

Everglades Coalition 2018 Conference held in Stuart Florida, Report from my notes

Friday Breakfast: Speakers from Florida Oceanographic Coastal Center spoke about work of FOS— Creating oyster bags to deploy in the St Lucie River to encourage new oyster growth; and seagrass propagation to populate the flats near the St Lucie estuary when clean water returns. Living shorelines will be encouraged by collecting fragments of Johnson's seagrass found in the wrack line, grow them in tanks, to be replanted in Lagoon as mats. (These mats become a seed source, 16 to 60 replanted in 3 month period.)

Friday PLENARY I:

Cara Capp NPCA gave a excellent history of the southern end of Everglades issues. C111; the Central Everglades Program has 3 components ready to go, but not till 2021; In 2018 there are 10 components costing \$100 million (Tamiami Trail raising 2.6 mile section, + next 1 mile section; C111 contract 8, 8a, and 9 need to get going; "Mod Waters" need to implement more flow (unsubstantiated claims of flooding.)

Captain Steve Friedman, career fishing guide in southern Florida,, "professional watcher." his workplace is on the water. Right now Florida Bay is suffering from high salinity. Need for fresh water flow from the mainland, no seagrass, on the precipice of disaster.

Ron Bergeron, former FWCC commissioner and long time resident grew up in south Fl before levees and pumps, recommends internal dewatering for 8.5 sq mile area as well as removing the old Tamiami Trail, raze L 29.

Brandon Tucker, Gov Bd SFWMD, Agreed that water flow to Florida Bay essential, variety of projects (as mentioned by others) to get that to happen. COP- Combine O? Plan?

Lt General Todd Semonite, Army Corps, Six commitments: Continue science-based IDS (Integrated Delivery Schedule); southern flow of water; progress on CEP—conveyance 2019, continue to push 2020; the S333; the southern reservoir (technical assistance); continue Kissimmee river restoration, C 44, and Herbert Hoover dike. (North of the lake and west of the lake...). Urged us to Keep the Passion, Keep the Dialogue, Be aggressive/ moral. This is BEST FORUM. Across the world 34 billion in projects, Everglades is the MOST TECHNICAL. Colonel Jason Kirk and Shannon Estenoz helped answer questions. Betty Osceola mentioned the need for western Everglades natural flow.

PLENARY II: Hurricane Recovery (post Irma) (Friday morning)

Monroe Cty Commissioner George Neugent Notes on resiliency from experience— use metal roofing and Hardiboard for siding; Ocean Reef to Big Pine Key ground zero for 130 mph winds (Little Torch key) Cat 5 threat, largest evacuation, as moved through Everglades it reduced to Cat 2/1 quickly. Mangroves and buttonwoods, as buffers, will regrow; FIU monitored mangroves regrowth after Andrew. Responses of animals and plants. Need to develop strategies to meet extreme storms: Resistance, Thermal Refuge; Resilience- help in bounce back; Transformation- make it functional, connectivity

PLENARY III (Friday afternoon)

Discussion with local neighbors: Miccosukee (Michael Frank), Seminoles (Kent Loftus, hydrologist, for Cherise Maples) Belle Glade community member (Steve Messam), Glades Cty administrator (Paul Carlisle). Raised questions of concern such as can communities be compensated for essential services they must administer with fewer/lost dollars; practice of burning sugar fields after harvesting that brings unhealthy fallout to the community, use that "bagasse" for other products that could bring jobs to the community; State has rolled back pollution standards for fresh waters, locals still rely on local fish for food; should EPA be sued for sovereign rights? The "Yellow Book" (CERP) listed 10 critical restorations including Big Cypress which has not had any movement since 2002.; the Reservoir— is it too near the Brighton reservation? (Is this the northern reservoir?) The Kissimmee river is a dynamic floodplain.

FRIDAY (afternoon) Breakout attended:

Lake Okeechobee: Connecting the Northern and Southern Everglades included Paul Gray, Audubon of Florida; Lt Col Jennifer Reynolds, ACE; Brandon Tucker SFWMD Gov Bd; Ramon Iglesias, Marina manager; moderator Manley Fuller, FIWF. Paul showed maps of location of Submerged Aquatic Plants (SAV) 70 sq miles, essential for cleaning water and bass fishing. the Emergent Vegetation zone (EAV) an interim marsh, water level should not go over 16 ft or will loose. (this day in January water/Lake level was 15.4); Lt Reynolds discussed many components being considered for Lake area north/west, reservoir, Paradise wetlands restoration, and ASR wells, fewer wells will be considered. Hearing concerns of neighbors; Brandon Tucker discussed BMPs,(keep cows out of ditches) also water farming / dispersed water. Private landowner (Caulkins) prepared space on property to hold water. I asked Q re what were they paid? And for how long? Could not get a clear answer (will email to remind still want to know.) also Deep Well Injection.

Legacy phosphorus 400+ in soil. Can manage the lake for curreant rainfall.
Will state take over the project?

SATURDAY BREAKFAST: Senator/Governor Bob Graham speaker

Discussed Deep Injection Wells: may be quickest, and cheapest at first look, but runs counter to goal of getting more water south— Restoring the natural system. Florida now has the best science available (earlier days they were all in California) now a “deep bench.”

Must continue with our respectful partnership with the Federal government.

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT: (only 3 today!)

1. A new Governor will be appointing members to SFWMD in Jan 2019. Start collecting names!
2. Business community must become greater supporters of Everglades Restoration. (Publix, Newspapers. EvCo should organize a TASK FORCE to get Biz community involved)
3. Plea against parochialism join together because their strategy is to divide and conquer. Be sensitive to needs. NB Appalachicola River issue to Supreme Court. Is GA taking too much water?

PLENARY IV: (Saturday morning)

The EAA Reservoir — SB 10 Mark Perry moderated discussion among Fl Senator Joe Negron, Drew Bartlett FL DEP, Erik Eikenberg, Everglades Foundation. New IDS for 2016 *need to look up. Also what is the latest Progress Report of the WMD concepts being sent to legislature. Senator Negron/ SB 10 allows for buying/ looking at more land. Reservoir as sent up may be too high and cramped. Need lower, wider, espec to create STAs. One of the choices sent up was using the Restoration Strategies FEB. Most wonder why would we chose to destroy something that is just getting going. Everglades Foundation hydrologists urged WMD to look at their dynamic model. Look at additional lands, consider swapping. Entities that do not want the reservoir are working in Tally & DC. This project will need to meet Federal requirements. Eve Samples asked insightful Q “Will the reservoir be more effective if larger?” Answer was YES! Needs to be built in parallel with CEP (negates bureaucratic timeline)

Saturday Morning Breakout: A. *South Florida Water Quality: What's in our water.* Moderator Rae Ann Wessel, SCCF Panelists: Dr Larry Brand, Marissa Carrozzo, Betty Osceola, Steven Davis. Each panelist had 10 minutes to start: Betty O explained that her generation were translating for their elders; note that Miccosukee live off the land/ water. DON'T TRASH our Water. Tribe has sued over 20 times to protect water. Since 1997 the ?yellow? Book was amended to include Water Quality at 10 ppb phosphorus. Larry Brand focused on toxic algae- Red dinoflagellates poisoning shellfish. Cyno-blue/green algae runs off into Fl Bay. Most not evaluated. May be implicated in liver cancer, BMAA causation for Alzheimer/ Parkinson/ALS 10-20 years later. We have lost nutrient sinks due to ecosystems disturbed, wetlands disturbed, loss of seagrass. Make BMPs more stringent requirements.

Steve Davis spoke of non-traditional sources of nutrients. When soils are not sufficiently hydrated they will erode carrying nutrients downstream. Keep eyes on natural systems; Western Everglades. Ask are BMPs meeting restoration goals, need sampling data —pollutant loads and reductions.

Saturday Afternoon Breakout: *Conservation Funding for the Future, Moderated by Julie Wraithmell, panelists Bill Miller, Everglades Headwaters Nat. W. Refuge, Alik Moncreif, FL Conserv Voters, Julie Morris Nat Wildlife Refuge Assn., Jim Strickland FL Conservation Group (rancher/farmer landowners)*. Discussed acres bought, showed maps of various purchased or easements gained, money spent. See maps on website of central Florida land conserved or not yet. [Link to maps](#) provided by National Wildlife Refuge Association

PLENARY V *Triple Threat: Florida Policy on Water, Growth, and Conservation Funding Moderated by Richard Grosso, panelists were David Guest, Thomas Hawkins, and Alik Moncrief*. Best to lead with these: **Economic Value in Conserved Land and Protecting Land is Protecting Water**

TH: The battleground is now in your city regarding growth. Pay attention to CRAs. Redevelopment is best in an already developed area as infrastructure already existing. Legislature has taken Florida Forever apart. Stand up and speak up. Seizing Democracy.

DG: WMD budget Cut drastically so that there is a decrease in recruiting scientists. Water policy changed with recent minimums flows, allowing additional permitting affecting FL aquifer. Now irrigating pastures! let pipelines in via Land Acquisition Trust Fund.

Notes not clear enough to attribute specific other points: Comp plans should be reasonable re accommodate at least 10 years; place to win/lose in county administration; increase impact fees; **BMAPs** look at a farm wide range to see how managed- no pollution discharges; **Make People Accountable**; Farmers want to do better; lost fertilizer is lost money; Algae, sludge - Change name to SLIME, fecal matter, manure. Compliance and Consistency mean different things.

Find Conference Brochure: Everglades for Everyone Building Connections for Progress on www.evergladescoalition.org