



**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING
AGENDA ITEM**

Date of EPC Meeting: January 12, 2016

Subject: Morris Bridge Sink Water Use Permit discussion

Agenda Section: Regular Agenda

Item: Legal and Administrative Services Division

Recommendation: Informational Report and discussion.

Brief Summary: Staff will present a summary of the resolution it reached with the Southwest Florida Water Management District regarding proposed withdrawals of from the Morris Bridge Sink.

Financial Impact: No Financial Impact

Background: On December 4, 2015, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (Department) authorized an intent to issue a water use permit a/k/a consumptive use permit (WUP) to the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) for withdrawing 2,017,000 gallons per day on an annual average basis from Morris Bridge Sink (MBS). The proposed maximum daily withdrawal is 3,900,000 gallons per day. The SWFWMD proposes to pump water from MBS, then discharge it to the upper pool of the Tampa Bypass Canal (TBC), pipe it to the TBC middle pool, and then transfer it to the Lower Hillsborough River via the City of Tampa Hillsborough River Reservoir. The MBS project is a component of the SWFWMD's recovery strategy towards meeting the minimum flow requirements established for the lower segment of the Hillsborough River, pursuant to Rule 40D-80.073(8)(b)8, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.). Among other benefits, it helps reduce the salinity in the Lower Hillsborough River downstream of the dam, thus improving the habitat for flora and fauna that require more freshwater.

The EPC sought an extension of time to avoid filing a challenge to the permit and to initiate a dialogue with the SWFWMD staff. The Department denied the extension request; nonetheless, the EPC and SWFWMD expedited a meeting to discuss an amicable resolution regarding permitting criteria. Staff will update the Commission on the status of the negotiation.



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Southwest Florida Water Management District

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January 11, 2016

Mr. Phil Compton, President
Friends of the River, Inc.
1214 E. Park Circle
Tampa, Florida 33604

Subject: Morris Bridge Sink Project
Water Use Permit Application No. 20020574.000

Dear Mr. Compton:

I would like to sincerely thank you and your colleagues for the professional dialogue we had during our meeting on January 11, 2016 regarding the above-referenced Morris Bridge Sink Project ("Project"). As we discussed during that meeting, the District is committed to providing the following assurances in support of the Project:

- 1) When the Lower Hillsborough River Recovery Strategy ("Recovery Strategy") is evaluated in 2018 and 2023, the 25% loss factor referenced in Rule 40D-80.073(8)(b)2.c., F.A.C. will be included as part of the District's overall evaluation.
- 2) Also at that time, the District will evaluate both the Recovery Strategy and the minimum flow established for the Lower Hillsborough River.
- 3) The District will allow and encourage public participation during the review.
- 4) The District will conduct biological monitoring of Morris Bridge Sink.

We sincerely appreciate your participation in these discussions, and appreciate your support of the Project.

Sincerely,

Robert Beltran, P.E.
Executive Director

cc: John Ovink
Janet Dougherty, EPC
Ryan Matthews, FDEP
Craig Varn, FDEP

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Robert R. Beltran, P.E.
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