

LEON COUNTY COUNTYWIDE CITIZENS
WATER RESOURCES COMMITTEE

2008-2009 Annual Report

The By-Laws of the Leon County Water Resources Citizens Committee state that "It shall be the duty of the Water Resources Committee to consider the values provided to the public by the various lakes and related water resources of Leon County, including groundwater, and to recommend to the Board of County Commissioners policies, regulations, management activities and long-term funding strategies that protect or enhance these values. In assessing these values, the Committee also proposes to consider the various impacts to these resources from accelerated runoff, including flooding and surface and groundwater degradation. Last, to better accomplish these tasks the Committee proposes to consider an ecosystems approach wherever applicable.

The significant actions and other activities taken by the Committee in 2008-2009 are listed below by meeting dates.

2008

Date Action

- 1/07: The Committee reviewed several proposed amendments addressing aquifer protection and Wakulla Springs derived through the Comprehensive Plan Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR) process. The Committee also heard a presentation from a City/County planning consultant on Urban Fringe (UF) land use areas in the unincorporated area. The Committee provided comments to staff and the consultant related to these issues.
- 2/04: The Committee heard an unscheduled presentation by Commissioner Bill Proctor. The Commissioner, describing his attendance at a Wakulla County Board of County Commissioners' meeting, suggested that Leon County and Wakulla County should meet to create and implement within their respective comprehensive plans a consistent set of policies with a unified strategy to protect Wakulla Springs, including the passage of a Primary Springs Protection Zone (PSPZ) based on the Leon County Aquifer Vulnerability Assessment (LAVA) data. He asked the WRC for their support for this strategy.

The Commissioner also asked that the WRC:

- Continue to provide input and support for these proposed environmental protection policies within the Comprehensive Plan, and he solicited the Committee to provide increased input to the Board on these and related issues;
- Provide support for his ideas on enhancing the present Southern Strategy by adding environmental and health components. He also expressed concern about the water usage associated with the proposed plasma arc incinerator;

- Provide support for the provision of centralized sewer facilities within the proposed PSPZ, as well as increased development density in those areas where sewer would be available;
- Provide support for increased lake protection efforts on the south side of Leon County;
- Provide support for his efforts to have the federal government provide a natural resource protection designation (e.g., national monument or other) for the Floridan Aquifer, or at least that part of the aquifer that provides the flow for Wakulla Springs. He also asked for their support for his efforts to secure additional earmarked federal funding for additional aquifer protection measures, including the provision of sewer design and/or construction funds, as well as funds to help citizens who cannot afford mandated advanced/performance-based septic systems for their homes; and
- Provide support for studying the affordability of homes and septic systems in the south side of Leon County and within the PSPZ, as well as the effects of the continued regional drought on the local aquifer the issue, and the possibility of revisiting the Special Development Zone policies for this waterbody;

The Commissioner also expressed the following concerns:

- That the Southside DRI , by virtue of its being completed prior to the adoption of any policies associated with the proposed PSPZ, would be exempt from any new PSPZ policies;
- The fate of Lake Jackson, including the alleged impact of required stormwater management ponds on lake levels, and that the County may have gone too far in requiring these ponds;

Following this presentation and discussion, the Committee moved that a comprehensive policy statement be drafted for transmittal to the Board on this issues, and that the Committee pursue a workshop with the Board.

- 3/03: The Committee reviewed a summary of the facts and findings from a series of meetings held by the Committee on the role of LAVA and other information in addressing growth issues and their impacts on aquifer resources.
- 4/07: Staff presented the Cycle 2008-1 Proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendments to the Committee for selection of those warranting further review by the Committee. The Committee also reviewed a summary document written by the Committee entitled "Conclusions on Leon County Aquifer Vulnerability Assessment (LAVA) Impacts."
- 5/05: The Committee discussed and provided comments to staff on a proposed Leon County response to an application for commercial groundwater withdrawal facilities. The Committee also reviewed and provided comments to staff on a selection of Cycle 2008-1 Proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendments potentially affecting surface and/or subsurface water quality.

6/02: The Committee reviewed an amended version of proposed Cycle 2008-1 Proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendment PCT080117 and provided comments to staff. The Committee also heard a presentation by John Buss, Director of the City of Tallahassee's Stormwater Division, focused on the State of Florida's proposed changes to the statewide stormwater rules.

Staff presented a draft of the letter the Committee voted at its April 4, 2007 meeting to send to the Board concerning the Woodville Recharge Aquifer Protection Study. The Committee voted unanimously to send the letter to the Board.

7/06: No meeting was held in July.

8/03: No meeting was held in August.

9/08: The Committee reviewed comments submitted by Rich Bray regarding the groundwater protection comprehensive plan amendment recently transmitted by the City of Tallahassee and Leon County to the Florida Department of Community Affairs.

The Committee then heard a presentation by Paul Thorpe of the Northwest Florida Water Management District (NFWFMD). The presentation focused on the NFWFMD's Lake Jackson Surface Water Improvement and Management plan, including the status of recommendations proposed in the Plan. The Committee then heard presentations by Kris Barrios of NFWFMD and Hal Davis of the U.S. Geological Survey on recent changes in flow affecting Wakulla Springs.

10/06: The Committee heard a presentation from County Public Works staff on the 2008 Water Quality Report for Selected Lakes and Streams for Leon County.

The Committee heard a presentation by Angela Chelette of NFWFMD focused on the water management districts' statutory authority for and the process of permitting groundwater withdrawals in Florida.

Comments were provided to the Planning Commission and the Board based on the Committee's review of septic systems comments submitted previously by Mr. Richard Bray, which addressed recent groundwater protection Comprehensive Plan amendment policies.

11/02: No meeting was held in November.

12/01: Staff presented an update of the Evaluation and Appraisal Report (EAR)-required groundwater protection policy amendment of the Comprehensive Plan. This included a description of and schedule for the adoption and ordinance process, and a proposed Wakulla Springs workshop for February 25, 2009. The Committee then voted to send a letter to the Board of County Commissioners stating the following:

1. That they support the staff recommendation to exempt areas inside the USA from the requirements of the transfer of development units system,
2. Require that central sewer be available before units may be transferred to a receiving site
3. Eliminate the exemption process from the proposed policy
4. Utilize the updated Primary Springs Protection Zone Map, and
5. Recommending the prohibition of the construction of new golf courses in the Primary Springs Protection Zone, and to require that existing golf courses in the Primary

Springs Protection Zone be managed consistent with the practices detailed in the Golf Course Chapter of the Protecting Florida Springs Manual or other equivalent best management practices specific to golf courses in karst regions.

The Committee then discussed an effort by Pam Hall to draft a Committee statement to send to the Board asking them to consider requiring as standard practice a formal post-evaluation of County stormwater and other water quality capital improvement projects. Pam stated that she would bring an item for discussion back to the Committee after the holidays. No actions were taken by the Committee on this item.

The Committee then discussed goals and objectives for 2009. These included:

- Advising the County to design and implement a formal evaluation process for County stormwater and other water-related capital improvement projects using specific, measurable, biological and other indicators;
- Evaluation of County stormwater and other water quality capital improvement project planning and other related processes;
- Reviewing the status of existing County lake management plans;
- Review and comment upon proposed comprehensive plan amendments and related ordinance changes; and
- Continuing the review and evaluation of land development clustering options, including conservation subdivisions, and their impacts on water resources, and consideration of developing a comprehensive plan text amendment addressing clustering in subdivisions and its impact upon County water resources.

2009

Date Action

1/05: The Committee discussed a draft Committee statement to send to the Board asking them to consider requiring as standard practice a formal post-evaluation of County stormwater and other water quality capital improvement projects. The Committee also discussed its goals and objectives for 2009.

2/02: The Committee reviewed a draft of the project evaluation recommendations proposed earlier. The Committee voted to transmit a copy to the Leon County Board of County Commissioners.

The Committee chose several Cycle 2009-2 Proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendments for further review in March. The Committee then heard a presentation on Low Impact Development.

3/02: The Committee reviewed Cycle 2009-2 Proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendments PCM090202, PCM090206, PCM090207, PCT090211, PCT090212, PCT090114, PCT090215, PCT090217, PCT090221, and PCT090222. The Committee voted to send a letter of recommendations concerning these proposed amendments to the Board.

- 4/06: The Committee heard an update on the proposed Septic Tank Regulations Ordinance from the Florida Department of Health, Leon County Health Department, Division of Environmental Health. Pam Hall volunteered to represent the Committee on a proposed citizens advisory committee to provide input on this issue.

The Committee heard a staff presentation from the Leon County Department of Growth and Environmental Management on a proposed landscape/natural area set-aside transfer program. The Committee discussed the proposed ordinance, and stated their support for it.

- 5/05: The Committee heard from the Florida Department of Health, Leon County Health Department, Division of Environmental Health staff concerning the status of the upcoming May 12, 2009 workshop on the proposed septic tank ordinance. Pam Hall was designated to represent the Committee in a proposed County advisory committee.

Leon County Department of Growth and Environmental Management staff presented proposed Environmental Management Act draft code changes. The Committee provided comments in response. Leon County Department of Public Works staff also presented the online County Water Atlas.

- 6/01: No meeting was held in June.

- 7/06: No meeting was held in July.

- 8/03: No meeting was held in August.

- 9/08: The Committee heard a presentation from the Leon County Public Works Department concerning the County's Water Quality Report For Selected Lakes and Streams (July 2009). The Committee then voted unanimously to send a letter of support for the County's water quality monitoring program to the Board of County Commissioners.

Staff presented three Cycle 2010-1 proposed amendments for the Committee to select for further review in October.

The Committee discussed the evaluation objective and criteria letter previously sent to the Board. Following this discussion, the Committee agreed to ask its Chair to speak to the Board during a regular meeting to ask for this issue to be elevated for Board discussion.

- 10/05: The Chairman of the County's Science Advisory Committee (SAC), Dr. William Landing, and another SAC member, Dr. Sean McGlynn, addressed the Committee concerning a workshop previously held by SAC and others in the community on the management needs of Lake Munson.

Planning staff presented Proposed Comprehensive Plan Amendment PCT100103 (a text amendment change to the Sanitary Sewer Sub-Element of the Utilities Element to more broadly define performance based treatment system standards to allow for implementing regulations that permit the use of systems from more than one manufacturer). The Committee then voted to send a letter to the Board recommending approval of the staff recommendation to adopt the proposed amendment.

- 11/02: Planning staff presented a status update on the Chason Woods development proposal, located in the southern portion of Leon County.

The Committee considered the clustering rules in the conservation subdivision development option available to landowners and developers in the Urban Fringe land use category. The Committee voted to schedule a presentation on this issue, including the history of cluster subdivisions, in early 2010.

12:07: No meeting was held in December.