

**LAKE OKEECHOBEE SOM NEPA SCOPING MEETING
EXCERPT OF MEETING**

Tuesday, February 26, 2019

3:45 p.m. -4:43 p.m.

Broward County Main Library 100 S. Andrews Avenue, Sixth Floor Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33301

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PROCEEDINGS

*Taken before Ilona Lupowitz, Certified Realtime Reporter,
Registered Professional Reporter and Notary Public in and for the State of Florida at Large, in the above
cause.*

MR. SEGAL: Good afternoon. I don't think I really need to raise the microphone up. My name is Fred Segal. I'm the chair of the Broward Soil and Conservation District and, also, the president of Broward County Farm Bureau. I want to start by thanking you for holding these meetings around the area. Now, any new regulation schedule, I feel, needs to balance all project purposes; flood control, water supply, recreation, navigation, environmental effects to fish and wildlife, and they definitely need to be based on sound science. The reduction of flood releases to the estuaries is important, but should not be the only objective of lake management. The critical project purposes cannot be met by simply artificially lowering the level of Lake Okeechobee to some arbitrary stage like 10 and a half feet every year, as some have suggested, or by allowing prolonged, extensive high stages during wet years. Lake navigation starts to be restricted at a stage of about 12 and a half foot and, particularly, impacts recreational boaters who don't always use canals.

The recent update on Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule, biological opinion from 2018, confirms that excessive low lake levels can also adversely affect habitat and endangered species. Future economic and environmental needs of all South Florida, including inland, rural communities, will only be accomplished through development of a balanced schedule in which all project purposes are addressed.

Because of the precarious condition of the Herbert Hoover Dike when the current schedule was adopted, water supply benefits had to be sacrificed and the protections established in the WRDA 2000, for surf, were not able to be honored. The new schedule must accommodate future water supply needs and surf projects that will be coming online, with a schedule in place such as the C-43 Reservoir, the C-44 Reservoir and the Storm Water Treatment Area and the Central Everglades Plan. Therefore, the water supply protections required of all surf projects must be accommodated with any new lake schedule. The Corp. should take the time necessary to perform comprehensive analysis in order to produce a schedule that is responsive to all future needs of the region, based on sound science, and not hurry because of political pressures.

MR. ENGLE: Thank you, sir. Next, we have Lee Padron, from Marco Rubio's office.

MS. PADRON: I'm just here to listen to the comments, but, thank you.

MR. ENGLE: Thank you, ma'am.

Next, I have Burton Lamont.

MR. LAMONT: Thank you. My name is Burton Lamont. My family has lived in Florida for over a hundred years, and on the south shore of Jupiter Inlet for over 40 years. I'm a U.S. Army veteran, and I'm thrilled that the U.S. Army Corp. of Engineers is seeking public input, to use it in preparing the Lake Okeechobee System Operating Manual that will give proper priority to the public health.

The new manual will not propose improvements to the quality of the water in Lake Okeechobee. The result is that the harm to public health currently caused by discharges of water from Lake Okeechobee

to the St. Lucie River and the Indian River Lagoon will continue, if the discharges continue. Overwhelming evidence of harm to public health from discharges of polluted fresh water from Lake Okeechobee to the St. Lucie River and Indian River Lagoon supports the demand that the U.S. Army Corp. of Engineers stop the discharges, no matter what the consequences to agriculture, tribes and any others who insert entitlements to pollute Lake Okeechobee, draw water from Lake Okeechobee or both. Neither agriculture, tribes or any others have an entitlement to harm the public health of the people living east of Lake Okeechobee. Geography and geology show that a natural separation exists between St. Lucie River and Indian River Lagoon, to the east, and Lake Okeechobee, to the west. The St. Lucie River and Indian River Lagoon do not contribute to the pollution of Lake Okeechobee, and the pollution of Lake Okeechobee should not be allowed to continue to pollute the St. Lucie River and Indian River Lagoon and, thereby, continue to harm the public health of people living east of Lake Okeechobee. I thank the U.S. Army Corp. of Engineers for the opportunity to speak at this meeting. MR. ENGLE: Thank you, sir. Next, Monica Hands. MS. HANDS: Hi, good afternoon. My name is Monica Hands. I'm here to represent the Realtors of Palm Beach and from Greater Fort Lauderdale, as the vice president for this entire region of Florida.

It is no secret that Florida's waterways are the most precious natural resource. In Broward County, tourists from all over the world flock to our beaches to enjoy the beautiful waters, white sand and intracoastal boating. People from across the country keep moving to South Florida to live in paradise, and after they visit, many decide to make it their home. However, over the past decade, we, as realtors, have seen a troubling trend when discharges occur and toxic algae flows through Lake Okeechobee. We receive phone calls from potential buyers backing out of deals because they turn on the national news and see a river of green. This, in turn, is causing a negative effect --a negative impact, excuse me, on local economies and the real estate markets that help support them.

As members of Florida Realtors, with over 187,000 active members, we support less releases coming from Lake Okeechobee.

My question to the Army Corp. of Engineers: Has the Corp. conducted hydraulic modeling that would show the maximum level --maximum water level on Lake Okeechobee that water managements are comfortable with? Excuse me. The complete rehabilitation of the Herbert Hoover Dike.

We thank you for your time and commitment to solving this crisis.

MR. ENGLE: Thank you. Next, Caroline Carrara.

MS. CARRARA: Hello. My name is Caroline Carrara, and I'm here representing the Realtor Association of Palm Beach and Greater Fort Lauderdale. I'm one of the corporate board of directors.

When you think of Florida, what is the first thing that comes to mind? I venture to say, most people would say, our water, but weather would be a close second. The weather and the water are the two main reasons I moved here, from New York to South Florida, after coming from London, when I moved to America in 1995. I stepped foot on South Beach in February and said, that's it, this is my new home. We want to continue to hear stories like that, but the alarming trend of toxic algae discharges from Lake Okeechobee has the potential to stop people from moving to South Florida. Even in Broward County, we are concerned with the amount of water being discharged to the east of Lake Okeechobee. When toxic algae flows from the lake, there is a negative impact on the real estate market in South Florida.

As members of Florida Realtors, with over 187,000 active members, we support less discharges from Lake Okeechobee.

My question to the Army Corp. is: What amount of discharges would result in the possibility of Broward County seeing toxic algae flow down our rivers and canals?

We thank you for your time and commitment to solving this crisis, and I'd like to submit this letter.

Thank you.

MR. ENGLE: Thank you. Next is --I'm not sure I can read the last name. Jason Topmmes?

MR. TOPMMES: Hello. So I'm a third generation south Floridian. My family moved here back in the 20s. I went to school on the west coast. I have family on the west coast. I live here, on the east coast. It's very troubling, what I have seen with those --the toxic algae blooms related to the discharges from Lake Okeechobee. I'm not a scientist; I'm just a regular guy who's seen his --you know, his environment fall apart, and it seems to be more --the cause of it is agriculture, commercial operations and overdevelopment and, then, us.

It seems to me that the Army Corp., who is responsible for the water, the floodings, the controlling of the flooding and the water levels, there's a lot of --like I've seen in the presentation, there's a lot of players that --at stake here that influence decisions, and I'm just hoping that we can come around where you guys would serve more of not just the flooding issues, but, also, the nutrient issues, the pollution. I understand the reservoirs have been talked about, but, you know, to accommodate or take out those nutrients --and I don't think that it's gonna do it. From what I understand, the reservoir is too deep, plants can't grow, can't filter that nutrient pollution, the phosphorus, so maybe solutions and mechanical operations, like cleaning plants, some kind of stations throughout the state to help take the nutrients out of the water. That's a Band-Aid, really, but what we really need is federal laws, state laws, to stop the pollution, get it out of our water. So that's my two cents. Thanks for letting me speak. MR. ENGLE: Thank you. Next, Karen Holland. MS. HOLLAND: Hello, good afternoon. My name is Karen Holland. I live in Palm Beach County. I came all the way, just so I could see what's going on and make a few commentaries, but I like what Burton said, and Fred --I don't know where he is. And Jason. I think you all did a good job. I'm glad you're all supporting or at least giving an idea of what we all came here for, I believe, which is, what are you doing? What are you doing to the environment, and how can you guarantee that what you're doing here is going to help rather than hurt? I am an environmentalist in my heart. I speak for all the animals and the birds, even the alligators and the crocodiles in the Everglades. They need a voice. UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: And the people. MS. HOLLAND: And the people, yeah. We do have a lot of people moving down to Florida, and that's kind of a controversy for me. I also have relatives who live just off of St. Lucie River, maybe not even a mile off of the river, and it affects them. I'm really concerned about their health and well-being, as well as everybody here, who lives in Florida, who has an interest in what's gonna happen.

Now, when I was looking at --I think, this is the one right here, this proposed scoping --whatever that is. I have no idea, but it says, Decision and Public Comment in December, 2022. My thought was, well, if something goes wrong, how do you change it, take down the dam and just rebuild it? I don't understand that at all.

I think of Katrina. Now, that was a really old dike, or whatever it was that needed to be fixed, but I also have relatives there, and they're still waiting for their homes to be built. It's a really long time now. Maybe that's a good idea, that we have it built, but I'm not so sure about that. I'm really not sure.

Once again, is there a guarantee? What kind of guarantee can you offer me that would not affect people that lived here, that the algae blooms would just discontinue and not affect people that live off rivers and off the west coast and create --well, I don't want to say, more people to come because we're number two now in population. That's a lot. I see that the Everglades are being damaged as well, and I would like to see it all restored.

What else do I have to say? Oh. There was a picture over there. I notice things. There was a picture over there with some guy standing underneath the faucet, which looks kind of funny. It just gives that impact that maybe somebody didn't look very carefully at what was put together. So that's my point.

Is that a good point?

All right, I'm done. Thank you.

MR. ENGLE: Thank you. Next is, Susan Caruso.

MS. CARUSO: Hi, good evening. I am Susan Caruso, and I do want to thank you for holding these public hearings this far south in the Water Management District area. We appreciate that.

I taught at Fort Lauderdale High School for a long time, and somewhere in the early '90s, South Florida Water Management published a magazine called, How Much, How Good, and it was probably my favorite teaching tool, and I used it until the magazines wore out, in about 2010, 2011, somewhere, and I copied the last one I had. So I know what a complicated issue this is, and I also --these are the things that I also think I know, so just some general statements, and then I'll tell you what I'd like you to do about it. First of all, flood control is the major reason we change landscape, not for water quality, but for flood management. Obviously, that's important, but it totally disrupted the natural flow and ecosystem of Lake Okeechobee, so the water birds, the wading birds, the prolific amount of species there just dwindled, and we can't afford to keep doing that. Also, that Lake O. --that the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie weren't supposed to be attached, but because of flood control, they were. Even releases of fresh water, just the fresh water, disrupted the saltwater habitats and the estuaries, and estuaries are some of the most diverse and important ecosystems on our planet, so just any release would disrupt that flow.

As the gentleman said before, the real impact is that we are sending out polluted water, and I saw an interview or a speech by --I believe it was the South Florida Water Management District board member, prior board member. I didn't catch his name, but I could tell he was involved in the agriculture industry. He said that if you live, work, play in South Florida, you're part of the problem, and I'll grant you that, but if he's trying to compare my culpability to the culpability of the sugar industry that has poured nitrogen and phosphorus into the lake mindlessly, greedily, when they could be implementing best management practices to reduce that, I'm not buying that. And I will use his word: That's an asinine statement.

Secondly, the flow --so what would I like you to do? I would really appreciate if the Army Corp. would balance priorities. I don't think sending all the water out and keeping all the water in the lake is the best answer. There has to be common sense.

So I hope you'll balance the priorities of everyone. It's not an easy task and I don't envy you. Unfortunately, eliminating pollution isn't your job. Your job is putting that polluted water somewhere, and the best priority would just be, send it southward, to its natural flow, give it time to flow so the plants can suck up the nutrients, like they do, and when you create the new reservoir --I know you're doing --I believe you're doing an impact statement on that now, that you'll mimic the natural lake. I understand that a new reservoir, because there's not enough land, is gonna have, like, a 23-foot berm. Hello! That kind of sounds to me like the Herbert Hoover Dike, and it just pains me, makes me want to cry, that we keep doing the wrong things when we --that we aren't learning.

So could we please, please, please --let's find a way to create less pollution. Not your job, but any legislators here can help us with that. And that you will try to mimic nature as much as possible because she, kind of, knows best.

Thank you.

MR. ENGLE: Thank you. Next, Kevin Carter.

MR. CARTER: Hello, good afternoon. My name is Kevin Carter. I'm with Broward County, and we want to welcome the U.S. Army Corp. of Engineers to Broward County and thank residents and non residents for coming today to support the event. We appreciate very much that the Army Corp. is engaging across the complete watershed and that Broward County is one of your important stops.

We are going to primarily provide high-level comments today because we also appreciate that we can put in the written comments by March 31st. So I'll just touch on some key areas that the county is exploring, as we look to provide input to this important process. You know, having this meeting, at this beautiful complex, our main library, gives us a view of our vibrant community right outside.

So Broward County, 18th largest county in the United States, home to almost two million people, over 10 million visitors each year. So one of the critical elements that we would like the Army Corp. to consider is the water supply that our 26 utilities use to provide the critical, clean and reliable drinking water for our residents and for our visitors. So public water supply, definitely up front on our list of things that we're interested in, going back to your three questions.

If we drove out west into Broward County, almost two-thirds of it is the water conservation areas. Those water conservation areas provide the critical recharge to those utilities --to those utilities that are providing that critical public water supply. We need the Water Conservation Area elevations to be considered in your modeling, but not just for public water supply. They represent Broward County's Everglades, an important habitat and connectivity of the Greater Everglades Ecosystem, from Lake Okeechobee --in fact, from the Kissimmee system, Lake Okeechobee, the Water Conservation Areas, Everglades National Park, all the way down to Florida Bay, one system, one regional system. So both from the ecology needs for our county and the critical water supply, we ask you to consider Lake Okeechobee, the modeling, the whole regional system within the conservation area aspect. Just to give you an example of how local --government local utilities fit within the regional system, in 2007, the South Florida Water Management District developed a regional water availability rule, which said, utilities --amount of water that we can withdraw from the Biscayne Aquifer, the primary drinking water source from the southeast coast. So that's where we were set. The purpose was both to provide for the Corps' needs at the time, but also to protect the water needs --future water needs of the Everglades.

So we wonder, as you look to --look at different scenarios, future scenarios, we want you to take into consideration our base conditions, our water needs, as you move forward. From a technical standpoint, we'd like to be involved in the modeling, both the selection of the model, how you plan to run the model, how they talk to our local model and, again, how they talk to the Water Management District model. The model world out there creates boundaries and creates input and information, so the important work that you're doing for the lake is going to be used for the regional system. To that end, you asked, sort of, what --some key study outcomes or things to look for in the study are some of the regional features, such as CEPP, Central Everglades Planning Project, will be taken into account for. I saw the C-43 Reservoir pamphlet out front. How about other reservoirs that are being planned or are being constructed as we speak?

Then, finally, I guess, as we look forward, we want to have our level of service, of course, protected, the public water supply, but, also, we'd like to see operational flexibility as you move forward. Broward County's been at the forefront, planning for sea-level rise, part of the four-county compact. We feel that with this proper modeling, we can even be more resilient in those efforts going forward.

Speaking of going forward, we look forward that with this --I realize, this is the start of a two to three-year process, and we plan to be engaged from the start to the end. I just remind you that it is a big region. You've taken the time to go out and listen to public comment throughout the watershed, and I ask you to incorporate that into your model runs and your analyses.

With that, I close my comments.

MR. ENGLE: Thank you. Next, we have Lynn Dixon.

MS. DIXON: I'll send my comments in writing, although I'd love to speak.

MR. ENGLE: Very well. Thank you. Next, we have Daryl Rietz.

MR. RIETZ: Good afternoon, folks. My name is Daryl Rietz. I'm with the Sierra Club, the Broward Sierra Club. I'm also a past member of the state board of the Sierra Club, but I'm here just speaking as a private person. I'm a little nervous about all of this. You know, the Army Corp. had to --decided to fix things that could straighten out the distended river because there was a lot of flooding. Well, now, years later, what are we doing? We're spending a lot of money making it crooked again. You know, that's something that --we need to make sure that we get it right now because there's no turning around. I got involved with all of this because I wanted my children to have the same kind of quality of life that I did. Now, I'm saying, maybe my grandkids. After seeing some of those timeframes, maybe my grandkids.

The first thing I want to approach is, I'm --I take people out on bike rides out in the Everglades, and one of my favorite places is to go around Lake Okeechobee. A few friends of mine did about seven years ago and, unfortunately, we got to Port Mayaca, and you had to get off because the road wasn't done. So I just hope that, at some point, the --the road and that bike path, which is really great recreation -- people come from all over --that it will be fixed.

But talking now about the --my main comment is --okay. We want to clean the water, and this is what happens when --but why can't we have clean water in the first place? You know, I think state, federal, county organizations, they need to have the cajones to make sure we have clean water from the first time. We shouldn't have dirty water coming in, whether we need cesspools or --it's not just sugar, but

it's all the Cattlemen and phosphorus-generating places. There are laws out there to make sure that that is curbed, but we're not enforcing it.

Now, thank you. Hopefully, we'll get it right this time, folks, because there's no turning around. Thank you very much.

MR. ENGLE: Thank you. Gerald Ward?

MR. WARD: Good afternoon. Gerald Ward, for Vero Beach and Key West. It would be helpful to have a podium or a paper instead of just a simple microphone.

I have been involved in water resources since I got out of the service in 1970, so this is not something new for me, dealing with Lake Okeechobee. The process that you're starting is heavily into the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. In the handouts, you prophesize that the Herbert Hoover Dike repairs by the Corp. of Engineers will be done by 2022, and there is similar discussions about the Kissimmee River backfill, where you are the contractor to the South Florida Water Management District for a project that was initiated in '87, in '92, and enacted in, I think, '96. We're decades late in accomplishing that project.

You do say in your --one of your handouts that you will consider the effects of the Kissimmee River backfill project, but when are you going to establish the regulatory spaces for the upper Kissimmee River section that's above State Road 60? Lake Kissimmee is at that location and all the way into Kissimmee, carried northward, to Orlando. So there is --is substantial impacts that need to be considered by the rainfall that comes to the lake and your establishment of Lake Okeechobee discharges.

I've been involved in a number of public works projects similar to the Kissimmee River backfill since '70, and the Corp. does not have a good record of timeliness or completion on time. Take, for instance, the Port of Palm Beach restudy, where you came in to do an environmental evaluation, NEPA statement, said you'd take two years. Five years later, you had finally produced the draft impact statement for review and, then, to the final. Nobody at the Jacksonville district was there. I have asked the --the public relations person at the desk, and she said that she will prepare a list of all Corp. people here, which would include their offices, so I would like to know and have presented to the court reporter the people that are here at this meeting.

I understand our current officer, Lieutenant Colonel Reynolds, could not make it because she has to go to Washington today, but she is certainly the senior person that should be involved in today's operation. We need to get, clearly, a timeliness, and I think the schedule of three years is too high.

I would also call your attention to last week. Colonel Kelly, took the unusual, infrequent and unique posture of establishing additional operational flexibility in making large discharges down the Callosahatchee and St. Lucie River. Paragraph 7-16 of the plan, which recites the central and south Florida water control plan for Lake Okeechobee and Everglades Agricultural Area of March 2008, pages 7-29 to 7-31, clearly say, this has got to be a very infrequent and unique action.

So how many other times has he or has the Corp. implemented this since 2008, and how many times do you foresee it to happen between now and 2023, when you get through?

So it is --it is important for you to change your philosophy and make sure that things get done quickly and timely, and that they pull in lots of things that may not be available today, be it water stages, regulation plans or other inflows.

MR. ENGLE: Thank you. Next, Stanley Pannaman.

MR. PANNAMAN: Hi. My name is Stanley Pannaman, and I'm a conservation program chair for Broward, with the Sierra Club, and the team lead for the Southeast Florida Marine and Water Quality Team. I would like to thank the Army Corp. of Engineers for holding this meeting so you could have public comment.

The first thing I'd like to remind everybody here is that the Army Corp. of Engineers is a government body. They take orders; they don't make policy. They take orders and, then, they make policy.

Lake Okeechobee is probably one of the most polluted lakes in the United States of America because of all of the agriculture waste that comes down from northern Florida and from all the back-pumping of the sugar industry of nitrogen and phosphorous into the lake. Matter of fact, there was a three-foot layer of nitrogen and phosphorous at the bottom of Lake Okeechobee.

The Army Corp. of Engineers is mandated that once the water level reaches 15 feet, they must release it, and because of that, their blue-green algae bloom is not going to stop. When the rainy season comes --and it will come --the level will get to 15 feet, and because they're mandated to release the water to prevent a catastrophic break in the Herbert Hoover Dam, that water is gonna go down to Chattahoochee, and it's gonna go down to St. Lucie, and this problem is not going to stop. Now, they're planning to finish the Herbert Hoover Dike by 2022. Since 2003, I have been involved, fighting or dealing with the Army Corp. of Engineers on the Central Everglades Planning Project, which should have been done years and years and years ago, but has not. It was the plan to build a facility to store water south of Lake Okeechobee. Well, our South Florida Water Management District put a kibosh in it by allowing the sugar industry to lease the land that was supposed to be used for that. Now, we have many problems here in Broward County, none of which is caused by the county, but it's being caused from the environmental impact from the state of Florida and the United States government. Now, I appreciate all of the input that has been brought out here. The real estate in Palm Beach County is being affected, the fact that the red tide mixed with the blue-green algae bloom that hit the Gulf of Mexico killed over 700 manatees, over 200 sea turtles and thousands of dolphins and millions upon millions upon millions of fish. And, of course, people's health is at risk.

I believe that we, as a group of citizens, must band together and protest and protest and protest what is being done to us. We're the taxpayers. Why do we have to subsidize the sugar industry that's polluting us and giving us the back-pumping of their waste into Lake Okeechobee?

MS. DIXON: My name is Lynn Dixon, and I just want to know --

MR. ENGLE: Ma'am, if you want to approach the mic --

MS. DIXON: Zero gallons --zero gallons of water were back-pumped into Lake Okeechobee. It's still legal for sugarcane farmers to --

MR. PANNAMAN: Well --

MR. ENGLE: Ma'am, you're gonna have your time. Please, please.

MR. PANNAMAN: Okay. I am going to take a little section of what she said.

There will be a movie that will be produced right now, from National Geographic, that addresses that statement, but we're not here really to talk about what we're doing today. I'm talking about what we plan to do in the future. If the Army Corp. of Engineers plans on completing their repairs of the Herbert Hoover Dike by 2022, that means, for the next three years, we will be forced to release water down the St. Lucie and the Chattahoochee filled with toxic blue-green algae bloom. As I said before, we have to band together, as citizens, and make our voice heard. We have a new governor who says he will help us by contributing billions of dollars toward this. We have to force him to do what he says. Thank you very much for your time. MR. ENGLE: Thank you. Next, Alex Gillen. MR. GILLEN: Hello. Alex Gillen, with Bullsugar Alliance. I'm an attorney for them.

Just to address your point, ma'am: Lake Okeechobee created about a month's worth of discharge --I'm sorry --backflow and back-pumping from the EAA created about a month's worth of discharges last year, so it's absolutely not true that they're not back-pumping and back-flowing. I can show you the numbers.

So thank you all. This is --this is a warm reception, seeing you all and how much you all care about this issue. I do think, you know, the toxic algae that we see affects all of us because when I talk to neighbors and colleagues down in the Keys, they get customers, and they say, you know, can I show up? Do you have red tide? Do you have toxic algae? So it does affect all of us, the way we manage these things. It does hurt the 10 million residents here, in Broward County, because they --a lot of people who want to visit Florida don't know the difference between Fort Myers, Fort Walton Beach or Fort Pierce, so when they see toxic algae, they think, well, maybe that's all in the state. It does impact all of us, the way we manage it.

As an administrative point, I would like to request, for our neighbors and colleagues in the Keys, that there be a meeting in the city of Marathon. Additionally, I've heard from folks in Fort Myers and Sanibel that the meetings were awfully quick, they didn't get a lot of notice, and they would like to come, so I'd like to request that there be a meeting, before this scoping period ends, in either Sanibel or Fort Myers.

In terms of completion of this project study, I'd like to know if the language in WRDA of 2018 is a floor or a ceiling in terms of completing that --completing this study. I think, from a good government perspective, it makes a lot of sense that we would have one Colonel, Colonel Kelly, the Colonel that just started overseeing the whole project. To switch courses in midstream seems like a --kind of a bureaucratic inefficiency to me.

I have a list that we put together, at Bullsugar, that has six categories:

Human health and safety, community and recreation impacts, environmental impacts, economic impacts, sea life, animal impacts and indirect impacts. I'd like to submit that, for the record, and I'd like all these things to be considered, please.

Thank you very much.

And, then, I have a lot of things that I'm gonna just put in, for the record, so that we, as a community, build a record and get a lot of answers, with the opportunity for the Corp. to respond.

So does the federal government have a standard for cyanobacteria? If not, what agency would be the one to create such a standard?

Does the lack of a standard by a federal agency impair the Army Corps.'s ability to manage for cyanobacteria in Lake Okeechobee?

Another administrative measure, for the modeling: Can you put the performance measures for the modeling on your website so that we all can see what performance measures are used in how we perform the --in how we define success?

So when they run a model, they create the different alternatives. They're looking at how we define success. What we want to know, as members of the public, is what measures are you all using? We would like to see the models be made public.

Can you make the models public so that everybody could run the models? We all pay for them, as taxpayers. Why not make them public?

Please consider, when discharging toxic algae and Lake O. discharges, how far, and whether it's east, west, south, north, where the blooms actually go and stop. It seems to me, you know, anecdotally, that the blooms are influenced by wind and tide, and they can, you know, change directions, but, you know, it's important for --for quantifying harm.

You know, we know, in Bathtub Beach, we had to close that, in Stuart, in 2016, because of the discharges because of the cyanobacteria, but it's not clear if that's gone all the way down to the Jupiter Inlet, or if that's going all the way up to Fort Pierce and, you know, kind of the reverse is true on the Fort Myers side.

So if we could quantify --and it's true because when there's discharges out of the Lake Worth Lagoon, and probably here too, if we could quantify where these discharges flow, I think that would help everyone.

Please consider fish migration and bioaccumulation of cyanobacteria caused by microcystin and BMAA and indicate whether that is something you all consider when discharging and evaluating the harm of discharging.

Please consider crop irrigation and BMAA uptake that's microcystin.

Please confirm that if there is a water shortage, if humans and businesses are in a conflict for water, who has priority, humans or businesses.

And the water control plan: Explain how the South Florida Water Management District controls water by water shortage plan, when lake levels are low, when that control is in conflict with congressional authorizations.

If the Army Corp. has a congressional mandate of recreation and enhancement of fish and wildlife, why does recreation and enhancement of fish and wildlife suffer when irrigation and drainage do not?

Please provide a legal explanation of how consumptive-use permits are fulfilled at the expense of navigation and recreation when lake levels are low.

Please explain why the environment has makeup water releases, but agriculture does not have makeup water supply releases.

Please explain how adaptive management, the mandate in the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan has been used, if at all, in the administration of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Project.

Please explain when the EAA did not receive water or drainage requested.

Please explain when the Callosahatchee or Everglades did not get the water they requested.

What records are kept when cyanobacteria is blooming in the lake?

What warnings are made to people in the lake, south of the lake, east of the lake, west of the lake, when cyanobacteria blooms occur?

As far as the canals affecting boating, navigation can be impaired by consumptive-use permits. Please confirm that.

I'm glad the Florida Farm Bureau is here because you all opposed the original promulgation of the Senate bill intended to create the EAA reservoir, so from my community's perspective, it's a little hard to hear, on one hand, don't take our water and, then, to hear two years ago, hey, don't take our land to store more water. So, you know, perhaps if the Florida Farm Bureau had been more of a partner in water storage, we wouldn't have some of these debates right now.

Please confirm or explain how flows south from Lake Okeechobee prevent saltwater intrusion and protect drinking water supply.

On a personal note, you know, I've heard a lot of folks say that Lake Okeechobee is this and that and that people in my community don't care for it. I think Lake Okeechobee is awesome. I think we mistreated it in a lot of the way we mistreated a lot of our waters, so I think we should not use Lake Okeechobee as a reservoir. We should use it as the world-class lake that it is and really protect it.

For each authorized use of Lake O., authorized from Congress, please provide a pinpoint legal citation to where that authorization is represented in the statute. So not just, you know, a bill number, but, like, a line number. Like, if this is for --and of the most recent statute. So if this is for water supply or irrigation, you know, please provide that pinpoint citation for each one: Recreation, irrigation, navigation, enhancement of fish and wildlife and flood control.

Please consider adjusting other regulation schedules throughout the CNSF project area to minimize discharges to the estuaries, maximize flows to the environment, both in the Callosahatchee, in the dry season, Florida Bay, in the dry season and Florida Bay in the wet season, as well as Everglades National Park, and to minimize risk of breach of the Herbert Hoover Dike.

Please confirm that the Herbert Hoover Dike is safest and that St. Lucie and Callosahatchee River are least likely to get discharges when the lake is the lowest.

Please articulate how much water is used for natural system and municipal water users from Lake Okeechobee for the last 10 water years.

Please provide how much water is drained from the EAA each year, for the last 10 water years.

Please quantify how much water has been back-flowed and back-pumped into Lake Okeechobee from the EAA and surrounding watersheds for the last 10 water years.

Thank you very much.

MR. ENGLE: Thank you. Finally, Lynn Dixon.

MS. DIXON: I wish I had prepared something in writing. My name is Lynn Dixon. I'm a second-generation Floridian. My grandfather was one of the original scientists of the Everglades Research Center, and a laboratory is actually named after him, so I have a lot of knowledge, scientifically based.

What bothers me is all the misinformation being spread. I know you would understand all the non-factual information that's been presented here. Some people have it right; some people are really off base. I'd love to see --I know it's not your job, but to see the government present the true facts to the public. I'm hearing things like the sugarcane tribes, agriculture are evil.

The fact of the matter is, that it is illegal for EAA farmers, which provide a lot of our vegetables --all the vegetables you're having for dinner tonight, they didn't come up from the northern states. They came from one or two states, California or Florida. Right? The rest of it's covered in snow.

So it is illegal, this is a fact, for sugarcane farmers to pump water north into Lake Okeechobee.

When you all think that the sugarcane farmers or --they don't have control over a pump that has the ability to pump water into Lake Okeechobee. The farmers south of the lake do not pollute Lake Okeechobee. In fact, they have implemented best management practices that have been wildly successful. Last year, they reduced phosphorus by 66 percent. They've exceeded the --there is a law. People don't think there's any laws that are --that regulate pollution and there are.

The EAA farmers are required to reduce phosphorus by 25 percent based on --they have exceeded that requirement every single year for the past --help me out. How many years? 20 something years.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: 25.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: 25 years.

MS. DIXON: So when we say the sugarcane tribes are polluting Lake Okeechobee, that is false. Too much phosphorus did go into Lake Okeechobee 30 years ago; that is true. Today, that is not true.

Where this polluted water is coming from is from the Kissimmee River Basin. That's from Orlando south. That's what we need to be addressing. That's where the phosphorus is coming that's polluting our water and causing the blue-green algae. Okay? It's not coming from the sugarcane tribes, as you call them; it's coming from --95 percent of the water inflows into Lake Okeechobee is from the Kissimmee River Basin. That's the elephant in the room. We need to control the flow of the water into

Lake Okeechobee. That way, we can control the flow out from the Caloosahatchee and the St. Lucie. Okay.

So what I would like to know is, how can we expedite our projects to store and cleanse the water entering Lake Okeechobee? And that's north of the lake; it's not south of the lake. The small amounts of water that the Army Corp. has pumped into the lake have been off the urban areas, Clewiston and whatnot, not any of the farms. That can happen in emergency water. It hasn't happened in quite a while. So the misinformation out there --I'd love to speak with you. I do have some paperwork that could explain to you that big sugar isn't our problem, and organizations that are spreading these lies are detracting from the information that people really need to make educated conclusions and --the water is coming from Kissimmee River Basin. It's not being polluted by farmers; it's being polluted from the Kissimmee River Basin. I wish I had something more prepared. I have something in writing to submit so I can have my thoughts a little bit more in order. MR. ENGLE: Thank you. That concludes the public comments, people that put a card in. I don't have anymore cards, so that concludes tonight's meeting. We will be having meetings this week in Palm Beach County and in Dade County, tomorrow night and the following night, six to eight, and if you want information about it --about those, you can see us at the desk here, on your way out. As we said, you've got until the 31st of March to submit comments and, after that, we're not done getting feedback.

What's gonna happen after that is, we're gonna close the initial scoping comment period, but when we come back for workshops, we're gonna continue to get feedback and to answer a lot of the questions that have been brought up tonight.

So thank you for coming out. Have a good evening.

(Meeting was concluded at 4:43 p.m.)