

Meeting Minutes  
**WATER QUALITY PROTECTION PROGRAM CANAL  
RESTORATION ADVISORY SUBCOMMITTEE**  
January 31, 2014

9:00 am – 12:35 pm  
Marathon Government Center, Board Meeting Room  
2798 Overseas Highway, Marathon, FL 33050

**Member and Advisory Attendees:** Gus Rios - FDEP; Susan Sprunt - Islamorada; Commissioner John DeNeale - Key Colony Beach; George Garrett - Marathon; Skip Haring - Layton; Charlie Causey – WQPP SC Member; Billy Causey – FKNMS NOAA.

**Members not in Attendance:** Mayor George Neugent – Monroe County; Alison Higgins – Key West; John Hunt – FWC (FWRI); Steven Blackburn – USEPA.

**Advisory:** Rhonda Haag – Monroe County, Nat Cassel – Monroe County, Wendy Blondin – AMEC, Annie McGreenery – FWC (FWRI) - meeting minutes.

**Guest Speakers:** Nancy Diersing – FKNMS NOAA.

**Permitting Team:** Ivan Fannin – USACOE; Bruce Franck – FDEP; Ben Shephard – FWC (on the phone); Rosalyn Ellington – SFWMD (on the phone); Brandon Howard – NOAA Fisheries (on the phone); Joanne Delaney – NOAA FKNMS (on the phone); Anita Bain – SFWMD (on the phone) and Barbara Conmy – SFWMD (on the phone).

**FIU Monitoring Program:** Henry Briceno – FIU.

1. **Introduction and Approval of the December 12, 2013 Meeting Minutes.** Gus Rios called the meeting to order at 9:00 am. **Skip Haring moved** that the Minutes from the December 12<sup>th</sup> meeting be approved and **Charlie Causey seconded**, all approved.

Gus Rios reviewed the agenda for this meeting and items that would be discussed. He introduced all the permitting team on the phone. Gus pointed out that during Public Comments item each person from the Public has 3 minutes to speak and encouraged the public to keep to the 3 minute time frame. Gus requested members of the public who wished to speak to sign the Public Comment form.

2. **Public Comments #:**

- **Marcey Reynolds** – home owner, has worked with DEP and the Army Corp. of Engineers. She had gotten a set of permits to have everyone put in bubblers and started to clean the canal up. The home owners wanted to put in an air curtain at the mouth of the canal to keep weeds from coming in however she was sued by the homeowners at the mouth of the canal. The County and the State of Florida were also sued. So that did not happen. She wanted to know if the Subcommittee would be going through the permit process to put in the wells and the pipes. **Gus Rios** clarified that the projects being discussed today are the demonstration projects only. However if their canal has a project that they want to proceed with the permitting process then they can contact the FDEP Marathon Office and Bruce Franck will assist them with the ERP permits. All canals restoration projects may need permits and the work of the Subcommittee will help facilitate the permitting process. **Marcey** mentioned that at one time they were going to install a culvert but someone shot

that down. **Gus** stressed that home owners are welcome to move through the permitting process and the Subcommittee will work with anyone ready to move forward.

- **Curtis Brown** – Whispering Pines home owners association. They received a letter from AMEC stating that they had been removed from the demonstration project because canal # 286 was scheduled to have pumping and no weed barriers or any other restrictions. As a homeowner on this canal he sees three problems: (1) water quality and polluted water, (2) weeds coming into the canal – which will not be eliminated, (3) easterly winds bring wrack on the water at the mouth of the canal. Because of these problems he felt that the pumping system would cost a lot of money and be very complicated. The restoration proposal stated that the pump would not eliminate the weeds. Curtis felt that since they would be spending a lot of money on a very complicated pumping system and would not be eliminated the weed problem some homeowners declined to participate. He asked the committee to consider canal # 286 with an alternate technology, one that would eliminate the weeds in the canal entirely as these other systems are being considered. **Wendy Blondin** pointed out that there are a lot of canals that need more than one technology. However the Demonstration Projects were selected to place multiple technologies into different canals so that they could look at the effectiveness of specific technologies.
- **Lee Oldak** – a Whispering Pines homeowner, stressed how thick and heavy the wrack is at the mouth of the canal. He mentioned that the big iguanas can literally walk across the canal. With a paddle board and canoe, when the wrack is so bad, they can't make it to the mouth of the canal.
- **Jerry Grant** – a Whispering Pines homeowner, she noted that there were many homeowners from Whispering Pines that were totally unaware of what was going on and encouraged the Subcommittee to serve better notification of any canal project. They all received the notification that their canal was no longer being considered as part of the Demonstration Project. The homeowners association is an inactive one. She requested that if additional funding becomes available to notify the entire neighborhood. She also felt that some technology is better than nothing.
- **Rhonda Haag** – discussed the Priority Schedules and pointed out that the Subcommittee has a tight schedule with these Demonstration Projects. The County Commission gave them 90 days to gain approval from the homeowners, otherwise the Subcommittee needs to move on to the next canal prioritized within that type of alternative technology. These are the demonstration projects that need to be tested to see how well they work because there are additional funds coming up and we will not know how these technologies work unless we get started.
- Rhonda reported that there are other sources of funding. There is the BP oil spill Restore Act, there has been a 6 million dollar application that was submitted on behalf of Monroe County for canal restoration. If selected that will be shared with the city municipalities and unincorporated Monroe County. This may allow the Subcommittee to review the canals under consideration and use some of these restore funds to implement a technology in those canals.
- Rhonda stated that Monroe County did a solicitation for the design of the demonstration project. AMEC did respond and they were selected.

### 3. Permit Application Requirement for the Canal Projects

- **Introduction of Interagency Permitting Team representatives**  
**Gus Rios** discussed the purpose of the Permitting Team assembled and how important it was to try to move forward with canals that are ready for permitting. The September 2013 FKNMS WQPP

Report to Congress, that Steve Blackburn will be bringing to the Steering Committee Meeting on 2/12, mentions that the Canal Water Quality Demonstration Projects are a high priority.

- **Overview of selected project and scope of work**

**Wendy Blondin** reviewed the history of the Subcommittee and how progress to the current status of selected demonstration project canals using alternative technologies. The Master Plan was completed 2013 which evaluated the water quality of all the Keys canals. The ongoing waste water and storm water improvement projects will not fully address the water quality problems related to poor tidal flushing and accumulation of organic debris in Keys canals. This is the driver of the Master Plan in the canal restorations. Once the Master Plan was completed Monroe County allocated \$ 5 million dollars towards the initiation and demonstration program for canal restorations. The process of selecting these canals was done by a very formal process reviewed technically via an engineering evaluation. The number one criterion was poor water quality. With 500 canals in the keys and selecting five there had to be an objective process. The canal selection is grouped by technology. The Subcommittee wanted to select one canal from each technology to try that alternative technology out. Those technologies were: (1) Weed Barriers (of multiple kinds), (2) Removal of Accumulated Organics, (3) Culverts, (4) Pumping Stations, and (5) Backfilling. All meetings have been noticed and open to the public in compliance with the Sunshine Law. Wendy and Rhonda Haag have attended many homeowner meetings. Wendy reviewed the various selected canals, and mentioned that canal # 286, due to objections may be dropped for the Pumping demonstration and another canal will be selected.

Wendy stressed that there is an EPA grant that was approved to monitor the effectiveness of the various technology restorations and the monitoring needs at least two years of post technology restoration implementation monitoring to really see the full effects of the different alternative technologies. The three year grant went into effect 9/2013 so implementation and monitoring is time sensitive.

Wendy presented to the permitting team the various technological designs proposed describing in more detail how each technology will be used by the selected canals. She also noted discussing, with the regulators, some possible backfill material being considered.

**Gus Rios** – reviewed the purpose of the permitting team to address permitting issues and determine how the entities can move forward with permitting of the various canal restoration technologies when they are ready. The Steering Committee sent a letter to the heads of the permitting agencies asking for designating people who were knowledgeable and could help us with the permitting process. We asked them to first identify all the permitting issues and then help the Subcommittee and entities submitting the permit applications to streamline the application review process to expedite the approval so the selected restoration projects can move forward in a timely manner.

- **State requirements – South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD), FDEP and FWC**

**Rosalyn Ellington (SFWMD)** – South Florida Water Management District is a State agency and there is an application form that can be obtained for an Environmental Resource permit. The forms are available on-line as well as submit these forms via paper. The South Florida Water Management District form is a joint form because it also allows you to submit to DEP and also the Army Corps of Engineers. DEP and South Florida has a cooperating agreement that designates which one of those State agencies that will actually review the permit. The Canal Restoration Demonstration Projects, for the most part, will be handled by SFWMD. South Florida will be looking primarily three things: (1) ownership of the submerged area of the canals – this is a primary

concern; (2) construction methodology – erosion and sedimentation impacts, how the construction will be completed, like barges will be used, how the sight is accessed; submerged aquatic resource impact, the coastal wetland impact, mangroves and impact to threatened or endangered species; (3) the location, operation and maintenance of the project. Who is going to be doing what and how it will improve the water quality. These are the typical concerns.

The restoration projects that have already been identified all look good to the SFWMD agency and they feel that this will be an improvement to the system. From an administrative standpoint, SFWMD is looking at a general permit for restoration and enhancement. These projects are typically designed to result in net improvements to water qualities and environmental resources. So that it is the same condition for fish and wildlife and listed species. If the restoration projects have minimal environmental impacts and result in net improvement of water quality and biological communities the ERP permits will not require mitigation.

The State of Florida Administrative Code provides general permit for restoration and enhancement and the fee is about \$250.00. Using a general permit will expedite the ERP application review process. The FDEP and SFWMD have time clocks for reviewing ERP applications and usually a very quick turnaround for general permits. Another option would be to use a conceptual permit which would cover all of the demonstration projects and then subsequent to conceptual they would complete a construction authorization that could be grouped by the government entity or the property owner where the project will be located.

The projects that would need to be permitted by Islamorada and Monroe County need to identify the land owner(s) where the project will be located. They would need to be co-applicants and subsequently sub co-permittees for projects that require operation and maintenance of the system. The permits can be modified after the initial permit is issued if the operating entities change at a later date.

The SFWMD also encourages pre-application meetings, with sufficient lead times; they will travel to the project sites, especially if there are sensitive resources involved. If the project needs to have any de-watering, example would be the culvert installations or organic removal which would require a de-watering permit concurrent with the ERP permit.

**Gus Rios** – mentioned that DEP will also be reviewing and supporting the permit process and Bruce Franck (FDEP) is available for the DEP permitting process. Bruce has a lot of experience with ERP permits and has been working with the Water District and the Army Corp. of Engineers applicants for a long time.

- **Federal requirements – US Army Corps of Engineers, USFWS, FKNMS and NOAA Fisheries**

**Ivan Fannin (USACOE)** - A permit or multiple permits will be required from the UA Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) to complete this work. Ivan discussed specific regulatory statutes and because the work is being completed in navigable waters in the United States then the Corps is involved. As mentioned it is a joint application which is sent into the State. The State takes Section A of that application and forwards it to the Corps. The Corps' purview is navigation impacts and resource impacts. We are not concerned with ownership. When the Corps receives the application, they may send out a public notice to all the owners affected by the project and soliciting any comments that are favorable or adverse. The Corps takes all those comments into consideration but just because one person objects it does not mean it is a deal breaker for the Corps.

Once the Corps gets an application, they will look at it and determine the most efficient way to process the application. The Corp is limited in the kinds of pools that are available right now. Regarding permits, the Corps has general permits, nationwide permits, or a standard permit. Each permit type has different degrees of review. However, the general permits (SPGP) and the Nationwide permits are not currently available for the Keys projects. We are a little limited right now and this may be a little bit more of a longer review from our side just because of other agencies that we have to initiate consultation with. Because we have the Endangered Species Act (ESA) that we have to take into consideration so we may have to consult with the National Marine Fisheries Service, the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, and Fish and Wildlife Service. The Corps may need to investigate further into the weed barrier technology.

**Gus Rios** added that the US Army Corps of Engineers and the Water Management District issue permits routinely for canal projects. The permitting process needs comply with applicable Federal, State and local laws, but we hope to work in the partnership with all the permitting agencies to streamline the review process for the canal restoration projects to expedite the water quality improvements in the canals. Improving water quality in these canals is a priority of the Water Quality committee and then creating this current Subcommittee. How important and critical the Canal Restoration projects proceed and restore water quality.

**Charlie Causey** – Is aware of the length of the lag time it takes for the permits to travel through its process and asked if there is a way to expedite this process. Refer to the Park System found a way to combine processes based on resource.

**Ivan Fannin** – He stressed that the Corps will do their best to expedite the permit review process. He said the policies change constantly and right now Corps permit application process is not as quick as it once was a couple of years ago. If we go the route of a standard permit: the Corp receives the application, they place it on public notice, and the Corp writes a separate letter to the National Marine Fisheries Service Protected Resource Division (NMFSPRD) to initiate a consultation because of the in-water work. Right now, any in-water work has to go through NMFSPRD for review of major species. The Corp writes a separate letter of which species are affected, which habitats are being affected, how they are affected, what is the extent. The Corp has to attach a check list that covers of the work performed, will it be a barge, and will the barge be there during the day, are there sea grasses, mangroves, everything that was mentioned early. Right now the turnaround time we are getting from NMFSPRD for consultation, takes 4 to 6 months. Currently the standard permit is required for the Keys projects. See weed barriers/ gates may have to go to the USFWS as a formal consultation.

**Ivan** – will try his best to move this process along as quickly as possible.

**Charlie Causey & Billy Causey** – recommended that getting everyone together in a joint meeting, putting everything on the table at one time to review all the facts in hope of expediting this process.

**Susan Sprunt** – mentioned that there could be steps that are already completed; example was notifying every one of the homeowners involved in the canal restoration project technology.

**Gus Rios** – stressed how, working as a team is more efficient and effective for moving forward with the Canal Restoration project. We want to go through this canal restoration project with a focus on showing that the projects will improve water quality and benefit biological communities, including endangered.

**Ivan** – Further defined a list of species that they are concerned with: Manatees, sea turtles, small tooth sawfish, and Acropora corals. It is almost like a flow chart the Corps follows along the process. The whole process is based on the scope of the work, location, and where it will be. So not only is the species considered but also the habitat. Will any work be completed in critical habitat areas? So if the applicant already has the green light from the various agencies that will be involved then that would definitely expedite the permitting process. He said in order to expedite the permitting process the applicant can contact the applicable agencies directly (i.e. NMFS, USFWS, FKNMS, etc.) and preemptively obtain the authorizations/ approvals to submit as part of the application package.

**George Garrett** – pointed out that if the applicant can front end load the application with additional critical information that would seem helpful in decreasing the application permit process.

**Brandon Howard** (NOAA Fisheries) – Brandon will probably do two types of reviews: (1) essential fish habitat review and (2) NMS protected resource review. He will be writing the concurrent letters. The essential fish habitat review process will mirror that State permitting requirements and also the Federal Corp engineers for permitting requirements. This requires avoidance, minimization, mitigation for impacts to the wetland resources (seagrass, coral, mangroves, etc.). The applicants may want to incorporate some mitigation component into the proposal. They will need to have in-water surveys of what is located there. Document the species of coral that are present and their diameters and length of the coral because they may require movement (relocation) or mitigation through the sanctuary processes. This process takes about 30 days if the applicant has a complete mitigation plan and has demonstrated the ordinances and minimization.

The 4-6 month process; the protected resources and endangered species view. Brandon gave the Subcommittee a “Biological Assessments and Biological Evaluations” document. This document needs to be reviewed and the various questions will need to be answered. He will be looking for the impacts of the environment based on the different technologies. A second part to Brandon’s document is “Guidance Preparing an Initiation Package for Endangered Species Consultation” the document provides a general guidance on the type of detail of information that should be provided to initiate consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and/or National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS).

Ivan will be the liaison to Brandon Howard and will pass the necessary documents to him. Brandon will review the project based on the information that has been submitted. Letter is then reviewed by a copy editor, then it is sent to the Section #7 Coordinator, then it continues to the Branch Chief, then to legal review in a small council, comments are returned then it is signed by the legal administrator.

**Gus Rios** recommended that any documentation that can be completed up front for these projects will not have adverse affects on the environment will help the time of the permitting process.

**George Garrett** pointed out that the Subcommittee would like to develop a standardized process. So other than changing a particular canal the whole process will be very similar.

**Brandon** expressed a couple more points for the Subcommittee. When discussing stream lining these projects, it would be a really good idea to identify how many different technologies that will be tested/using and batch them together into one consultation package so that you have, let’s say five culverts, batch them together so that we are only waiting 4 to 6 months for one type of technology. He felt by batching on a single technology together would save some time.

The site inspection and the pre-application meeting would be a great idea and he wants to be part of the meeting and is available. Also mitigation regarding sea grasses, perhaps completing backfills into some canals to encourage sea grasses would mitigate the destruction of sea grasses in other area.

**Joanne Delaney** (NOAA FKNMS) – covered the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary, their roll is all of Monroe County and their jurisdiction begins at the mean high water line. This does include going up into all residential canals. FKNMS will be participating in the permitting process. Joanne has been working very closely with Wendy Blondin at AMEC with the pre-assessment work and the pre-construction work for the Geiger Key culvert. Our biggest concern as echoed by the Water Management District and the Army Corp of Engineers is the submerged aquatic resource impact, mainly the sea grasses and corals. We are confident that those impacts will be documented by Wendy and her team or by the FIU folks during their pre-construction monitoring. Everyone does not anticipate a high level of resource quality given the current condition of these canals. If there are resources present then they will want to know how those impacts might be mediated.

Other concerns from FKNMS are the long term maintenance of these systems. Once they are in place there will be assurances that the technologies will be operated for the long term as well as assuring that whoever the permittee is will be someone who has the authority to be in compliance with the system over the long term.

**Ben Shephard** (FWC) – Marissa Krueger will be the member of the permitting team. Our group does land use planning and provides comments, recommendation and technical assistance with respect to comprehensive plans, ERP's, dredge and fill permits and the like. We also look at potential impacts to the habitats and or individuals as well as access to water ways and boating safety.

- **Local Government requirements – Monroe County and local municipalities**

**Michael Roberts** – locally we are looking at the impact of the shore line setbacks above the mean water line. Most of the in water work will probably not be covered under our regulations.

- **Any other agencies that should participate in this process?**

**Gus Rios** - There was a general discussion among the Subcommittee on items that should be addressed as soon as possible with the various agencies. As well a discussion was made to determine who the subset committee should be to help proceed through the permitting process/ some key players were potentially mentioned. The small group will be focused on fact finding to move the process along.

**George Garrett** presented a motion to designate a subset of Subcommittee members including designees to work with the applicants including; AMEC, Monroe County, Village of Islamorada.

**Susan Sprunt** seconded, **all approved**.

**Gus Rios** – one important item for the discussion is the operation and long term management, electricity and maintenance of the installed technology. Someone will need to be responsible for the maintenance. His understanding that the Village or the County will be responsible for the installation but at some point the homeowners will need to presumably take over the care and maintenance of the system. Susan Sprunt pointed out that it is part of the permitting process to designate who will be responsible for the maintenance.

#### 4. Permit Application Process

- Who will be the applicant(s)?
- Can we use a comprehensive permit application that will cover multiple projects?
- Group Discussion – Ways to streamline the permit application process

**Gus Rios** – question to Anita Bain, from a Water Management District perspective, who needs to be on that application? **Anita Bain** - if it is a county project then the County would be the applicant. They also need to know who will be handling the long term maintenance, the culverts and pumps, etc. If the county is not the owner they could become the eminent domain authority, not to say that the county would go down that path, but if this involves a homeowners association then they would ask that the County be involved in some way. As well as an agreement with that the homeowners are ok with the application moving forward. The permit license would be issued to the county and any other entity that you would be designated as a co-applicant.

**Nat Cassel** County Attorney – Nat realizes that these projects really want to move forward. But the problem is how we manage to do that in the most efficient way and getting as many people involved as possible, particularly home owners. Yes, it is the County's project but it is on other people's property.

An issue has been raised, can we do a blanket permit for all of the canals. Her preliminary feeling is that it could be problematic in several ways. She is only discussing the demonstration projects which are in their earliest stages. This is discussing what canals could be available to have those canals. AMEC has been researching the best possibility to gain some scientific information. In discussing for the demonstration project a large blanket permit for all of them. The County Attorney's office has some real concerns about that. The County Attorney's office is thinking that it may be better to lump some of the different technologies that are close together in engineering technology under a single permit, that way we would have two or three permits.

Some concerns are if you have a big blanket permit, and you have someone upset with that permit, so they file a lawsuit or something else stops the permit process, you might stop the entire project. The preference is to divide it up, talk about what they want, if they have problems we talk about it, but this allows other projects to proceed.

Who would be the applicant? If it is the counties project, I think the county can be an applicant, but the county needs a real buy in from the property homeowners. To be sure that the homeowners agree that this is what they want and they are involved in the process before the technology is placed in the canals. Let us drop eminent domain from our world. We are not interested in that method, this is not about pushing demonstration project through. This is about giving homeowners an opportunity to have a canal demonstration technique completed in the homeowner's canal.

There are certain technologies where the county will maintain this for a certain period of time and then the homeowners will take over the maintenance of this system. **Wendy Blondin** pointed out that the pumps and air curtains/weed gates will need long term maintenance. The back filling, debris removal and culverts will not need maintenance. The owners signatures on the application, it is the homeowners within the foot print of the actual construction.

**Nat** brought up the fact that even if the homeowner is not within the foot print of the technology the County still wants to discuss the affects with the other homeowners. **Wendy Blondin** realizes that the County wants to go above and beyond the permitting process but just wanted to clarify that with regard to the permitting process the homeowners within the foot print are required to be notified.

**Gus Rios** pointed out that you need the other homeowners on board if the technology will affect them in any way.

**Anita Bain** pointed out that if there is going to be a pump system that they would rather have a government entity operating that pump and not the homeowners. **Susan Sprunt** asked what Anita feeling is on aerators? **Anita** felt that because there are moving parts and things can break, Anita would rather see the County taking the maintenance responsibility. However, if there is an existing homeowners association who has actively participating in upkeep of an existing aeration system, then that would also work. This conversation will continue as to who needs to be responsible for the long term maintenance of various technologies.

**Gus Rios** brought up blanket permits. Based on the conversations heard today it might be easier to lump projects together. But Nate's point is well taken that if someone was not willing to proceed then that entity may delay everyone else who wants to move forward. This issue needs to be further discussed. **Nat** pointed out that the project could be divided up so that if someone is unhappy it does not slow all the projects down. People do not always think the same at the beginning of the project vs. the middle or the end of the project. Her initial response on bundling is that it may not work. **Gus** pointed out the permits can be modified, so if there is an issue then modify the permit so that the process continues. This issue is not resolved and requires further discussion.

**Gus and Wendy** will begin setting up pre-application meetings on the projects that are ready to move forward. On February 12<sup>th</sup>, the Water Quality Protection Program Committee, the group which created this Subcommittee, will be meeting. Wendy Blondin, Gus and other Subcommittee members will present where the Subcommittee is and some issues that still need to be resolved.

## 5. Update from the Village of Islamorada and Monroe County

**Wendy Blondin** – spoke to Anita about two projects that will be in the forefront on the pre-application meeting process (within two weeks), prior to the demonstration package. It is the way the funding issues and constraints have worked out. The projects are: (1) Geiger Key Culvert on Canal # 472 (money needs to be spent by June 30, 2014) and (2) the Village of Islamorada – Treasure Harbor Canal # 137 upgrade of the Aeration/weed gait.

**Susan Sprunt** – is obtaining survey's to make sure that have the correct depth for the air bubbler/weed gait. The attorneys are working out the details. They hope to work with Wendy and jointly work through the pre-application process. It is all moving forward and Wendy and her team of engineers have been a tremendous help.

**Wendy Blondin** had two county updates. AMEC has collected all the field data in December 2013, completed a topographical survey, completed a geotechnical boring (2), completed the evaluation of the subsurface of the culvert, site condition survey, compiled all the utility information, completed the benthic resource survey, completed the ecological evaluation, and the Disks deliverables have been given to Rhonda Haag and Gus Rios for the Geiger Key Culvert Canal # 472, which is task # 1.

AMEC also went out to the two organic removal projects, which she showed us pictures; completed nine cores in each one of those canals, there have gotten a lot more information regarding depth and organic content. A very discrete revised volume and a separate deliverable for task # 6 from the DEP funded grant. With all of this information they are ready to begin the pre-application process. Wendy will meet with Ivan and Brandon to review AMEC reports.

AMEC sent out homeowner letters to the demonstration canal programs. She apologized to the homeowners on #288, and felt that Curtis Brown had participated in all of the Subcommittee meetings and felt the homeowners were being kept abreast of the projects. The weed gate canal #288 has issues. Three homeowners do not want to pay for maintenance of a weed gate. The county would like to move down to the next ranked canal. Wendy asked the Subcommittee to skip canal #288, due to negative feedback and pass by canal #297 (no active homeowners) move to canal # 287.

**George Garrett made a motion** to allow AMEC to skip canal # 297 to proceed to canal # 287, **Skip Haring seconded**, all **approved** after discussion.

**Nat** feels that homeowner's participation is critical during the demonstration project. The homeowners should hold a vote and allow everyone to understand and speak about the demonstration project. **George Garrett** pointed out that every homeowner's association documents are different. Further discussion regarding what is or is not a homeowner's association; **Nat** recommended discussing the issues with a lawyer.

#### 6. Update from Dr. Henry Briceno (FIU), on the WQ Monitoring Program

**Dr. Henry Briceno (FIU)** presented the 3 year EPA & DEP funded monitoring program with the group. The Subcommittee discussed some of the presented types of analysis. **Gus Rios** and Henry Briceno are going to have a teleconference with EPA and FDEP to discuss what the analysis criteria should be. Gus invited Wendy Blondin and Rhonda Haag to also participate in the teleconference, Wendy and Rhonda accepted. **Charlie Causey** asked if it was possible to move some of the monitoring stations currently being used and move some of them over to the demonstration canals or perhaps provided additional funding to have additional nutrient monitoring stations. Additional review and discussions will continue on this topic and potentially reduce the frequency of the testing.

**Wendy Blondin** asked Nat what the process would be for Henry to place his monitoring PVC pipe on homeowners land in the selected canals. The pipes are placed in the canal for a 24-hour to 3 days period. **Nat** wants to go to each individual homeowner and explain what will be completed. Wendy will provide Nate the names of all the homeowners.

**Wendy Blondin** wants to make sure that Jim Fourqurean (FIU) and his group for the baseline will complete the benthic surveys needed for the permits. If he can't complete this work within a certain time frame then the county will have to pay for these surveys separately.

#### 7. Status Report to the WQPP Steering Committee

**Gus Rios** intends to go to the Steering Committee (2/14) and review the progress that the Subcommittee had made and present how it intends to move forward. He recommends Wendy Blondin attend along with anyone else from the Subcommittee is encouraged to attend. He and Wendy will work together to make an agenda for the committee. One of the major concerns with this permitting process is the time constraints; Gus is hoping to address this during his report to the Steering Committee.

8. Outreach Update: No comment.

9. Public Comment #2: No comment.

10. Next meeting date, place, and agenda topics:

Gus Rios discussed the topics for next meeting: updates to the Subcommittee.

Next meeting was scheduled for **Friday February 28, 2014** at the **Monroe County BOCC** meeting room from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 12:35 pm.