

Lake Okeechobee Interagency Task Force Meeting Proceedings

The following individuals attended the Lake Okeechobee Interagency Task Force meeting on Wednesday, 05 October 2011 at the USACE South Florida Operations Office in Clewiston, FL.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)

Angie Huebner
Bill Zattau
Jeremy Crossland
Jeremy Preston
Jon Morton
Linda Nelson
Nichoel Church
Rachel Nuetzel

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC)

Jackie Smith

South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD)

Mike Bodle

Additional Attendees

James Boggs (Helena)	Art Hodges (Friends of Lake Okeechobee)
Keith Mangus (AAM, Inc)	Bill Hemphill (Fisherman)
Kurt Ramsey (AAM, Inc)	Larry Patterson (Fisherman)
Paul Gray (Audubon Society)	John Welch (Public Member)

Public Comment Period

John Welch started the meeting by asking a series of questions about the vegetation management contracts that USACE and FWC have on Lake Okeechobee. He also asked questions pertaining to wind restrictions, treatments during fish tournaments, disciplinary consequences to keep the contractor in check. Jon Morton and Jeremy Crossland answered his questions as they arose. John Welch also mentioned that he tried to access the spray schedule on the USACE Jacksonville District website but had difficulty. He mentioned that he had also accessed the www.floridainvasives.org/Okeechobee website and thought the spray schedules were easier to find. However, he would like to see more information on the Florida Invasives/Okeechobee website. Then John Welch directed a few questions to Jackie Smith about FWC's restoration efforts on the lake. Jackie answered the questions as they were asked. Jackie Smith and Mike Bodle explained how SFWMD uses FWC dollars to treat invasive plants on the lake. Art Hodges asked who members of the public should contact if they have questions, comments, or concerns. Jon Morton stated that USACE biologists in Clewiston, Jeremy Preston and Nichoel Church, should be contacted and contact information is provided on bi-weekly treatment notices distributed around the lake. Jeremy Preston said that if other interagency personnel needed to be contacted the biologists in Clewiston could relay the message. This will serve the public better than putting individual phone numbers on treatment notice signs. Bill Hemphill asked questions about the lack of treatment on the Industrial Canal

Lake Okeechobee Interagency Task Force Meeting Proceedings

upstream from the USACE office in Clewiston. The entire group recognized this issue but explained that there is not an easy answer. Art Hodges explained that he would like to see the Caloosahatchee River monitored more closely for treatment of target vegetation. Larry Patterson asked who performed the mechanical harvester work during 2009. Jon Morton explained that USACE has a mechanical harvester contract and when funding and harvester availability permits, USACE will use them to remove large amounts of target plants in one area.

AAM Status Report

Kurt Ramsey reported 448.5 acres of target plants treated since the last interagency meeting on 07 September 2011. The treatments took place in Fisheating Bay, Harney Pond, Clewiston, Eagle Bay Island, Taylor Creek, Caloosahatchee River, and Lake Hicpochee.

Aerial Survey Report of Floating Vegetation on Lake Okeechobee

Flight on 28 September 2011

During the flight participants observed 985 acres of target plants. The average coverage for all zones observed during the 30 August flight was 838 acres.

<i>Area of Lake</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>SFWMD</i>	<i>FWC</i>	<i>AAM</i>	<i>USACE</i>
1. Torrey & Kreamer	10.00	1%	15	5	10	10
2. Ritta	10.00	1%	15	5	10	15
3. East Wall - Coot Bay	65.00	7%	120	40	35	15
4. West Wall - Whidden	30.00	3%	30	40	20	20
5. Fisheating Bay	46.67	5%	50	40	50	20
6. Harney - Indian Prairie	33.33	3%	70	10	20	10
7. Indian P. - Kissimmee	15.00	2%	30	5	10	5
8. King's Bar	31.67	3%	60	10	25	20
9. Kissimmee - Taylor Cr.	650.00	66%	450	700	800	350
10. Taylor Cr. - Chancey	93.33	9%	150	100	30	60
TOTALS	985.00	100%	990	955	1010	525

SFWMD: Mike Bodle, FWC: Brent Bachelder, AAM: Kurt Ramsey, USACE: Nichoel Church

Lake Okeechobee Interagency Task Force Meeting Proceedings

USACE

Current water levels of Lake Okeechobee were discussed. Current lake level is 11.11ft. Jeremy Preston explained that AAM applicators are currently working in Taylor Creek, the Caloosahatchee River, Lake Hicpochee, Torry/Kreamer Islands, and Eagle Bay Island. Jon Morton gave USACE budget update. He stated that USACE will not need the state to pay for aquatic operations during the month of September. Jackie Smith and Bill Caton are aware.

FWC

Prior to the meeting Don Fox provided an email of FWCs current and future treatment efforts. Treatments include Luziola subintegra, Nymphoides cristata, water lettuce, water hyacinth. Aerial treatments of Phragmites.

SFWMD

Mike Bodle stated that many treatment notice posts around the lake need to be replaced.

Other/ Old business

***Next Interagency **Flight** has not been scheduled as of yet.

***Next Interagency **Meeting** is scheduled for **09 November** 2011, at the SFWMD Okeechobee Service Center in Okeechobee, FL.