



HERNANDO COUNTY WATERWAYS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES – March 10, 2025



Date: Monday, March 10, 2025 Time: 6:00 P.M.

Location: Hernando County Lake House
1202 Kenlake Ave, Spring Hill, FL 34606

The meeting agenda and back-up material are available online at:
<https://www.hernandocounty.us/departments/departments-n-z/public-works/aquatic-services/waterways-advisory-committee/agendas-and-minutes>

CALL TO ORDER

Kathryn Birren called the meeting to order at 6:12 p.m.

Attendee Name	Title	Attendance
Kathryn Birren	Chairman	Yes
Maryann Johnson	Vice Chairman	Yes
Ron Zellmer	Member	Yes
Chris Licata	Member	No
Brian Woolfolk	Member	Yes
Rob Talmage	Parks and Recreation Administrator	Yes
Carla Burrmann	Department Manager, Aquatic Services and Waterways	Yes
Lt. Reak	Marine Patrol Deputies	Yes
	Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission	No

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL / MODIFICATION OF AGENDA (Limited to Staff and Committee Only)

- Motion to approve agenda by Maryann Johnson. Second by Ron Zellmer.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – January 13, 2025

- Motion to approve agenda by Ron Zellmer. Second by Maryann Johnson. Approved unanimously.

MARINE PATROL REPORT

- A fourth marine deputy has been added to assist with enforcement on HC Waterways.
- Enforcement of the SPZ is active. Deputies are issuing citations.

NEW BUSINESS

- Janie Hagberg (SWFWMD) gave a presentation on the Weeki Wachee River dredge project.
 - Introduction to SWFWMD
 - Purpose of Surface Water Improvement and Management (SWIM) section.
 - More information can be viewed at: see attached [Weeki Wachee SWIM Plan](#)
 - Dredge activities removed sedimentation in the river.
 - Project completed in February 2025

- Hand dredging utilized in historic river bottom
 1. 20 feet bottom width to -5 ft. MLW
 2. Avoided docks and seawalls.
- Dredge material pumped to Cofer Rd. site.
 1. Cells were built to treat and remove sediment from dredging material.
 2. Water was returned to river just downstream of Roger's Park and sediment was taken off-site.
- Water quality was monitored to meet turbidity requirements.
- Navigation was maintained.
- Manatee spotter was utilized constantly to ensure safety of this mammal.
- Spring vent was uncovered during dredge in upper area of work area.
- All debris uncovered was removed from the river.
- Main objective was to uncover the natural bottom habitat covered by the sand/sediment.
 1. Snags and relic features were left.
- Approximately 30,000 cubic yards of sediment were removed from the river.
- d. FWC will be replanting grass within the area of dredging. Project is currently being permitted through FDEP.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

- Navigational marker repairs
 - a. Repairs continue
 - b. Signs on WWR replaced to prepare for spring break.
- Canal Maintenance Study
 - a. Surveying/data collection is ongoing.
- Canal debris survey
 - a. HCSO conducted a survey of canals and did not find any issues of concern.
 - Large items (two cars) have been removed.
- Harvesting Vessel – Hunter's Lake
 - a. Vessel is currently harvesting vegetation on Hunter's Lake.
 - b. Vegetation is taken to landfill to be included in the County composting project.
- Lake Lindsey shredding project
 - a. FWC shredded tussocks on the lake to address navigation issues.
 - b. Will re-shred in 1-2 months.
- Weeki Wachee Preserve Park
 - a. Phase one is being designed currently. This will include construction of a parking lot, ADA accessible bridge over the canal, informational kiosk, restrooms, and sidewalks.
- Artificial Reef project
 - a. Baseline data collection/monitoring ongoing.
 - b. Waiting for ACOE permit to be issued.
- Pine Island Park update
 - a. Substantial damage incurred due to hurricanes.
 - b. Proposed mobile office building and restroom facilities. Concrete slab placed for Food Truck vendor.
 - c. All structures built after Hurricane Idalia remained after Hurricanes Helene/Milton.
- Island cleanup
 - a. This can be addressed by private individuals. Must receive authorization from owner.
 - b. The current priority for the Waterways Department is installation/repair of damaged ATONs.
 - c. Any activity shall not impact current resources in/on/around the island.
 - d. Addressed during Coastal Cleanup?

CITIZENS' COMMENTS

- Where is the artificial reef project proposed?

- a. The overall goal of Hernando County's Artificial Reef Program 14-1 is to construct a diverse network of artificial reefs that will enhance recreational opportunities for a wide variety of users and enhance nature-based tourism. The objectives of the project are to: 1) support the increasing recreational demand for offshore reef fishing and scuba diving opportunities; and 2) enhance the abundance, distribution, and structural diversity of hard bottom habitat in the county's marine waters. Habitat created by artificial reefs is anticipated to provide numerous environmental benefits including: 1) the creation of transitional hard bottom habitat between the offshore zone and estuaries; 2) creation of essential fish habitat (EFH) that will increase fish diversity; 3) substrate supporting encrusting and colonial benthic organisms such as sponges and corals; and 4) niche space for small marine invertebrates.

WATERWAYS ADVISORY COMMITTEE / STAFF COMMENTS

- How to have the WAC webpage updated? Would the County's Public Information Officer be able to assist?
 - Our PIO office is in the process of updating the County's website.

OTHER –

ADJOURNMENT - Chairman (Kathryn Birren) adjourned the meeting at 8:02 p.m.

Upcoming Meeting(s):

The next regular meeting of the Waterways Advisory Committee will be held on Monday, May 12, 2025, at 6:00 P.M., at the Hernando County Lake House, 1202 Kenlake Ave., Spring Hill, FL, 34606.