

SAVE THE HOMOSASSA RIVER ALLIANCE MEETING
7:00 p.m. - 05/19/2019
Homosassa Civic Club

President Kapocsi welcomed guests and introduced special guests from SWFWMD - Dr. Gabe Herrick, Frank Gargano and Skye Notestein.

Treasurer's Report:

Beginning balance	\$9,107.23
Deposits	1,311.00
Checks/Withdrawals	917.93
Ending Balance	\$ 9,500.30

Minutes:

Minutes were read and approved.

NEW BUSINESS:

The HRA will be working with the Pew Institute to protect seagrasses. They will be filming a documentary about rivers and the grass flats. 400,000 acres of seagrass. Big push to protect. On 5/13, Captain Tooney will take Pew Institute personnel to begin that process. Also, an organization out of Miami will be making a PBS documentary about the springs. This is in the infancy stage. We will help with that also. Public News Service has picked up on our attempts to promote the health of the river like disposal of scallop shells. This has gone out to the general public on many radio stations through the US.

HRA has sent notes to the Chronicle asking them to bring information to their subscribers on how to protect seagrasses when scalloping.

An additional 5,000 rack cards have been donated by SWFWMD and they will be handing them out to people at the boat ramp, along with diver down flags.. Our thanks to Melissa at the SWFWMD office in Brooksville.

A scholarship will be awarded to a student at Lecanto High School – Madison Weaver. She will be attending USF St. Pete campus, majoring in Environmental Science. Phyllis Colvin and the scholarship/Education committee chose Madison based on her GPA, service/work towards protecting the environment.

Presentation began and Dr. Gabe Herrick addressed the audience with the following:

SWFWMD's job is to protect the environment. Environmental values such as water quality, fish population, shoreline vegetation, oyster beds, recreational uses, sediment in rivers, scenic and aesthetic attributes dictate their goals. Criteria is used to determine which area is most sensitive to reductions to protect these environmental values.

Why Minimum Flows and Level withdrawals? Water which is used for private and commercial wells, agriculture, municipalities all come from the aquifer,

which affects what comes out of our springs. Agencies such as SWFWMD work to see that water withdrawn for these purposes are not excessive enough to harm the Florida water systems. **MFL's** are: 1) a requirement made by the state to protect waterways, 2) Just one measure used to protect springs, 3) address the quantity of water coming out of a system, 4) used to plan for future water needs.

Rules in place now went into effect in 2013 and they are required for re-evaluation in 2019. A public workshop is scheduled for June 11, 5:00 p.m. at Lecanto campus of Central Florida Community College, Bldg. C4, to discuss new rules. **The Public is encouraged to attend. They are recommending an 8% reduction for Chassahowitzka and a 5% for Homosassa.**

Questions from audience:

1. How do you know how much water is used with wells, especially residential wells, which are not metered?
Ans. They feel they can fairly estimate what people are using.
2. How about salinity in the water due to withdrawal?
Ans. Many samples taken to try to determine salinity. Water near the park is the freshest (1 part per thousand) and increases as it gets closer to the gulf.
3. Where are these wells?
Ans. All throughout the county.
4. What communities benefit from withdrawal?
Ans. Mostly our own Citrus County. Does not benefit the Villages as many think. Nothing farther East than the Withlachochee River.
5. How do we protect this county so we don't look back with regret later?
Ans. We learn from the past. Lots of work being done to avoid significant harm. Water Management districts didn't exist until the 1960's. We are in a much better place now. **Elected officials need to hear your voices.**
6. Why do you use a 15% withdrawal as your model? Is the modeling being peer reviewed?
Ans. 19 peer panels review our recommendations to make sure we are making sound decisions. The percentage of withdrawal is different for different systems but never goes beyond 15%. This is the harm standard we use and if a system shows that it has been harmed by 15%, then this is where we draw the line for that particular system.

Note: Dr. Herrick said that sea level rise is the problem, not withdrawal. Less visitors and less water use would help. Email him at watermatter.org with comments. That website also gives info about meetings, upcoming events and reports.

Meeting adjourned at 8:45.

Amendment to Minutes: It was mentioned at the June meeting that the last question asked is incorrect or phrased incorrectly. It should have said "why do you use a 15% harm standard for your model?"

Respectfully submitted

Iris A. Rose