

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

The following personnel attended the Lake Okeechobee Interagency Task Force meeting on Wednesday, January 21, 2004 at the South Florida Operations Office in Clewiston, Florida.

### U.S. Army Corps of Engineers South Florida Operations Office (COE)

Ryan Peck  
Angie Huebner  
Richard Bailey  
Jeremy Crossland  
Jon Lane – Jacksonville District Office

### Applied Aquatic Management, Incorporated (AAM)

Roger Beard (AAM on-site supervisor)

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

Don Fox  
Beth Egbert

### Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)

Jaqueline Smith

## **1. Public Comment Period**

There were no members of the public present at the meeting.

## **2. Status Report of Spray Program**

Roger Beard (AAM on-site supervisor) reported spray crews have treated approximately 1274 acres of water hyacinth and water lettuce since the last interagency meeting. The majority of the work was completed in the following areas: Eagle Bay Island, Government Cut, King's Bar, Harney Pond Canal to Kissimmee River, S-133 to S-193, Buckhead Ridge Canal, Pearce Canal, West Wall, Fisheating Bay, Fisheating Creek, Spoil Islands, Ritta Island, Creamer & Torry Islands and the rim canal.

There will be no plant treatments from Monday 19 January to Friday 23 January 2004 due to the increased number of boats on the lake during the FLW Fishing Tournament.

## **3. Report of Aerial Survey of Floating Vegetation on Lake**

An aerial flight was conducted on Friday 09 January. The lake elevation on this date was 15.64 ft msl. The average estimate of treatable floating vegetation on

Lake Okeechobee was 459 acres. Areas of concern include Harney Pond Canal to the Kissimmee River and King's Bar (see attachment 1).

#### **4. Old Business**

There was no old business discussed at the meeting.

#### **5. Discussion Topics:**

##### **Mechanical Harvester Work - COE**

The harvester removed tussock material in the rim canal from the south and north side of C-5A cable, Monkey Box Run, Old Moore Haven Canal, and Harney Pond Canal in the months of November and December. The C-5A cable barrier was removed 16 January 2004.

##### **Terrestrial Exotic Plant Treatment Update - COE**

AAM has conducted a follow-up treatment of Brazilian pepper from C-5A to Moore Haven.

##### **Ritta and Kreamer Island Burn Plan Update – SFWMD and FWC**

The berm removal on Kreamer Island has been postponed due to some problems with portions of the plan.

The berm removal on Ritta Island will continue as planned. FWC plans to treat the vegetation in the internal ditches and burn the berm area when weather conditions permit.

##### **Website Update - COE**

FWC plans to update the fish data for the website. A new website is being developed and will encompass all business line functions performed by the COE at Lake Okeechobee.

#### **6. Open Forum:**

##### **Terrestrial Invasive Plant Program – DEP**

This program has been developed to better control terrestrial invasive exotic plants on public conservation lands throughout the state. The state has been divided into four regions with 11 working groups scattered within those regions. Each region has a certain amount of pre-approved contractors that bid on projects. Each working group has a liaison that works with state, county and city administrators in the identification of potential projects. Each project proposal is evaluated and will be funded based on the rating and amount of available funding. Proposed projects must be included in the Florida Natural Areas Mapping Inventory to qualify for the program.

**New GPS system Update - COE**

AAM inquired about a new GPS system that could be used in monitoring the locations where applicators are treating. COE is currently using a new system at Palatka and is trying to resolve technical problems with the system.

**West Indian Marsh Grass Update - DEP**

West Indian marsh grass continues to expand into Fisheating Bay from Fisheating Creek. There is an insect that feeds on the plant but it hasn't helped in decreasing the amount of plants.

**Moonshine Bay Cattail Treatment – FWC**

The residual funds from the Ritta Island berm removal project will be used to treat small monoculture cattail that are expanding into the spike-rush in Moonshine Bay.

**6. Next Meeting**

**The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 17 March 2004 at 10:00 a.m. at the South Florida Water Management District, Okeechobee Service Center in Okeechobee, Florida.**

**The public comment period will be from 10:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. Members of the public wishing to be placed on the agenda for the public comment period should contact Richard Bailey at 863-983-8101 ext. 243.**