

**Suwannee River Water Management District  
Minutes of  
Upper and Middle Suwannee River MFL Peer Review Kickoff Meeting**

**GoTo Webinar Link:** <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7634262604041641820>

**Wednesday, March 15, 2023  
10 a.m.**

**District Headquarters  
Live Oak, Florida**

Meeting participants that chose to identify themselves are listed below.

Peer Review Panel

Marty Hamel, Peer Review Panelist  
Gregg Jones, Peer Review Panel Chair  
Adam Munson, Peer Review Panelist

District Staff and Representatives

Amy Brown	Louis Mantini	Chelsea Dinon
Sean King	Tom Reeves	

Others

Rob Denis  
John S. Quarterman  
Charles Shinn

Agenda Item No. 1- Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:00am.

Agenda Item No. 2- Introduction

Sean King, MFL Office Chief, presented an introduction to the Suwannee River sections, history of MFL work on these river segments, the peer review process, and the peer reviewers. This was provided as an informational item for peer reviewers and members of the public.

Agenda Item No. 3- Sunshine Law Overview

Presented by Tom Reeves, General Counsel for SRWMD.

Agenda Item No. 4- Draft Upper and Middle Suwannee River Minimum Flows and Levels Overview

Sean King, MFL Office Chief, presented the technical work that led to the proposed MFLs.

Agenda Item No. 5- WebBoard Overview CANCELLED

Agenda Item No. 6- Peer Reviewer Discussion

Panelist Adam Munson asked about comparing methods between the Upper Suwannee River MFL report and the Middle Suwannee River MFL report. The panelist was advised by District staff that they do not need to compare methods to those of other water management districts, but part of the intent of this effort is for peer reviewers to weigh in on some of the differences

between methods used in the two MFL documents they are reviewing. The goal is to provide comments that will improve the MFLs.

Peer review chair, Gregg Jones, asked for an explanation of logic as to why we do not partition flows into “flow blocks” like the SWFWMD since some of these flows are relevant seasonally (i.e. sturgeon spawning). Per Sean King, the current method is to use the months that are seasonally relevant, which would be an analogous approach. The minimum flow determined would be applied year-round, even though sturgeon are seasonally relevant, because the Suwannee River is affected by groundwater withdrawals and District water use permits do not restrict water use seasonally. This peer review should be focused on the technical methods used to determine the MFLs. Peer reviewers are not being contracted to review the MFL status assessment, recovery plan, or anything outside of the technical work in the documents provided.

Peer review chair, Gregg Jones, expressed concerns about not using a WebForum to prepare for each subsequent public meeting. District staff will work to provide a solution so that the peer reviewers can make the best use of their time during the public meetings.

#### Agenda Item No. 7- Public Comment

Charles Shinn of Florida Farm Bureau Federation commented that the FFBF has policies that support the MFL process, including adequate water supply, but the volume of water for Agriculture has to be maintained in order for the local businesses to remain competitive in the marketplace.

Rob Denis of Liquid Solutions noted the Reference Time Frame (RTF) is extremely important to these analyses. The development of the RTFs is poorly documented and vital to reviewing the technical work in these documents. He also noted the methods in which NFSEG is used for status assessment and MFL setting is not the same, but he needs more documentation in order to understand this. As a result, he believes peer reviewers should be allowed to weigh in on how the methods are applied in these technical documents.

John Quarterman of Suwannee River Keeper noted that the District should include modeling that will show how additions (e.g., recharge projects) or withdrawals will affect spring gauges and the extent to which they could be affected. The District should be limiting both future and existing water withdrawals. He proposed the addition of aquifer recharge wells in between planted pine beds that may encourage faster aquifer recharge and would be superior to the previously proposed pipelines.

11:59 meeting adjourned.