



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF Environmental Protection

Marjory Stoneman Douglas Building
3900 Commonwealth Boulevard
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Ron DeSantis
Governor

Jeanette Nuñez
Lt. Governor

Noah Valenstein
Secretary

Blue-Green Algae Task Force Meeting Staff Minutes

July 1, 2019
9:00 AM

Lee County School Board, Fort Myers, FL

General subject matter considered: The Blue-Green Algae Task Force met to discuss Basin Management Action Plans (BMAPs) and Agricultural Best Management Practices (BMPs).

Attendee Name	Title	Status
Dr. Thomas Frazer	Facilitator	Present
Dr. Evelyn Gaiser	Member	Present via Phone
Dr. Wendy Graham	Member	Present
Dr. Michael Parsons	Member	Present
Dr. Valerie Paul	Member	Present
Dr. James Sullivan	Member	Present

1. Jon Iglehart, Director of Department of Environmental Protection's South District Office, gave opening remarks and emphasized the value of public input and the importance of protecting Florida's environment.
2. Chief Science Officer Dr. Tom Frazer facilitated the meeting.
3. Tom Frick, Director of the Division of Environmental Assessment and Restoration at DEP, gave an overview of how the Lake Okeechobee project benefits are accounted for; what the difference is between the statuses of completed, underway, and planned; and how some of the funding for projects works.
4. Task Force members discussed how to prioritize projects, particularly North of Lake Okeechobee, including:
 - a. Looking at projects that reduce both phosphorus and nitrogen loading to the lake;
 - b. Looking at projects that target ammonium; and
 - c. Consider not requiring local government match dollars for bigger projects.

Meeting minutes are not intended to act as a transcript of the meeting. To watch a recording of the meeting, or to see the recommendations of the Blue-Green Algae Task Force, please visit ProtectingFloridaTogether.gov/state-action/blue-green-algae-task-force.

5. Task Force questions and comments focused on nitrogen loading to the lake, including a discussion on the following: collecting more taxonomy data of the algae itself; completing sediment monitoring; completing or adapting monitoring plans both before and after blooms to get a better picture of the drivers of the blooms; and legacy loads, including the importance of addressing nutrient loads trapped in the sediments that slowly release into the water column of Lake Okeechobee.
6. Task Force questions and comments additionally focused on agricultural BMPs North of Lake Okeechobee, including how best to monitor BMP effectiveness due to increased legacy loads that exist in the watershed; what kind of data are available to evaluate the effectiveness of BMPs; how and where to monitor to best evaluate; how BMP effectiveness gets translated into the water quality modeling; and the need for more granular monitoring data.
7. Chris Pettit, Director of the Office of Agricultural Water Policy at FDACS, gave an overview of how BMP manuals are adopted and how BMPs are designed for enrollees. Vanessa Bessey, Environmental Administrator at the FDACS Okeechobee Office gave an overview of the BMP verification process.
8. On biosolids, Dr. Paul commented that the draft biosolids rule seemed to be phosphorus focused and not focused enough on both nitrogen and phosphorus. Tom Frick discussed how DEP took both nitrogen and phosphorus into consideration when writing the draft rule, and while nitrogen may not be explicitly addressed, there are increased monitoring requirements across the board in the draft rule.
9. On Innovative Technology, the Task Force discussed what kind of criteria could be used screen the responses to the Request for Information (RFI), given that DEP is looking for technologies that provide near-term ecological and human health relief. Task Force questions and comments included minimization of potential impacts to the environment; technology that is mobile and scalable; side-stream vs in-stream treatment; the effectiveness of technology, including monitoring plans and independent evaluation; the need to decide how experimental of a technology you are willing to accept (e.g., technology that is proven and ready-to-go versus a technology that is more of a pilot technology); and the cost per unit removal and timeframe.
10. The RFI process was clarified to the Task Force, as well as the Task Force's role in the process.
11. On the timeline for updating the Lake Okeechobee BMAP, the Task Force had questions and comments focused on the types of projects that should be considered for inclusion. The discussion included the need for monitoring plans for Agricultural BMPs North of the lake; and the need to explore ways to generate the necessary data to evaluate BMPs.
12. Public comments were taken. Topics included:
 - a. Need for water storage;
 - b. Establishing water quality criteria for cyanotoxins;

- c. Specific allocations to non-points sources in BMAPs;
 - d. Looking at the sediment differences North of the lake;
 - e. Need for regional projects North of the Lake;
 - f. Concern that projects are not pro-active enough;
 - g. How the permitting program can be translated to North of the lake;
 - h. Updating the statewide stormwater standards & the presumption of compliance;
 - i. Use of biofuels to dispose of algae collected;
 - j. Concern over septic tanks;
 - k. Sediment transport or removal as source of nutrients;
 - l. Challenges of implementing Agricultural BMPs North of the lake versus South of the lake;
 - m. Lake Worth Lagoon should be looked at as an estuary;
 - n. DOH signage regarding cyanotoxins is insufficient;
 - o. Need for both reactive and proactive projects to address nutrient sources;
 - p. Biomass removal in Lake Okeechobee to remove nutrients;
 - q. Use of fertilizers & phosphate mining;
13. Dr. Frazer thanked everyone for the comments and re-iterated the importance of public input and engagement.