

Cone Ranch Environmental Advisory Panel
Recap of Meeting on July 20, 2009 at 9:00 – 11:00 AM
County Center

Environmental Advisory Panel Members

Heidi McCree, Chair
Rosanne Clementi, Vice Chair
Hugh Gramling
Vivienne Handy

Pamela Jo Hatley
Dr. Felix T. Haynes
Denise Layne

Technical Resource Group

Mark Adams*
Jack Berlin
Will Bissett
Steven Blaschka
Hank Ennis*
Susan Fernandez
Pete Fowler
Lucia Garsys
Paula Harvey

Ed Helvenston, Sr.
Mike Kelly
Renee Lee *
Mike Merrill
Richard Miller *
Jim Roberts
John Sheahen
Tim Simon
Bob Stetler

Edith Stewart
Eric Sutton
Paul Vanderploog
Andrew Zodrow*
Mark Barcelo

* Not in attendance
** Late Arrival

Heidi McCree, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 9:05 AM and introduced the County Administrator, Pat Bean, who gave greetings and made brief remarks about the task before the Environmental Advisory Panel. The Recap of the June 29th meeting was approved.

Scott Emery, Environment and Health Integration provided a history of Cone Ranch which included maps and charts detailing the early channelization of the two rivers on site dating to the early twenties. Blackwater Creek will probably make the list of impaired water bodies when the next list comes out. Plant City currently discharges to the Creek, but below the NPDES permitted level. Bob Stetler also contributed hydrology information to this report. Mark Barcelo, SWFWMD, provided hydrological charts that showed historic water quality data for the two rivers crossing the property.

Next, Susan Fernandez, Hillsborough County Managing Attorney, presented the legal aspects of the process for disposal of county property. She reviewed the relevant sections of Florida Statutes and then reminded the Panel that the legal requirements of the bond covenants took precedence over the statutes, 125.38 and 125.35 F.S. which she provided to the Panel.

Mike Merrill, Utilities and Commerce Administrator, reviewed the process that would be necessary to satisfy the bond covenants. In addition to the Cone Ranch property, other revenues which support the bond indebtedness include: monthly utility receipts; impact fees; accrued guaranteed revenue fees (reservation of capacity); interest on invested cash; reclaimed water revenues.

Rosanne Clementi moved and Hugh Gramling seconded a motion “To recommend to the BOCC that Cone Ranch be maintained as an asset of Water Resource Services and that ownership be retained by Hillsborough County.” There was discussion and Denise Layne moved to *Table the motion*, but since debate was already underway, the Chairman ruled that debate should continue. The motion failed 4-3; Layne, McCree, Haynes, and Hatley voted NO; Handy, Clementi, and Gramling voted YES. Discussion followed about how an appraisal might be conducted. Staff reported that it would be complex and would require at least two appraisals which would require 4-6 months at a cost of \$25,000-\$100,000.

The Panel discussed what their next steps should be and agreed to have presentations to include: The Florida Conservation Environmental Group (FCEG); Conservation Easements/Elements; Mitigation Banking; status of ELAPP consideration of a Cone Ranch purchase; Nature Conservancy/ possibilities.

Member schedules necessitated the Panel meeting schedule to be changed as follows: Meeting scheduled for Monday, August 10 cancelled and rescheduled for Friday, August 14 from 9:00-11:00 AM. Two members of the public spoke and the meeting was adjourned at 11:20 AM.