- DR / GR process
- (See D. Water Quality for additional items of this nature)

3. Specific recent/pending agency activities that should be implemented in a meaningful way

- Evaluation of results of 3-year West Coast Study
- South Lee Co. Watershed Study

B. Water Flow Decisions, Operations, and Natural Systems

- *** **Decision-making based on optimal flows and hydroperiods (as opposed to minimum flows and levels)**
- Operation of Lake Okeechobee re flows to Caloosahatchee and south of the Lake
- Hydrologic restoration of flowways, south of Lake Okeechobee and in the West Coast basins
- Study of optimal flows to Estero Bay and decision mechanisms to attain those flows
- Studies to evaluate impacts of releases (high, low, variability, etc.) on the estuaries to identify acceptable / optimal flows and operations

C. Water Reservations and Storage

- *** **Increase water storage north of Lake Okeechobee**
- Water storage in the basin
- Water storage generally
- (See topic area A for more on Reservations)

D. Water Quality

1. Water quality in general

- *****In aggregate, the broad topic area plus the specifics below received a large enough number of votes to equal or exceed other ‘high-scoring’ topics**
- Pollution control at the source / dispersed storage and treatment, including state Stormwater Rule
- (See topic area A parts 1 and 2 for more on Water Quality)

2. Particular regulatory/government actions that should be continued, improved, or emphasized

- Implementation of Impaired Waters Rule

- Implementation of TMDL program
- Analysis, design, and implementation of Numeric Nutrient Criteria

E. Habitat and aquatic species protection

******In aggregate, the specific topics in this topic area received significant number of votes***

- Integrate / link habitat protection / restoration decisions across the region
- Immediate protection for species / habitats that are at risk
- Implementation of protection requirements under ESA for smalltooth sawfish, manatee
- Understand / respond to impacts on biodiversity (of development, land use changes, water quality, climate change, others)

Meeting notes as recorded on the flip charts on May 25

<i>DOT S</i>	<i>COD E</i>	<i>#</i>	<i>DESCRIPTION</i>	<i>RANKING</i>
6	H	1	Optimal flows and hydroperiods	2
1	G	2	Retrofit water conveyance drainage systems	
14	G	3	Governance and economic development philosophy -current and future -water quality	1
2	ED	4	Education and translating to action	
8	H	5	More water storage north of Lake O	5
		6	Studies to look at impacts of releases to estuaries	
11	G	7	Unite land and water management	3
	E	8	Reinvest in existing areas	
1	ED/G	9	Improve communication for TMDL process -- stakeholders and governance	
2	ED	10	Improve support for River of Grass and CERP projects -- public	
	H	11	Hydrologic restoration in basins -20 year comprehensive regional plan -needs, barriers, economic value; GIS map	
1		12	Connection of habitat conservation areas	
4	H	13	Optimal flows for Estero Bay -part of 1	
1	WQ	14	Numeric nutrient criteria	
4	E	15	Affordability and sustainability of regulations	
9	E	16	Profitability of water quality improvements	4
6	G	17	Meaningful policy reform	
3		18	Crisis of biodiversity/climate change impacts	
	H	19	DR/GR	
1	H	20	South Lee County watershed study	
5	WQ	21	Impaired waters listing + #19	
3	WQ	22	Pollution source control/dispersed storage and treatment (ex. Statewide stormwater rule)	

6	WQ	23	Water quality (#21 + #22) + #14 + #16	
9	HG	24	Water reservations and legal protections/River of Grass and CERP + #10 public involvement	4
4	H	25	Water storage	
1	H	26	Optimal flows and hydroperiods/ecological restoration -- part of 1	
3	H	27	Flow ways south of Lake O	
	H	28	Caloosahatchee water storage	
2	G	29	Results after 3-year West Coast Study 1. fertilizer ordinance 2. package plants abandonment regulations 3. central sewer reuse 4. septic tank maintenance 5. enhance stormwater management	
4		30	Small tooth saw fish/manatee	

LEGEND:

ED=Education (4, 9, 10)

H=Hydrology (1, 5, 11, 13, 19, 20, 24, 25, 26)

G=Governance (2, 3, 7, 9, 17, 24)

Habitat (6, 12, 18, 26)

WQ=Water Quality (14, 21,22, 23)

E=Economic (8, 15, 16)