

# **Lake Okeechobee Interagency Task Force Meeting Proceedings**

The following individuals attended the Lake Okeechobee Interagency Task Force meeting on Wednesday, 14 December 2011 at the USACE South Florida Operations Office in Clewiston, FL.

## **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)**

Angie Huebner	Jessica Spencer
Bill Zattau	Jon Morton
Jeremy Crossland	Nichoel Church
Jeremy Preston	Rachel Nuetzel

## **Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC)**

Brent Bachelder  
Corey Lee  
Don Fox  
Jackie Smith

## **South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD)**

Mike Bodle

## **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)**

Sandra Sneckenberger

## **Additional Attendees**

James Boggs (Helena)	Jeff Allen (Lake Okeechobee Habitat Alliance)
Kurt Ramsey (AAM, Inc)	Cannon Eley (Lake Okeechobee Habitat Alliance)
Paul Gray (Audubon Society)	

## **Public Comment Period**

Jeff Allen, with Lake Okeechobee Habitat Alliance (LOHA), explained his concerns, as a duck hunter and fisherman, about the treatments that occurred around McTough Canal the week prior. Nichoel Church and Kurt Ramsey explained that the USACE's contractor only targets water lettuce and water hyacinth in that area. Jeff Allen asked if USACE would be willing to put the spray schedule on LOHA website or Ducks Unlimited website. Jeremy Crossland responded that USACE puts spray schedule information on the Jacksonville District website, and the [www.floridainvasives.org](http://www.floridainvasives.org) website, as well as posting treatment notices around Lake Okeechobee. Jon Morton spoke about why the interagency group treats invasive floating plants. Cannon Eley mentioned his involvement with LOHA and his activities on the west side of Lake Okeechobee as a citizen of Lakeport.

## **AAM Status Report**

Kurt Ramsey reported that 750 acres of target plants were treated since the last interagency meeting on 09 November 2011. The treatments were conducted around the lake from Torry/Kreamer Islands to Eagle Bay Island.

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## Aerial Survey Report of Floating Vegetation

Flight on 30 November 2011

During the flight participants estimated that an average of 1165.25 acres of target plants were present on Lake Okeechobee. The 03 November flight estimated an average of 1478.75 acres.

<i>Area of Lake</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>FWC</i>	<i>SFWMD</i>	<i>AAM</i>	<i>USACE</i>
1. Torrey & Kreamer	93.75	8%	90	70	155	60
2. Ritta	171.25	15%	125	40	450	70
3. East Wall - Coot Bay	41.25	4%	50	60	25	30
4. West Wall - Whidden	92.50	8%	75	90	155	50
5. Fisheating Bay	90.00	8%	150	60	100	50
6. Harney - Indian Prairie	55.25	5%	50	70	61	40
7. Indian P. - Kissimmee	17.50	2%	20	15	10	25
8. King's Bar	52.50	5%	80	50	50	30
9. Kissimmee - Taylor Cr.	480.00	41%	500	540	400	480
10. Taylor Cr. - Chancey	71.25	6%	100	90	35	60
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1165.25</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1240</b>	<b>1085</b>	<b>1441</b>	<b>895</b>

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

### USACE

The current lake level is 13.78ft. Nichoel Church mentioned that there were 10 applicators working in the Eagle Bay Island area. Jeremy Crossland explained the federal budget is working within a continuing resolution authority (CRA) which might require the state to pick up work for the month of February 2012. Jackie Smith responded that she will check with Jeff Schardt to see if the state has money to give. The USACE is scheduled to receive funds during mid-January, which would allow business to continue as usual. The USACE and FWC would like to have a contingency in place if that schedule slips.

### FWC

Brent Bachelder listed the current FWC treatment areas of water lettuce and water hyacinth. Dime size water lettuce seedlings are sprouting up inside the marsh. He also

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mentioned he heard that a few Snail Kites in Everglades National Park have started nesting.

### **SFWMD**

Mike Bodle spoke about the spread of *Luziola subintegra* around Lake Okeechobee. He discussed using Fluridone to control *Luziola subintegra*. The herbicide is an effective herbicide in controlling the Florida native, *Luziola fluitans*; he received the information from Dr. Mike Netherland. Paul Gray said that he is concerned about using Fluridone around Snail Kite nesting and foraging sites. Don Fox concurred and said that the herbicide will also treat hydrilla. Mike Bodle is aware and will try to set up a test site to try Fluridone in the Moonshine Bay marsh on Lake Okeechobee. Jeremy Crossland and Jon Morton agreed with Mike Bodle that small trials on Lake Okeechobee would be a good idea.

\*\*\*Next Interagency **Flight** is scheduled for **12 January** 2012 at 0830, Pahokee Air Field.

\*\*\*Next Interagency **Meeting** is scheduled for **18 January** 2012, at the SFWMD Okeechobee Service Center in Okeechobee, FL.