

IN RE: LAKE OKEECHOBEE SOM NEPA SCOPING MEETING

PUBLIC MEETING

Ft. Myers

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DATE TAKEN: February 5, 2019

TIME TAKEN: 1:00 p.m. - 3:05 p.m.

PLACE TAKEN: Lee County Mosquito Control  
15191 Homestead Road  
Lehigh Acres, Florida

REPORTER: Maryanne Wagner, RPR, FPR  
Court Reporter

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MERIT COURT REPORTING, INC.

6213 Presidential Court  
Suite 100  
Fort Myers, FL 33919

2022 Hendry Street  
Suite 104  
Fort Myers, FL 33901

239.481.1300  
FAX: 239.481.1451

## A P P E A R A N C E S

Corps Members Present:

Lt. Colonel Jennifer Reynolds

E. Timothy Gysan

Jason Engle

Kim Taplin

Marci Jackson

Andrew Geller

Colin Rawls

Erica Skolte

Ann Hodgson

Allie Joura

Jessica Mallet

John Campbell

LT. COLONEL REYNOLDS: So I want to thank you all for coming out this afternoon. We are doing two public meetings here today. One this afternoon, and then they'll be doing the same presentation this evening. So those of who are here now, you don't need to come back tonight. Instead you can prepare to hear whatever the President has to say tonight, and get your dinner in before then, and leave the space for other folks to join us this evening.

Of course, if you want to come back we are not going to deny entry to anybody who wants to come to as many of our public meetings, but it will be the same presentation that we give this evening as we are giving this afternoon. We just wanted to give people an opportunity with different timeframes.

I see a lot of faces that look familiar to me. So thank you for coming out about issues that we know you care about. I know many of you are here this afternoon, because you are mad, because you are frustrated, because you are disappointed, because you want to see change. We want to be part of that. We want to hear your priorities. We want to hear what is important to you. And we also want to hear about things like hey, why are you having the meeting here at the Mosquito Control Center and not in Cape Coral.

In fact, I saw Mayor Coviello when I came in a few minutes ago, I don't see him at the moment, but I know he's here. And what I committed to him is I already heard from a large number of folks from Cape Coral that you are interested in us having a public meeting or a public workshop in Cape Coral. We are committed to looking for a venue to do that in Cape Coral or in Fort Myers in order to help facilitate the public participation in this process.

So those types of comments are also welcome. You know, so that if there is things that you want us to see firsthand as we go through this process and make sure that we bring team members out to see particular facilities, impacts, those kind of things, feel free to give us those types of information, and data points in your public comments whether tonight, this afternoon, in written form, in an e-mail, in a letter, however you'd like to do that. So again, thank you for coming.

I know that we have several public officials here. I know that we have Mayor Coviello from Cape Coral. We have Mayor Ruane from the City of Sanibel, Vice Mayor Denham is here. I see city council members, Councilwoman Holly Smith, and Councilman Chauncey Goss is here. Thank you for being here.

If there are any public officials that are here that I haven't recognized -- ma'am, I am sorry, my eyes are not as good as they used to be. But we'll make sure to announce at the beginning of public comment period to give you guys an opportunity to go first with your public comment period, starting with Mayor Coviello, who I know has another commitment this afternoon. So we'll -- so if you have not checked in with Erica at the back of the room in the foyer, please make sure you do that and we'll you get in at the front end of public comment period.

So I just want to also let you know that a lot of things that we are hearing already in public comment period from e-mails and letters that we are getting is why is it going to take you so long to do this study, and we need change now. We hear you loud and clear. We are not doing things the same way we have always done them. We have already moved more water south in the past year than we have done since we started LORS '08. We have already moved more water to the Caloosahatchee estuary during this dry season than we normally do during -- under the LORS '08 schedule. We are working very closely with the Water Management District, with scientists on both coasts as to figure out how do we provide better benefits to the estuaries right now in order to create resiliency in those ecosystems in

preparation for this next hurricane season and those in the future. Those are all things that we are doing under the current schedule. We are using all of the flexibility that's already written in that schedule and we are thinking about it differently, because our priorities have changed because of your voice. And that's what this process is all about is codifying and putting into the new schedule with a lot more clarity all of those priorities of what you are telling us is important. What your elected officials are telling us is important, and what our scientists and engineers are doing the modeling, and the investigation to make sure that we are not having unintended impacts to these changed priorities.

So with that I'm going to turn it over to Tim Gysan who's our project manager for this effort and he's going to tell you a little bit more about the process and what we are doing both today and throughout this process in order to codify those things through the LOSOM or the Lake Okeechobee new schedule, so that's a system operating manual, Lake Okeechobee System Operating Manual. We deliberately changed the name, because we are not just adjusting LORS. We are fundamentally changing the way that we think about and manage water across the system.

MR. GYSAN: Thank you, ma'am. Before I get started I am going to try to do it really fast, because the purpose of us being here today is to hear from all of you what your priorities are as we move forward and build the framework for what our efforts are going to look like.

Before I do get started I want to acknowledge our team members that are here, so if everyone from the Corps could stand up so I can introduce you. If you guys have questions after this meeting, please feel free to look up any team member here and talk to them.

Andrew Geller representing our operations division. Jason Engle, chief of water resource of engineering branch. Jessica Mallet, our lead engineer for this effort. Marci Jackson, our planning technical lead. Kim Taplin, who is our program manager for the Corps of Engineers. Also have Allie Joura, who's one of our water management leads for this project. And Colin Rawls, who's our lead economist for this effort.

So if you have any questions for them after this meeting, please feel to look them up and ask any specifics. We're going to be fairly general here, like I said, get to your comments as soon as we can.

All right. Just a quick overview of a little bit about Lake Okeechobee and we'll get into more technical stuff in our workshops that we'll have coming up at a later date.

But everybody is aware, you may already know, Lake Okeechobee is part of the Central and Southern Florida Project. It's surrounded by Herbert Hoover Dike. Those two things are important, because the authorization for the lake itself and why we manage it the way we do is two things; the resultant from catastrophic flooding that happened early part of the 20th Century. We implemented this project, which the lake is a major part of, in order to prevent flooding in central and southern Florida.

The Army Corps of Engineers operates and maintains Lake Okeechobee, as well as other parts of the C&SF project, along with our partners at South Florida Water Management District. The Corps is the main operators of the lake itself. The lake is governed by an operations manual, which is developed through a public process, and that's what are we here to engage on today is that public process.

So what are we doing? We are reviewing the Lake Okeechobee operations as part of this effort. And as Colonel Reynolds said, this is kind of an open book new slate. We are not updating the existing LORS.

This is an effort to understand what science, the engineering, what the public focus is, and that will lead us to where we want to be at the end of this effort.

The result will be a new operational plan which will be codified in the system operating manual, which basically is just the rules for how we operate the lake in the future.

It's important to remember this effort is not recommending any new infrastructure, it's an operational study. That said, we will be looking at the CERP infrastructure, the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan, and the infrastructure being added as part of that program, including C-43 on this coast, and C-44 on the east coast.

Why are we doing it now? There's a couple reasons. Back when LORS 2008 was formulated they recognized that there were some important events happening in the future that would require us to look at the regulation schedule again.

First of those being the Herbert Hoover Dike rehabilitation, which is an ongoing effort. And the second is implementation of new infrastructure, as I mentioned, C-43, C-44 in particular which are under construction now.

We also have new authorization from WRDA 2018, the Water Resources Development Act. And that's how we get most of our authorizations to do the work we do is through the Water Resources Development Act that congress passed. Last year they saw fit to give us a new authorization, which told us to expedite an evaluation of lake management to coincide with completion of Herbert Hoover Dike. And that was partly in response to a lot of the estuary releases that we've seen, the algae, a big concern for everyone. This is congress can kind of asking to get us moving to help you guys.

This process falls under NEPA, which is the National Environmental Policy Act, and what that requires us to do is look at impacts of any Federal actions. So all Federal agencies are required to utilize NEPA in the process, which is partly engaging the public, to understand what these efforts may have impact-wise on the human environment.

There is two possible levels of analysis under NEPA. One is EA, and one is EIS, which you see up here. Those are the documentation of those impacts of any of the projects. And this project study will involve developing one of these at the end, which will document any impacts of any schedule alternatives that we look at as well as whatever is selected at the end of this process.

All right. Timeline as Colonel Reynolds mentioned, this is about a four-year process to get us to a new system operating manual once we have a new infrastructure in place. That doesn't mean we are not doing something already under the existing schedule.

So want I everybody to take that away from this meeting is there are things going on now that will try to address the issues that we see under the current flexibility of the LORS 2008.

But this process in order to look at the future of infrastructure is something we would not be able to implement until the dike rehab is completed in 2022. Why it's a longer process, we want to be able to engage all of our stakeholders in meetings such as this so we can hear all of your voices, and understand what priorities moving forward should be. And that takes time to deal with to be able to do. Again, we are doing something unparalleled to address the issues that everybody is seeing as we speak.

So about a four-year schedule should be complete, end of 2022, coincide with completion of the Herbert Hoover Dike rehab. We'll have a new operating regime ready to go at that point, which we can then utilize.

As you see there are multiple engagements throughout the process where we are going to be out trying to get feedback from you on different parts of that process, and this is the first part of that process today, is hearing what your priorities are, what your concerns are, what you want to see out of this effort.

We plan to come back out in May, and then again in August -- I'll try to speak up a little louder. Sorry about that -- so we'll be back out in May to hold some workshops talk about a little bit more technical information on how the system works. Take some ideas that we hear today in our future scoping meetings over the month of February, and figure out some of the kind of good ideas that people have, and hopefully bring back some modeling to show what the impacts regionally might be as to ideas, get that conversation started. And that will also enable us to not only engage you again to get more specific ideas on what an operational schedule should look like, and provide information back to you on what some of the ideas that you have, what this impact might be, and how they may affect other areas within the system, as well as provide benefits locally.

Once we have all of that feedback, we'll develop specific alternatives for lake operations, and going into detailed modeling of those, and we'd come back out once we have that data and share what that analysis looks like and get your feedback on that and see what is important, what schedules, what operations you guys want to see based on detailed technical evaluation. Then ultimately that will help us to figure out what a future regulation schedule for the lake should look like. We'll document that in a new system operating manual as well as NEPA document to be sent out for public review. That's currently scheduled for April/May, 2022. We'll take feedback at that point. Make any changes to the plan based on that feedback. Send the final back out for everyone to look at again, provide final comment before anything is actually implemented.

So there would a lot of opportunity for everyone to be involved throughout this process. We want everyone to be out here involved in this process, keep your voices heard, let us know what is important to you and be involved in that process.

So again, lots of opportunity for involvement, so that's what I want everybody to take away, this is just the first of many opportunities throughout this.

As we move forward we know there is a lot of different stakeholder interests depending on where we are for different uses of Lake Okeechobee, since it is the heart of the Everglades system, a lot of people are counting on it for many different uses. And not all of those uses -- have mutually beneficial lake operations. We want to acknowledge that as well.

Flood control is very important. Flood risk management for us and for a lot of stakeholders, but that's not necessarily a mutually exclusive or beneficial operational regime as something such as ecosystem or water supply, things like that. So it's something we want to acknowledge and we'll talk more about that in our workshops on how the trade-offs work and how for different operations, but just want to acknowledge that fact right now.

Okay. And we're almost wrapping this part up. But what are we looking for today. And you are free to make any comments that you want. We want to hear everything you have to say, but as you are

making comments there's a few things we'd like everybody to keep in mind that would help us as we start to put a framework to this process. Those things are what issues are important to you. What study outcomes did you want. How would you measure success of this effort in the long run.

So like I said, feel free any comments you have we want to hear, but these are things that will be especially helpful for us as we move forward and start planning for the future engagement that we have.

And this effort, as I say, is a part of the scoping process, initial effort, but this portion of the process we want to have all of the comments in by March 31st. So that's just under 60 days from today. We want to have everybody's comments in on what is important, what they want to see out of this effort, so we can start preparing for follow-up workshops.

There are multiple ways in which you can provide comments, including today, providing a verbal comment here for us all to hear, you can also submit written a comment today, but if you want to follow-up and you don't have the opportunity until March 31st, you can also submit comments to Dr. Ann Hodgson, the address here. We also have a website which will have a lot of project information and contact information you can go through, and also a public e-mail address, lakecomments@usace.arm.mil, and that would be the main way to collect comments from everyone after this public meeting is over today.

As I mentioned, we'll have upcoming workshops planned for May. We don't know where we are having those yet. We're going to decide that based on the feedback that we get at these public meetings that will help us figure out what we want to talk about, where we want to be for the following workshops.

And that is all I have. I want to go ahead and turn it over to Jason Engle, who is going to facilitate our public comment period. And I encourage everyone to come up and make your comments so we can get it on the record. If you choose not to, you want to provide a written comment, that counts just the same.

So I'll turn it over to Jason. Thank you for your time.

MR. ENGLE: Thank you, Tim. Well, as we Lt. Colonel Reynolds and Tim Gysan said, welcome Ladies and Gentlemen. I want to say a few words about how this process is going to work. We are going to ask that the elected officials come up and make their statements first. Then we'll work through the comment cards that have been submitted. We have about 35 comments from the public. That being said, that with the time we have remaining in this meeting we have to limit that to two minutes. So we'd like you to keep your comments to two minutes, please.

I'll reiterate some of what has been said already, but we are here to listen. It's important your voice is heard, that's why you are here. We are here to listen and understand the concerns so that we can incorporate those into our efforts going forward. So when we come back around and speak again in those public workshops Tim spoke about in May we'll have looked at all of these comments, and incorporated those into the scope of our next steps.

So understand that today we are here to get your comments. We don't -- we are not really here for question and answer, because those answers have to be formulated when we have seen all the comments from all of the stakeholders across this entire month. I wanted you to understand that.

We are capturing your comments with a court reporter, so know that you are going on the official record. This is going to be the same as if you wrote on the comment card and submitted via e-mail, so your comments are considered equal.

As we said, the next step in this process is for our team to return for the public workshops where we have distilled all that information, and shown you some of our earlier results and get feedback again on where we need to go, and the steps to follow those workshops.

So we are attempting to get all of scoping comments in by 31 March, but that is not the end of your time to submit comments, as we said, we'll come back for the workshops. You will have other opportunities once you've seen some of our work to make additional comments. So all the scoping comments end 31 March, that does not mean the conversation is done.

So finally, what I would say is, in terms of process, like I said, we'll first have our elected officials come up, and then I have the -- I'll do the comment cards in the order that you walked in today, in the order that you submitted yours.

When you get up, please state your name, if applicable any organization that you are affiliated with.

So like I said, the first step is going to be to invite some of our elected officials to come up. And the first one on the list is Mayor Joe Coviello.

MAYOR COVIELLO: Thank you. Mayor Coviello, City of Cape Coral here, representing the 200,000 residents that we have in our City.

First, I want to thank Colonel Reynolds for your service as an active duty service person. Thank you for that. Thank you for the Army Corps for being here, and for holding this public informational meeting. I think it is the first step in many meetings that will help us hopefully find a resolution.

Citizens of Cape Coral do not ever want to see the blue green algae that we had in our canals last summer. Unless you've experienced it firsthand, you really can't understand how bad it really was, and it had an impact on our real estate market, our tourism, and many of the other economic development things we were trying to accomplish in our City. So we need to move forward on this regulation schedule, and I believe we need to move forward a lot quicker than we are looking at based on the plan. To me it's an essential aspect of keeping, not only Cape Coral, but our coastal communities in a temporary basis until all of the construction projects can be completed, which are going to take many, many years. So I find the initial solution to some releases taking place in the dry season, I'm not going to get technical, I'm more simple than this, I'm going to leave that to Mayor Ruane, he's got more technical experience with this than I do, so I'll talk in simple terms, but we know that we need more water during the dry season and less water during the wet season. To me that's a very common sense simple fix to what we are talking about today. So to look at the schedule to go out and review everything over a 30 or 35-month period, to me is much too long. We need to shorten that study done by the Army Corps and make something happen a lot faster so we can have temporary fixes, because the last thing I ever want to see is green algae coming down the Caloosahatchee River.

Lastly, I will state that I am very, very pleased with the shakeup that our new Governor has given us with the South Florida Water Management District and some of the changes that are going to be made there.

I want to publically congratulate Chauncey Goss councilman for that appointment. I can't think of a better -- I can't think of better person to be on that board. So we know we have at least oversight people that are going to watch out for our coastal community and our area, and certainly to help get improvements, so we are looked at with equitable priority from that district, from the Water Management District, and we are not like the red-headed stepchild when it comes to releasing water, because they need it somewhere else. We want to make sure that distribution is equitable. So with that, again, thank you to the Army Corps.

Thank you for everybody for coming out today. I am headed off to our 47th Street Scape dedication. So going from the sea to the land, so thanks again. Good luck.

MR. ENGLE: Thank you, Mayor. Next on the list is Mayor Ruane.

MAYOR RUANE: Good afternoon. My name is Kevin Ruane, Mayor of Sanibel. I'm also the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force west coast member. And thank you, Lt. Colonel Reynolds and the Army Corps for obviously putting this on.

2018 was a catastrophic year starting with the 89 days of NEPA violations. And that obviously led to the devastation in my community where we had 852,000 pounds of wildlife fish that actually washed upon the beaches. There is certainly inequities in this, and to have 89 days of NEPA violations it just obviously a system that doesn't work. And when you really look at LORS 2008, it was intended to be for two years. So to think we're going to wait until 2022 when there are so many inequities in the system right now seems bazaar.

We need more than ever to make policy changes that have dramatic impacts now. We can't really afford to wait for the projects to take place. Inequities through LORS are certainly there. We can get into as many issues as you'd like to, but I am going to stay at the 30,000 foot level and certainly indicate that we need to manage, as Mayor Coviello indicated, the dry season much better, because when you have NEPA violations we're not receiving enough water, and then to actually receive just so much water seems to be a system that continues to be broken.

And what's the definition of contaminated, when you do the same thing over and over, and we do that every year. I mean, I've been an officer for 12 years been advocating for this. I commend all the actions of moving water south, but even with all the actions that took place this past year we still have the devastation we did. So kudos to the move, but it didn't prevent the impact to tourism and real estate, and more importantly to our environment, and that was devastating.

You know, it's critical honestly when you look at beneficial use bands that we actually have a quality built-in them. We seem to, again, look at our situation where we really don't seem to get any benefit whatsoever. You hear about water supply, water supply and water supply.

As someone that's grown-up in this area of -- or certainly been here for the last 15 years, I can assure you that our economy, our environment is just as important as anyone, and balance is certainly something I'd like to see.

We talk about watershed adversity. I'd really like to know what that means, because I have not seen that take place at all. It's supposed to be equitable for all water uses during dry periods, and that doesn't seem -- we seem to get cut off, and I can remember the many years getting cut off. And again, comes down to some operational flexibility, but to think we need to wait for LORS to run parallel with

the Herbert Hoover Dike seem to be really not one we want to endorse. We want to see any type of flexibility whatsoever to accelerate this process in LORS. Because, again, when you go back LORS was intended to be here for two years, never intended to go for 14 years. And the 2008 LORS, or certainly might be 2006 LORS. Just like we start this process now, and I don't want this to see 2022.

So if you want to do something really courageous and really want to be bold we need to accelerate this process. And more importantly, we need make these changes effective immediately. Thank you.

MR. ENGLE: Thank you, Mayor. The next speaker is Tracey Gore, Town of Fort Myers Beach.

MAYOR GORE: I am Tracey Gore, Town of Fort Myers Beach. I can't express anymore than what the two mayors just did. We have been so united the mayors of this county, Lee County. There is so many organizations, and I think a big point -- I want to thank the Army Corps, thank you so much for having us -- is to listen to our experts too, because we have a lot of amazing experts on water quality on the flows, on all things that need to be done, and I don't think that we've been listened to. And they're so smart, and I just -- I am with Mayor Joe and Mayor Kevin that we have to get this done faster. Not only am I a Mayor of my Town, but my business is commercial fishing. So it affects me and my pocket too when the devastation happens. And not only am I your Mayor, I'm a citizen here. I don't want my home and my canal and my island to be trashed like it was this summer. We have to do something.

So I look forward to working with you guys moving forward, but please listen to our experts too. Thank you so much.

MR. ENGLE: Thank you, Mayor Gore. Vice Mayor Mick Denham.

VICE MAYOR DENHAM: No comment.

MR. ENGLE: Thank you, sir. Next is Chauncey Goss.

MR. GOSS: Good afternoon everyone. Thank you so much Colonel Reynolds for being here, your team. Thank you very much -- more than anything else listening to us. I really appreciate that. I am city councilman newly appointed the governing board of South Florida Water Management District, I'm really looking forward to that. Most importantly I'm a resident of southwest Florida. My family moved here over about 50 years ago. I've never seen water quality worse than it is now. That's a real shame. I've got children, it is breaking my heart. It is not something you want to see -- it's clear to me that LORS isn't working. It should be clear to everybody that LORS isn't working. We can't have what we have had, you look at the last six years, three of those years have been sort of lost years on us. They've been lost years in a lot of ways, because they've been lost to our environment, and you see the impact that's had on our environment, which that translates over to the loss it's had on our economy. I look at Sanibel over the last couple years our economy has been hammered.

Most importantly, I think it is something that really has slipped under the radar and something you really need to start paying attention to is it's had an impact on our health. No ones paid attention to that. And it is something I am going to ask the Corps, you know, I think you are looking at this under NEPA, and you're looking at impact on human systems. I think you have to look at the health. I don't know how you can ignore that. I know Lee Health, and I know Martin Health are both involved now, so that's something I'd ask you very much to look at the impact this has had on human health. I think cyanobacteria there is no doubt in my mind that it is toxic. It's not something we should be breathing. There's no doubt in my mind that red tide, whether or not that was all caused by the releases or not is

something as toxic, and something we probably shouldn't be breathing. So thank you very much for being here. You said, you know, what is going to be our criteria for success, I think one of the things you really need to look at balance. I don't think the current LORS schedule is balanced all. So look at this coast a little more for balance as a criteria of success. Thanks.

MR. ENGLE: Thank you, Mr. Goss. Next is Holly Smith, city council Sanibel Island.

MS. SMITH: I'm waiting until this evening.

MR. ENGLE: Thank you, ma'am. Next would be city councilman Jason Maughan, City of Sanibel.

MR. MAUGHAN: Boy, Chauncey really said it there. Good job, Chauncey, congratulations.

I want to thank the Colonel for having us all here today. I never -- I would take the position that I don't blame the Corps of Engineers. They follow orders and execute on your orders. All they ever asked is that if there is any operational flexibility that things be expedited.

I would say now that the order of the day is a lack (inaudible) that comes up with the schedule. And what you need to consider respectfully is the citizens of the coastal areas and the river rhine communities as well, defend us, defend our economy, and defend our health. That is the order of the day. Thank you.

MR. ENGLE: Thank you, sir.

That concludes the list of the elected officials that I have here. Are there any others in the crowd that arrived since we started? Please come down.

MS. EVERLY: Hello, I'm Therese Everly, elected board member from Lee Health. I had not planned on speaking today, but I am sitting in the back I thought I'd take this opportunity. First, I'd like to thank you all for having this, listening to us, it means a lot.

Everyone has talked about the impact on economy and our tourism, obviously that is obviously important. But at the end of the day it is our health. And I am proud that Lee Health has joined with Martin Health in surveying people for the impact on red tide. What I would like, you are asking for an outcome, I would like you as Federal agency and State agencies to work together to come up with a mechanism to measure the toxins in the lake coming into the lake, and coming out of the lake. That we -- and see what is happening in our counties and formulate a plan, a public health plan to address this problem.

It is also very important that we mandate some type of way collecting the data so that long-term we can study effects of both the red tide and cyanobacteria. I know it is going to take several years to come up with this, but I feel strongly that this is our duty to take care of our children and our grandchildren moving into the future.

That's all I have to say. Thank you.

MR. ENGLE: Thank you. That concludes the first portion of the comment period for elected officials. We're going to step into the comment cards that have been submitted. These, again, do these in order. I'm going to call out three names so that the folks that are second and third have a chance to move

toward the mic. But like the reason I am doing that is because I want to have as much time the people on the mic as possible, and the least amount of pauses between. So we'll start with three names. We'll just move forward like that.

When you come up to the mic, please state your name so we have that in the comments records, and who you are affiliated with, so make sure to do that. We'll ask that you come podium just so that the microphones that are there can capture the audio.

The first three speakers, and I apologize in advance for mispronouncing the name if I do, Dennis Mac Namara, Jim Collier, and Wright Taylor.

MR. MAC NAMARA: I guess I'm first. Dennis Mac Namara, basically a nobody from Cape Coral. My first comment is where are all the people in such an important topic. I can't believe it's not standing room only, you know, for all of us here in Florida. Second, I think that our leaders have left us in a lurch. They are approaching this problem like the fable from the Blind Hindu's looking at an elephant, everyone looking at a different part and not working together to solve this.

We should have experts that are telling us what to do, and act on that. And we should be holding them accountable. I applaud the people here that are looking at -- working for solutions, but it is taking too long, and you know, it is a waste of our time. Thank you for your time.

MR. COLLIER: My name is Jim Collier. I live in Cape Coral. My wife and I bought our place there in 2004. We're very proud to live there. It is not the Cape Coral that we moved into. Things change, I understand that, I've been involved in real estate development.

First, I appreciate the chance to speak here today. We get a chance to actually act like this makes a difference. And the branches of the U.S. military in my opinion do a pretty good job with what they are tasked to do. I believe that's true of the Corps. They were asked to drain the Everglades to a great degree, and they are pretty good at doing what they are supposed to do.

My issue is with the instructions that the Corps use. There is no question that you did it. You cannot repeatedly insult these estuaries, estuaries being on the St. Lucie River, and the Caloosahatchee. Of course, we have the Peace and all the way down to Marco Island as Captain Rob will tell you with these discharges. The conditions have greatly changed since the Corps received its initial instructions back in the '50s to stop the flood problem that was going on in central Florida. Of course, if you ever drive by that dike it is pretty impressive. When you have as much earth moving ability as the Corps and its contractors have, I think it's definitely worth taking a look at.

The presently and here forward acting board of the district I think gave some instructions to the board, and to the Corps from congress. This is based on flawed and outdated information, possibly from a corrupt management. I think the Corps followed those instructions and essentially created laboratory perfect conditions for sugarcane. I'm not blaming big sugar. They are a corporation, they are making money for their shareholders.

I heard the term shared adversity. There is no shared adversity. I think we all know that. Modern equipment and technique can achieve southern disposal. What we need to do is send that water south, I think everybody knows that, and I don't think it's the idea to send them to reservoirs. It's clear that you need sheet flow, and I think all the experts that have credibility have clearly stated that sheet flow is the way you remove nutrients from water.

So my question is, doesn't the Corps have a duty to question the current instructions and request new ones, and it would seem that this process is part of that, and I just urge you to move on it. I don't think reservoirs are the answer, except that they are a contractor's dream. I could definitely pay off my house I think in the first 30 days of being one of the dirt contractors on either of those reservoir contracts.

With regard to Lt. Commander Reynolds, if any of your staff or you personally would like to take a tour of the Cape Coral area, I am sure I know enough guys with boats, including myself, that will take you out. And so that goes to any of the Corps staff. If you want to come down, get ahold of me, I signed up. We'll do that. My issues are urgency, and reduction of the discharges. The outcomes I'm interested in sheet flow to the Everglades. How do I measure success, sea grass and oysters growing in the rivers on their own, which would mean that you have a dramatic reduction of the discharges come down Okeechobee.

And then one other way I'd measure success, I don't have to go to anymore of these meetings, you got Captain Daniel Andrews here, I think he's a smart guy and he put out t-shirts a few years ago that said, I'd Rather Be Fishing. That's what I'd rather be doing than sitting out here. On the other hand, it's a really neat facility, and I encourage anybody to go down this hallway and look at pictures of World War II pilots that were trained here. This is a historic base.

Thank you for having me.

MR. TAYLOR: My name is Wright Taylor. I'm a professional guide and resident that has been affected by the water issues plaguing Florida. I am here today representing Coastal Conservation Association of Florida, and our 18,000 members. CCA has been Florida's leading recreational angler advocacy group for marine fisheries for 34 years. CCA is also very involved in habitat projects from around the State from sea grass, oysters, and mangrove restorations to revitalizing clams in the Indian River Lagoon, and creating artificial reefs offshore. CCA is very concerned about the water quality of our State and understands that without better water conditions comes a loss of habitat, and eventually loss of fish and marine life. And very importantly, a loss of Florida's economic well-being and our quality of life.

CCA Florida also understands that there are many solutions to consider. There is not one answer, but many, and we must all come together as Floridians and in partnership with the Federal Government to solve and to restore our water quality.

We want to thank the Army Corps of Engineers and the Army Corps for hosting this meeting and engaging the parties and to thank Governor DeSantis for his comprehensive involved water initiative. With workable and sound solutions coupled with real and adequate funding we can and must get this mess cleaned up.

MR. ENGLE: Thank you. Next three are David Ulrich. Pete Quasius. And John Cassani.

MR. ULRICH: I'm Dave Ulrich, life member of Responsible Growth Management Association. I made these three charts over here. I don't how much I can get in two minutes, but for the past probably five years I've seen pull the plug, send the water south, and the plug is at the Tamiami Trail. And we have a real problem that the water is coming through the WCA's, Water Conservation Areas, and it's not going out the bottom. And that's a mistake that was made 40 or so years ago when they put in the original plumbing. People in Miami didn't want the southern conveyance, so it wasn't built. So we built a toilet that has to come out to both rivers. And we are now is the time we need to fix that. And I am 85, my

wife says not to admit that, and even though I put up with her and she put up with me 63 years. We don't always do what the other says. But I can't wait for 2022. I will probably be around, hopefully.

But the only thing that I am still fighting for is this. I fought for a lot of things over the years. But this particular cause is one that I still am taking my time for. I beg for you to please study how you can send water down Taylor Slough to save Florida bays from salinity. If you don't, if it goes down Shark River Slough, mixes with salty water in the Gulf of Mexico, then comes back into the Florida Bay and doesn't do any good for the salinity.

I could say more, but I won't. And I have a handout.

MR. QUASIUS: I'm Peter Quasius. I'm here on behalf of Audubon of the Western Everglades. I've lived on the shores of the Caloosahatchee for more than 25 years, and seen it gradually die. We have a plan to make it recover, but if we are going to implement that plan it is vital that when there are dry times, and there will be dry times, that the Caloosahatchee does not get denied the vital water it needs to keep the oysters and sea grass alive. We need that shared adversity to meet our MFL's. There's one big change that we need in the operational manual that's coming up is that increase flexibility by the Corps so that they can, in fact, meet the needs of the environment with the waters that are available.

Corps, thank you very much for your leadership certainly for exercising the ability to use every bit of the flexibility that existed with the current regulations. We hope that the new regulations will give you and your predecessors -- successors more flexibility to meet the needs of our community. We are concerned about our economy. We are concerned about our health. We are concerned about the future of our quality of life. And the way to do that is to manage the high flows when we can and deal with the dry season when we must. Thank you very much.

MR. CASSANI: Good afternoon. Good to see such a good turnout. Almost standing room only. For the record, John Cassani, Calusa Waterkeeper. Obviously this is a all hands on deck situation that requires some open mind in congress with enough political courage to fix the problem. There has never been more at stake, but less time available to insure sustainable future for South Florida.

Unfortunately, even the current Lake O water control plants still has the basis and policy adopted seven years ago as part of the Central and Southern Flight Control District that benefits the few and expense of the many. This has to change. The District's and the Corps' adapted protocol process for revising lake schedule a decade ago resulted in little, if any, progress. The overall situation only got worse, except for the single industry that benefited from near perfect flood control water supply.

Revising the lake operating manual with a meaningful emphasis on public health outcomes will be a critical part of a renewed policy. We are hearing this from just about everybody. Numeric thresholds for the lake's cyanotoxin concentrations should become part of the regulation (inaudible) similar to the numeric flow rates for regulatory discharge. Communities around the lake experiencing cancer clusters as evidenced in peer reviewed science, should be just as concerned as those exposed to cyanotoxins on both coasts. Urgency is the message of the day. I hear this refrain everywhere I go, including the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine. We can't wait four more years to get this crisis turned around. I urge the Corps the support from congress to finish the process of revising the lake operating manual by June of 2020 independent of the dike completion, and a badly needed balance toward all users in compliance with federal laws protecting wildlife and habitat. Thank you.

MR. ENGLE: Thank you. The next speakers are Lori Haus-Bulcock. Maya Robert. And Cheryl Anderson.

MS. HAUS-BULCOCK: My name is Lori Haus-Bulcock resident of Cape Coral, and I am involved with several environmental organizations in Southwest Florida. Two years ago before the blooming algae and red tide reached the crisis levels of the past year I took a birding trip with my friend Cheryl to Sanibel. I was surprised to see as she stepped out of the car she was wearing a mask over her nose and mouth. To tell you the truth this looked like a little bit of hypochondria to me. Well, within 10 minutes I had a tickle in my throat and my eyes were profusely watering. At that moment the crisis became personal. Dead fish, manatees, dolphins are piling up in my back yard. Are we waiting to see whether dead humans will pile up? Will another 10 years or more pass before action is taken to address this? Will the U.S. Government continue to look the other way? I understand that an attainable yet a confessed first step would be to manage the water levels in Lake Okeechobee. I implore you to adjust your current schedule to one which would be immediately begin to mitigate the tragic impacts on our health, economy and wildlife. Thank you for your time.

MS. ANDERSON: Cheryl Anderson from Cape Coral. I probably don't need a microphone. How many of you were sick by algae this year just raise your hand? How many people were sick? I was sick. You want to know what it is like to be sick to walk outside in the morning and your head starts to pound and close the door. To buy \$4,000 worth of air filters for your home so that you can breathe and feel you are not being poisoned. To go over to a friend's house who had the algae backed up in their canal, when I got out of the car I thought my head was going to explode. And I'm going why am I here? I am poisoning myself. What kind of person lives next to poison breathing it? After we saw the living toxic puddle I am going, what kind of person lives in this? We should sell our house. We should leave. We should leave this place. That's what a sensible person does. Nobody stays around and breathes poison, yet we are here.

The only reason we are still here is because I have some hope that something will happen right now, that I'm not going to be poisoned this summer like I was poisoned last summer. Congress has told us that if Lake Okeechobee was at 10 and-a-half feet last year, 10 and-a-half feet last year, when the rainy season started we would have had zero discharges.

Now, I've been watching the levels on Lake Okeechobee every day, they were going down 12 and-a-half, 12 point three, 12 point two. Now they are going back up again. So if you look at how all the gates are being operated, it doesn't appear that they're being operated in such a way to take the lake to a lower level so that we won't have to endure these discharges. This is something you could do right now. Right now. Not four years from now. Right now. I can tell you that if you don't do something right now that we are out of here. Okay. It won't be just me, because you can't tolerate this much longer.

Now, congress just introduced a bill yesterday if passed will require you to warn us when poison is coming our way and may even limit your ability to poison us. That's what I would like to see. You guys figure out someplace else to put this water. How about the 16,000 acres that the taxpayers own that has just been released to the sugar companies. Thank you.

MR. ENGLE: Next three speakers are Dennis Holland. Daniel Andrews. Keith Cherne. I just want to remind everyone to state your name when you get up there and any affiliation you have, please.

MR. HOLLAND: What a crowd. Thank you. Dennis Holland. I've been a resident here since 1980, when a lot of ground was still ground. I think the biggest news story about canals was, oh wait a minute, they found a shoe with a foot in it. Those were the bad old days. Now we are hearing, oh my God, I can't walk outside without a mask on now. Now, my mother who is 93, I wouldn't let her go outside without

a mask anymore, because of what is out there. I have family come down here in December and unbeknownst to me they decided to go out to where water was, and next thing I heard was oh God, why am I itching, why am I coughing. I said, where did you go, and they said well, we went out to the islands. I said, you shouldn't have went there.

I asked the Corps, who I got a lot of respect for, you know, I spent over 40 years of my life as a consulting engineer, most of it here, building buildings and constructing things. If I took as long as you did, I would have not made a living. Now, the people here came here because it's a nice place to live. I've been lucky enough to live here for almost all of this time, understanding for a while for almost a decade, I built wastewater treatment plants, not the big ones, small ones, container size. I shipped them all over the world. If I could do that, you folks should have figured this out a long time ago. And not spend as much money. I realize that I had clients that I used to send proposals on, I used to send out 300 proposals a year. If I got 20 jobs I was really happy, that made our budget and it made our payroll.

But folks, we can no longer sit and wait for the water to rise, which it will do, and then flow down our ditches, because they ain't rivers anymore, and pollute us. You are going to build a retention pond, that's great. But what is it going to do when it overflows. Thank you, Ladies and Gentlemen.

MR. ANDREWS: My name is Daniel Andrews. I am the executive director for Captains for Clean Water. I'd like to thank Colonel Reynolds for putting this on today. I'd also like to thank you all for showing up and make your voice heard. I think that's what is going to make the biggest different between LORS and LOSOM. Thanks again for that. I'd like to thank all the elected officials who showed up today. I couldn't agree with what they have to say anymore. I think they all nailed it. And not only is it them, but they have a science staff that's working on this here in the room. We were living with this every day. These local governments are living with this every day. So I think the biggest thing that we can do as we go through the process is make -- keep them engaged, make -- you know, let them have a seat at the table, workshops with these local governments, and you know, James Evans knows more about the operations schedule than I do and probably most people in this room how we can tweak it to make observations. Rae Ann Wessel at SCCF is also a technical guru with all this. Let's set up meetings like that, and if it takes anything more than that, if we need to get the whole Army Corps of Engineers out with a fishing guide, I guarantee you I know enough fishing guides to get the whole Army Corps of Engineers and all of the congress out if that's what is it going to take.

But when we are seeing things like the tape grass in the upper estuary that's dying, because it is not getting enough freshwater, and then just days later it get flushed with billions of gallons of freshwater, that is something that a small operational change that we make could have a huge difference in the quality of life of everybody here in Southwest Florida, especially the business owners that are -- have really had to make some tough decision this year.

So again, my biggest take away. Thank you all for showing up today. And please keep the stakeholders involved. If there's anything we can do to help out the process, please let me know. Thank you.

MR. CHERNE: Hello everybody, Keith Cherne. And my wife Karen and I are eight-year residents of Cape Coral. We are boat owners, moved here to enjoy the beaches, climate and waterways of southwest Florida. Our retirement plans, local jobs, the local economy, including tourist and fishing, water recreation are being destroyed. On July 30th of 2018, not many days after that, Fort Myers Beach was like a ghost town. And by Christmastime we had 45 dead dolphins on the Lee County beaches. The

Corps of Engineers is responsible for the operation and maintenance for a natural manmade water system around Lake Okeechobee. As a federally funded agency, I was appalled at the releases last year. These releases had liver toxins, neurotoxins. And they were causing 15 times the accepted level of toxins safe for human touch. The Corps of Engineers indirectly is causing a threat to health -- human health and safety. Killing water vegetation, including sea grass, including sea turtles. And causing prolonged red tide in our waters.

I do not believe this was the intention of the Army Corps of Engineers. I have some important news for you, human toxins are being created and released into the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie estuaries. Last year the Calusa Riverkeeper had the water tested while the releases were in progress. Those results found the presence of these toxins. Maybe the Corps of Engineers could adopt a threshold for how dangerous of a toxin or how much of a toxin release could cause a stop to Lake O discharges.

Army Corps of Engineers is now making health and human safety of our people affected by the agency's actions a top priority, I'm so happy to see that. Flooding issues and water supply, of course, will still be of utmost importance. Agriculture and other special interests, like big sugar, should not have a place in determining policy, although they do. Yes. I don't even see their names on the stakeholder list, but they are definitely out there.

Some solutions I would like the Corps of Engineers to implement are lowering the operational level of water of Lake Okeechobee during the dry season. Let's put public interests ahead of agricultural interests here. It is very possible agricultural interests will have plenty of water for irrigation with this solution. We can use the water control system that's already in place without spending anymore taxpayer dollars. And with only four months of dry season left this year we're under the gun to get this considered and implemented.

Secondly, the people of Florida have spoken on April 11th, 2017. My wife and I traveled to Tallahassee where we helped Captains for Clean Water organization lobby for Senate Bill 10. A few days later that passed. Acquiring more land for the EAA would make this project work at optimal levels. The project has already been delayed by the inaction of the South Florida Water Management District and the Army Corps of Engineers. Senate Bill 10 passed nearly two years ago. There is no progress, concrete progress yet. Breaking ground on this project, actual project on the southern reservoir is critical now. This needs to be a top priority in the action plan.

What outcomes do I want to see, let's study Lake Okeechobee watershed restoration project tentatively selected plan, alternative 1B, which includes restoration plan for ASR wells, aquifer storage and recovery. ASR well in Palm Beach County some ejected water was lost and they did not know where it went. This was untreated water. The 80 wells proposed in that project at eight million dollars each is enough money -- it's equal to the Federal portion of funds authorized for southern reservoir. 640 million dollars for those wells.

Also, more study on harmful algae blooms like the one that covered 80 percent of Lake O last spring are needed. Any studies -- any studies can be done after a significant progress on our southern reservoirs. Herbert Hoover Dike may not even be necessary if this project works properly.

We can -- how can we measure success. First of all, let's get the EAA reservoir started. Many reservoirs have been built by our government agencies. Actions speak much louder than words. Secondly, we only treated clean water allowed into Lake O when protections are in place to insure this into the future, that will represent success. All of us are responsible for this manmade water crisis.

I would like to thank the Army Corps of Engineers and the Mosquito District for this platform. Thank you.

MR. ENGLE: What I'd like to say is, we want to get every single comment that you have. We got just about two minutes for every person to fit into this process. You can submit written comments. You can submit as much as you want, and we encourage that. We want to hear it, but we do want to let everyone have a chance. So please just try to stick to the two minutes if you can.

Next three names Rae Ann Wessel. Kenneth Thompson. And Brian Lynch.

MS. WESSELL: Thank you very much. Rae Ann Wessel, Sanibel Captiva Conservation Foundation. I want to thank the Corps for using extraordinary flexibility this year. This has been an unusual year of extremes, but we appreciate that there have already been operations implemented that have helped. We appreciate having a meeting kick off here in Fort Myers where the Caloosahatchee has experienced so much of that Goldie Locks condition with the too much, too little being harmed at both levels.

The current water management system is challenging on both ends, but we are going to focus comments today for the LOSOM on the low water conditions, because those low water conditions are a policy decision. High water requires more projects, more places to put water. But the low water conditions are really opportunities to share and balance this critical water resource. We'll submit more comments in detail in the letter to the Corps, but we are asking that we expedite the timeline to accelerate to finish in 2020. I am so proud that Water Management District and the Corps were able to get the EAA reservoir completed in that time. I've lived through this enough that I've seen the 10-year planning process, the three-year planning process and now a one year. So let's keep it up. That's a tremendous opportunity, because we can't afford to have three and-a-half more years of these harmful conditions.

We are asking that the evaluation be unlinked from Lake Okeechobee Herbert Hoover Dike restoration, because managing water levels in the lake really don't -- need to focus on natural resources, and that means the lake marsh, the living part of the lake. If we raise water levels above where the operational band is now, that's when we start to destroy that living system, and that would be what really affects the Herbert Hoover Dike. So I think we can unlink these two and have some real benefits.

We reiterate our request for a sea level rise study to assess the impact that the title water is having upriver on freshwater inflows that are needed to balance salinity downstream of the S-79. And I'll wrap it up.

Lake Okeechobee water level management should include evaluation of extending the lower lake operational band by a half foot to about 11 and-a-half feet. We ask that all bands on the water -- of the lake's water levels be managed and modeled. We currently don't have any modeling for releases to the Caloosahatchee water shortage, and that the MFL's that are used in the recover project management decisions are incorrect, they are deficient and defective and are less than half of what is needed, so when they do the habitat analysis we get the wrong answer.

I ask for the management and other details would be for shared prosperity when we have enough water, and shared adversity when we don't. We all take a hit and we all share in the benefit. Thank you.

MR. THOMPSON: Good afternoon, Ladies and

Gentlemen. My name is Kenneth Thompson. I am seat three of the Lehigh Acres Municipal Services Improvement District. Lehigh is a mile that way between here and the giant lake they are building 10,000 acre reservoir C-43. We have a request. We abut C-43. We'd like your water. There is currently no water treatment facility associated with this reservoir. We would like to take the water, flow it through Section C-10, which is a project that we are dealing with Lee County 560 acres of old mining pit to try to take the water to flow it through there, the Cypress Head, then through our water system back out to the lake, -- back out to the river. We would take it and treat it. We think it's a very good project. We are excited about it. It's currently in front of the State Senate House of Representatives. Dave Lindsey, our director, is here. He has more detail about it.

But we are asking for your support, because we would be taking your water and be able to treat it in the future from the river flowing through it, and we put it back into the river in a better qualified state. Thank you.

MR. LYNCH: Hi, I am from Cape Coral. My dad moved here in 1958. I was born here 1963. I've been fishing the river for my entire life. I got four points pretty much the same points everybody else has been making, that the lake levels in Lake Okeechobee need to be held as low as possible during wintertime so that when we know the rains will come, there's no doubt that they're coming, we need to make to sure that particular thing gets taken care of. Good point a lot of people have made that we definitely need be considered of is the amount of water that needs to be sent south. There is so many different things, in 41 different manmade structures that caused this. I know that if the Army Corps of Engineers decided to today that they could probably have miles and miles of bridges built in 41 in three months, because if they decided they'd want to do it they could get it done. We can get that water south. Florida Bay is dying from saltwater intrusion, you know, Miami has saltwater intrusion in their wells. We know this is a problem. We know having too much water in the lake is a problem. Let's go ahead and work on those two subject matters.

Also, the health, I had my next door neighbor had so much green algae built up in his canal I couldn't walk outside of my door without covering my face. So that's got to stop. We can't have just this green algae. We also have to have the minimal water flows to the river to stop the death of the sea grass.

Last point I make is I used to fish the area between Caloosahatchee Bridge and Cape Coral Bridge with acres and acres of the most beautiful sea grass you've ever seen, most beautiful oyster bars you've ever seen. When LORS came into effect that sea grass died off at a rate that is unbelievable. So these water releases have been happening for 50 years. Whatever LORS did killed it. Whatever LORS changed. I yelled at this the Cape Coral meeting when I talked to you and I said LORS has to change now, because what they did in 2008 has changed everything I used to fish. 2008, and there is 30 years' worth of stuff that is proof that water has been sent this way. Whatever LORS did in those numbers, I wish you could take a picture of what I used to fish and what I fish now, it's dead. Completely dead. Thank you.

MR. ENGLE: Thank you. The next three speakers are Richard Johnson. Jim Metzler. And Marisa Carrozzo.

MR. JOHNSON: Good afternoon everyone. Richard Johnson. I represent a group of business people that got together during this crisis and formed Florida Economic Council. Can you hear me now. Florida Economic Council that is dedicated to a healthy environment, which also means a healthy economy. We clearly recognize that the environment and the economy are clearly tied together.

I want to thank the Corps of Engineers for the work they have done here most recently, and also for holding these meetings, because I think it is very important they are here, they are listening. We need to speak up.

I also represent a 119-year-old family business that I'm very proud of out in Sanibel Island, and I will share with you that I have never been concerned about the ongoing business of the Bailey's General Store until this last year. We were threatened like we've never been threatened before. I seriously was concerned about being able to keep the doors open, and we cannot keep the doors open if we go through this year after year.

So I'm going to ask several things, please expedite the process. We've heard this from other speakers before. I think we need to move forward quickly. Steps can be taken that provide for much better water management decisions. Provide for balance that has been missing painfully, and the pain has been here on the east coast as well as the west coast of Florida. The considerations in the very recent past we've seen some good things come out of those decisions. It's a step in the right direction. We need to keep moving forward with that. Manage the lake in a manner that does not provide benefit to special interests groups at the expense of other stakeholders.

The last point I'd like to make is consider all of the economic, environmental and health impacts of the decisions that you put into LOSOM. Thank you very much for your time. I too would like to thank the Corps for putting on this process today.

MR. METZLER: My name is Jim Metzler. I am with Ding Darling Wildlife Society. The role of the society is to help the Ding Darling Wildlife Refuge achieve their goals. Now, the goals of the refuge, like all of the Federal national wildlife refuges including conserving, and managing fish and wildlife. Achieving that goal is difficult in a normal year, in part, because the releases from Lake O on a normal year is detrimental to fish and wildlife. We all know that last year was not a normal year. Those releases were not detrimental, they were catastrophic. Absolutely catastrophic.

I want to switch a bit, I want to read the press release the Army Corps put out, if I can find the press release, this one fell -- my wife calls me a basket case, I'm not sure why. Anyway, the press release states that this effort was due to new upgrading manual for Lake O, which were involved a new lake regulation schedule that addresses congressionally authorized purposes, I repeat, congressionally authorized purposes include flood risk management, water supply, navigation, recreation and the enhancement of fish and wildlife. I would suggest that the release schedule gets passing grades for four of those purposes, it absolutely fails on enhancing fish and wildlife.

Also in terms of requests going forward we have two of them. One is that we absolutely need to see congressionally authorized purpose of fish and wildlife enhancement up at the top shared with others, but not at the bottom. We can't take devastation year after year.

And the second request, like so many others, we all know we can't wait four more years. Four more years there may not be a Ding Darling Wildlife Refuge. Thank you.

MS. CARROZZO: Good afternoon, everyone. I'm Marisa Carrozzo. I'm here on behalf of the Conservancy of Southwest Florida. I'd like to thank Lt. Colonel Reynolds and the rest of the Army Corps team for hosting these meetings here and starting the scoping off in southwest Florida. Certainly our challenge are our time management skills on two minutes, though. Here it goes.

We see this as an opportunity to make beneficial changes to how water is managed system wide here. And to achieve this we strongly encourage the Army Corps to take a truly broad approach to the scoping process, not just from a geographic perspective, but in what is included and analyzed throughout this process.

So in that broad scope we have four overarching areas we'd like to see addressed. First, we would like to see a robust analysis and modeling of various water quality parameters such as nutrients, salinity and impact of algal blooms to improve impact analysis on any schedule.

Secondly, water supply is a key area. During dry season the Caloosahatchee is cut off from water before any other user. And as we heard from other speakers here today, we really need that shared adversity, that balance to be applied in these situations.

Another third aspect is operations, how can we include and codify the flexibility to address years like 2018, where we've swung rapidly to months of too little freshwater to too much freshwater in a matter of days.

Finally, in this scoping we do want to see this process less tied to the Herbert Hoover Dike repairs in order to include in the scope the current operations under LORS to prevent further ecological and economic harm.

And to the end we are pleased to hear that the Corps is committing to utilizing all the current operational flexibility under LORS '08, and we certainly recognize that the complexity of this effort and in support, of course, proposed public involvement. We will also see that commitment moves forward in an accelerated timeline to order to accomplish these benefits and provide relief to the estuaries sooner rather than later.

Finally, we do have some very specific recommendations that we'd like to see for LOSOM outcomes and criteria and measurements, but in the interest of being respectful of time we will submit those in written comments.

Thank you to everyone who's here today. We look forward to the Army Corps and all the other stakeholders in this process going forward.

MR. ENGLE: Thank you. The next three speakers are Mohamed Yasin. Duncan Russell. And Kris Fields.

MR. YASIN: Good afternoon. My name is Mohamed

Yasin. I am retired from Army after 23 years of service. Thank you, Colonel Reynolds for coming over. I like this type of gathering, this type of forum, because it gives you what the people want, not what you want as a group. If you listen well enough and those are leaders from the other areas, I am from Lehigh, if you listen about four speakers ago Mr. Ken Thompson came up here and said shove some of the water to Lehigh and they will treat it. Immediate solution, there is one of your most important ones.

The other solutions are what you guys are working long-term. The Army just doesn't move water just like that. Got to go through legislative powers and it takes time. I know it. You know it. Nothing gets done overnight. But we have to be careful and bring things forward, those things that are important to us. Our health is extremely important. And yes, I agree that we move -- we need to move forward

quicker than four years. It's too long. Do it now. Do it right away. Consider not delaying. Consider our health.

You know, I own places in Sanibel and in Cape Coral, I will tell you this, last year my family came from north over 35 of them that spent over \$1,200 each could not go to Fort Myers Beach, nor Sanibel. Think about this. Our economy has suffered by those people's. They won't be coming back, just like that. They've be questioning. Hurry up and do what is right.

MR. RUSSELL: Thank you very much. My name is Duncan Russell. I'm a resident of Cape Coral. I thank the Army Corps in hosting this. I'm going to make a few different comments that I haven't heard. I support the idea of sheet flow from the lake, but what goes -- Lake Okeechobee is a toilet bowl, okay. And you got a million cattle around the lake. Poop on the ground all flows into the lake, that's the source of nitrates. If you dredge the bottom of Lake Okeechobee it stinks, and it's from years and years, and until you fix the agricultural run-off, not only the nitrates, but the phosphates from citrus, there is obviously natural phosphates, but that has to be fixed. Put dikes around all the farm land, make them hold the water back, make them percolate through dikes before it gets into Lake Okeechobee, it will help cut down on a lot of affluent.

Second, the bottom of Lake Okeechobee gets stirred up in storms, and it is the source of a lot of the nitrates and phosphates, and that's where this green algae is coming from. So that has to be corrected.

Third source of nitrates are poor wastewater treatment facilities in the center of the State, Orlando, and Kissimmee, so on. I heard terrible reports about the condition of the water coming out of the wastewater treatment facilities. They are not policed properly and you got tremendous well and septic systems around the lake that aren't being tested.

So clean up the water supply that's flowing into the lake, that will help deter. Thank you for your time.

MR. ENGLE: Kris Fields?

MS. FIELDS: I'm not here to speak. I am here to listen.

MR. ENGLE: Thank you. The next name is Teresa Fields. Sandra Canning. Kenneth Jaros.

MS. CANNING: Hi. My name is Sandra Canning. I'm a retired biologist. I spent 25 years in the west working actually in areas where blue green algae blooms were a yearly occurrence. The bottom line is nutrient loading. And what I'd like to see the Corps address, they have a very difficult job to do. I read 2008 operational manual this week, and you have a thankless job to do. It's very difficult. You are trying to meet all kind of needs for all kinds of people, and that's not an easy job to do.

But nowhere did I see addressed, the only water quality thing I saw addressed -- in the lake was how to control or try to break out algae blooms in low level conditions, rivers, and I did not see anything addressed on blue green algae blooms in the lake itself. It's all nutrient loading, and I'd like to see in this new operation manual, because that's basically what we are dealing with here how to do that, is addressing how to try to control nutrient loading to the lake. Whether or not that's working with other entities, you don't have control over everything that comes into lake, but how to work with the other entities that have control over that in getting reductions in those nutrient loads and not become like the west where we have plenty of phosphorus and we have blue green algae blooms every year, because that's what happening.

And also what I wanted to also point out to you to address is plant removal in the lake, because as I understand it a huge plant removal, this exacerbated the problem in the lake by providing those -- a lot of nutrients to the lake water. So I'd like to see that plant removal, not just going in with a plant -- plant -- aside from killing them, but maybe physical removals or other possibilities on how to address that kind of thing. Thank you.

MR. ENGLE: Kenneth Jaros.

MR. JAROS: I have two minutes, make this quick. Thank you for having us. I want to thank the mayors and the other elected officials. I agree with what they said, and I agree with a lot of what everyone else said. I went to the scoping meetings through the South Florida Water Management District when they were trying to figure out what to do with SP-10. Our questions weren't answered, they were ignored. I see many of the faces, couple of faces here that attended those meetings.

What we asked for is 60,000 acres so that we can flood that, keep it dynamic, and we'll send the water south, clean water south. What they have now is just a little bitty, mini lake. So I hope that we keep pressure on our elected officials, and I believe with the new South Florida Water Management District board we can probably do some good along with the new governor.

Most important thing the Corps must impress is proposed 44-month NEPA to 18 months to implement solutions immediately. I don't know if we can handle another three or four years of these toxic blooms that we have had. So please compress it a little bit. Let's get it done quickly. You have some people here that are very wise. We have scientists in our group, I'd like you to use them. And so when you communicate, get them together, they will help us get it done. Thank you.

MR. ENGLE: Next three are Jason Pim. Mark Yelenich. And Drucilla Neeley.

MR. PIM: Thank you for having us. Thank you to everyone that's come out. My name is Jason Pim. Cape Coral. I'm a member of a lot of great organizations represented in this room. I'm a Calusa Waterkeeper Ranger. I'm going to read, try to keep it fast.

For all my life I watched the water discharge downstream from Lake Okeechobee to the Caloosahatchee with increasing frequency and scope that those waters are polluted with nutrients and bacteria. In 2018, we experienced cyanobacteria washing to our private properties for over three months. Toxic chunks of algae clinging to the seawalls, docks and pilings lingered our neighborhoods for another month after that. Close to a third of our water -- or our year was ruined for many waterfront property owners, boaters, and tourists. As worse, the off-gassing from the cyanobacteria made residents feeling nauseous, light-headed, force people to leave their homes. Toxins were measured in Cape Coral to be 9,600 times the EPA thresholds. USGS studies found these blooms to be most toxic when they hit saltwater. In the Caloosahatchee that would be the most populated areas of Lee County. If ingested cyanotoxins are capable of quickly killing the animals and human. Non-lethal doses can bioaccumulate to possibly manifest in our organs 10 to 20 years later.

I submit to you that nitrate cyanobacteria latent discharges are a health risk. These are risks the Corps must account for, and just like we account for dike failure or flooding, it has to be part of the future management of Lake Okeechobee. The dike repairs have been delayed quite a number of years, and have taken much longer to complete than planned. None of the 68 CERP projects are online from what I understand. We can't afford to keep tying our management choices to these moving goal posts. We

must accelerate this NEPA scoping process and implement changes more quickly. The upper estuaries need immediate relief from being used as safety valves for the system.

Skipping ahead, safety of humans and endangered species living along our waterways must be taken into consideration in the next lake operation manual. Thank you.

MR. YELENICH: Hello, my name is Mark Yelenich. I'm a year-round Sanibel Island resident. I'd like to thank the leaders that are here that provide expertise and knowledge to the process. Thank you to the Corps for what you do.

I'd like to just quickly and mostly echo things that have been said already. But the important issues, obviously human health and welfare, which is closely tied to environment, and then goes onto economic impacts like what the gentleman said earlier about the measuring of success, that would be with the environmental aspects of it, the sea grass, the oyster beds and the health thereof. I'd like to encourage you all to Google SCCF, Captains for Clean Water, Now in the Everglades, and others that provide extremely good information on what is going on and what historically happened. I would like to urge the Corps, I guess, first and foremost to act as if this is affecting your own loved one, like this is your child lives in this environment. Somewhat own it and that way -- and it will be difficult, but that way you can feel our pain so-to-speak. And I can't imagine why this process would be linked to completion of Herbert Hoover Dike, maybe there is reasons unknown, but to take three plus years to look at adjusting the freshwater releases in the dry season that are asked for to lower the lake to a level that could accommodate the additional water in the wet season to prevent releases to the coasts and estuaries, seems a no-brainer to me. And that seems to be something that could happen rather quickly. And what I mean by rather quickly, in a week or two, it doesn't seem like that could take very long to send additional water releases now in the dry season to allow for storage when the rains come, because they are coming.

I have also watched the level of the lake every day, like the lady mentioned earlier it was down to 12 point two seven what I saw. A week later after one rain event it was up half a foot, it was up to 12 point seven two with one rain event. And so we need to allow additional capacity when there are rain events. So thank you for your time and consideration to listen to us.

One last thing too, though, there were over 200 plus scientists and environmentalists that have looked at this issue for years that are experts. I have no idea compared to them, so I urge you to get them to a roundtable to discuss what the solution is. I see the water going south. Thank you for your time.

MS. NEELEY: I'm Drucilla Neeley, resident of Lee County working with South Florida Clean Water Movement following many of the groups in the organizations -- Drucilla Neeley, resident of Lee County working with South Florida Clean Water Movement, and following behind the Calusa Waterkeepers, We Can Movement, and many of the advocates and activists in my county and areas including to Punta Gorda, and the March Against Mosaic.

I want to remind everyone or I can mostly follow and repeat what has already been said today by all of the other activists and many of the experts. I do say that there is no more time for further delay on finishing the repairs of the dike. It can be done in 18 months. I remind the Corps to be able to release the water clean, clean, to control the releases, which will affect the HAB, the harmful algal blooms that come down the river. There is no reason not to implement measures right now to protect the estuaries. I urge you to realize, face the upcoming drought with a readiness to burn vegetation as it's down and dry enough, like it was done in 2007, which created an improved environment when the

new grasses came back and new fishing -- fishing flourished and so much as that. So blue green algae can be beneficial if it is without chemical nutrients, without the chemical nutrients that are within the lake itself and continually sprayed. When it's continually sprayed all of that comes down through the releases from the reservoir.

We need to start the recovery process coming out of this environmental and ecological disaster. It's a 10 to 20-year process at least, and if you don't start it immediately we will all suffer terribly.

Further, the health aspect of human beings. This year was the first example of health effects that and might have been linked, but it will increase year-by-year and without any reduction to the nutrients that come through.

I want to -- you see my sign, I want to remind you -- I would like to remind you that even this is one sea turtle that was didn't turn out that good, there he is with his sunken eyes. And as of last week in the Florida Weekly News the FWC released a report on the number of sea turtles that died in red tide within 14 months. 589 sea turtles. There is 213 manatees dying from the red tide and/or blue green algae. 127 Dolphins in a 14-month period.

Thank you for accepting my poster. But they can say a lot more than I can in this two plus minutes. Remind the Army Corps and all government that be in charge of these matters that you must meet the needs of clean water for Florida, and the world. Florida affects the health of the waters, air, and everything in the rest of the world. This is very important factor to be aware of.

I also encourage the Army Corps to pay attention to the many experts, scientists in our area down here who have facts and the information that you can work with.

One last factor I really need to point out also is that after the dirty water from the lake and down through the rivers, and down past Punta Gorda and the area where there is a strip mining there is one last factor that must be addressed. Absolutely. We are calling the Governor to pay attention to this, strip mining destruction to waters that finally flow out to the Caloosahatchee, Charlotte Harbor and down the whole west coast of Florida. Thank you.

MR. ENGLE: Thank you. Next three speakers are Steven Blumrosen. Holley Rallen. Jamie Delakey.

MR. BLUMROSEN: I am Steven Blumrosen. I've never spoken here before. I am a resident of Bonita Springs. I am president of the Democratic Club Bonita Springs in south Lee County. Yes. Really don't have anything to do with much why I am here though, because I lived through the summer, we all lived through the summer. I don't want to do it again. I want to know more what is happening to me. I thought maybe here I could find out -- oh yeah. Okay, yes, I can use the mic. So I want to find out more about what is causing me to feel the way I was. What was causing sea turtles and dolphins to wash up on the Bonita Beach, and I couldn't find a place where I could do that. I kind of looked pretty diligently, on YouTube and other places, for some place that would give me all the information about what was going on.

And so I hope to get that here. Obviously, this forum is not for that purpose. I'd like to encourage those who might have input into such things to consider greater community education about what is going on.

More specifically, I came here from Florida Gulf Coast University Renaissance Academy in Punta Gorda. I ended a class there this morning, and one of my fellow students asked me to ask you what is the process that is gone through when a decision is made to release water. We don't need to know something that basic out there in the public. I guess, in my own I covered all things I wanted to say. I am really appreciative of those people who did come here, told their personal stories, though, because I felt more connected to the community around me. Thank you.

MS. RALLEN: Hi, I'm Holley Rallen. I am a retired public health nurse, and a very proud member of Calusa Waterkeeper organization, and a newly trained Waterkeeper Ranger. Thank you for having us here today and for allowing us as a community to come together with all of the reasons why I shouldn't. I came here especially today I want to make sure that the word public health was spoken. So I thank you Chauncey Goss and all of you who spoke afterwards that addressed the most vital, most vital aspect of this.

I used work for Lee County Health Department for Florida Department of Health. When I left that organization I left it disgusted, left it disgusted the health issues really affected us from our environment that were not being addressed. That was seven years ago. So I am back. And I am wondering what if we got the Department of Health to partner with the Army Corps of Engineers and really tell the truth and work together and also learn to move with seasons and to understand that our seasons are changing. You don't like the word tough, climate change, I'm going to say it. Sea level rise and salt must be addressing now. We can't be afraid of losing funds in our organizations, because our conservative donors don't want to hear the word climate change.

So I am asking you as Calusa Waterkeeper, I'm taking my hat off right now to John Cassani, hats off to you for training citizen scientists. But isn't it ashame -- isn't it kind of ashame that we need to have organizations like Calusa Waterkeeper, and Waterkeeper Alliance nationally. We have to have them, because our government, locally and state level and federal level, are not paying attention to the public health of this nation. And so I am here for public health. I am here for clean water. I really, really appreciate all the eloquent speakers today that spoke for many organizations that I support, and that's it. I just heard the bell go off. Thank you all very much.

MS. DELAKEY: Good afternoon. My name is Jamie Brush Delakey, and I'm here as concerned wife and mother out of Pine Island, Florida. My husband is a fifth generation commercial fisherman whose ancestors date back to the Calusa Indians. These past couple months have been really catastrophic for Pine Island for my husband and our family. When he goes out there are absolutely no Mullet out there right now. His friend who are third generation fisherman who have cameras down in their traps for things like stone crab and blue crab, they are seeing no movement on the ocean floor, just dead carcasses, just nothing good.

And so as a mother I am expediential concerned with my two and four-year-old growing up in this environment and breathing this in and what we are doing to the environment, what are we leaving to them. And so I would just like to encourage and let the Army Corps know that I'm praying for you guys, and I hope that we can get this expedited, and I know that there is a bunch of commercial fisherman out of work right now, fish houses closing on Pine Island. There is a fish house owner committing suicide. I know there are a lot of people who would love to help you guys get whatever it is needed to complete your job. Thank you.

MR. ENGLE: Next three speakers are Bruce Butcher. Melanie Hoff. Gene Gibson.

MR. BUTCHER: I guess my writing wasn't so good, Bruce butcher. I'm at -- with Fort Myers Beach Town Council. I am here as a resident. You know, to me when you hear all these stories we know what has been going on for years. We are under attack. And if the United States was under attack, who would come and rescue us, the Army. And that's what they ought to be doing. They ought to be considering this as an attack on the citizens of the United States and ought to be moving into action, not studying, not thinking, all that stuff has been done. Let's get some action. Let's get it done now. So I'm for a balance benefit for all. And the word is benefit. I don't want to have to suffer. Let's get a benefit from it all.

I am not a scientist. I was a businessman of manufacturing. But when I look at C-43, all I see is boondoggle. I cannot see for the life of me how that's going to do anything. I would like to see prioritization of the money, the billions of dollars that's out there to be spent in a way that can have the best use for us, the quickest use in a very, very time sensitive manner.

Fishing is terrible. I moved to Florida so I could fish and enjoy water life. We used to go out 25 miles and catch our limited grouper four per person, some years we got 10, 15 miles out caught them. Last Saturday I was out 50 miles and we got one grouper. That was a keeper. It's just crazy.

So why does the Everglades have a high standard for clean water than the rest of us. I never did understand that why they had to have a certain level of water, but yet they've dumped the dirty water on us. Makes no sense to me.

In my view, in the world, there is enough sugar. We got enough people that's eating too much sugar. We've got enough saltwater. What we need is more clean water. That ought to be a priority. So we need more clean water now. We need the Army to attack this problem now, and let's get it fixed. No need to wait.

MS. HOFF: Hi there. My name is Melanie Hoff. I'm a resident of St. James City of Pine Island. I know there is some other Pine Islanders here. I live 30 river miles from Franklin Lock, and 72 miles from Moore Haven. It's a very long way for these impacts to go. Water level management decisions by the Corps make -- that the Corps make every day greatly impact my community and environment. Decisions to allow flows 800 cubic feet per second and above 3,000 cubic feet per second have large negative impacts on the health of Caloosahatchee estuary and the residents that depend on it for their livelihood and well-being. Decisions by the Corps in the summer and leading up to the summer of 2018 resulted in a water color and clarity of chocolate milk and thousands of dead fish in my community. My family and I avoided all water activities from late May until mid October.

I am here to ask that Corps better reflect the needs of downstream communities of fish and wildlife environment of Cape Coral, Fort Myers, Sanibel, Matlacha, St. James City and the Caloosahatchee estuary in revision of their operating manual. Your decision can impact how I live in my community, and if I can live in my community.

I urge the Corps to accelerate the schedule. It doesn't need to be tied to 2020, 2022, Hoover Dike. There is no need to wait. We need action now.

In 2018, according to water quality reports from SCCF, I love your reports whoever you are, they're great, weekly reports. There were 33 weeks where flows from Lake O out through S-79 were outside boundaries for healthy Caloosahatchee estuary. That's over half of the year, the flows were outside healthy boundaries for the Caloosahatchee estuary. That means it was outside healthy boundaries for

over half the year for all of the residents and all of the wildlife there. It can't happen it again. It shouldn't happen again. I ask that you work closely with South Florida Water Management District, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, local and regional scientists, local and regional health organizations as you reevaluate how to manage these discharges.

Lastly, to all of the folks who are here and all of the organizations, thank you so much. It gives me hope that change will come sooner rather than never. Thank you.

MR. GIBSON: Good afternoon. For the record my name is Gene Gibson with Calusa Waterkeeper. It is appropriate that the Corps begins its scoping hearings here in Lee County. Our environment, health and economy have been hammered by the high volume water discharges and harmful algae blooms coming from Lake Okeechobee. We request that the Corps, one, broaden the scope of its review to include its ongoing operations. Two, compress the timeline from three years and nine months to 18 months. To wait for a new schedule until the Herbert Hoover Dike repairs are completed now projected for 2022 is too long. Moreover, there is no certainty that they will be completed by 2022, four deadline's going back to 2006 have already been missed.

I will take a minute and now to share with you my personal experience, I live on the Caloosahatchee River next to a large marina that was covered by a half this summer. We used to consider our location on the river as a blessing, but now it is a curse. I have a couple chronic lung problems. I have been more or less asymptomatic for many years until several months ago when my pulmonary functioning started declining again. We need relief now. Our health, safety and environment and economy cannot wait until 2022 or later. Thank you.

MR. ENGLE: Thank you. We have four speakers remaining, four cards remaining. We should have plenty of time for that. First is Teresa Everly. Next is Jaclyn Lopez. Rachel Singletary. And Paul Gray.

MS. LOPEZ: Good afternoon everybody. I'm Jaclyn Lopez and I'm the Florida director for the Center of Biological Diversity. Thanks for coming out and thanks to all the electives that came out, and if you didn't see your elected here today, please give them a call and ask them to participate in this process, because this is really valuable.

So I'm going to echo, I think, just reinforce what others have said here today, two main points. We think we can get this done faster. We don't have to wait until 2022. And there is, in fact, the Army Corps already has the authority to do that. The job of the Army Corps more than anything else is to protect the integrity of our water. That's its principal job before anything else. And to do that it needs to be a move forward process to figure out how to get the Lake Okeechobee regulations revised so that we have protection for all of our waters, including the Caloosahatchee and the St. Lucie.

So more specifically, the -- in terms of the scope of what you are being asked to review right now, we ask that you consider ongoing operations in addition to the infrastructure project that will eventually come online. We'd like to look at both high flow events as well as the low flow events, that means take into account the effect of toxic algae, both the blue green algae and the synergistic effects of red tide.

In looking at the scope broadly, I live all the way in Pinellas County, and we lost a summer up there as well. I also have a two-year old and four-year-old. We live right down the street from Tampa Bay. I didn't take them to the beach at all this summer. That's heartbreaking. That's heartbreaking for all of us.

Also take into account the nutrients. Really do a robust analysis on what the effect of nutrients are on our ecosystems. The latest science that we have all the way back in 2007 when the Army Corps last looked at this issue, a lot of science has been developed since then. We need to take that into account. We need to take into account salinity, how does salinity affect our ecosystem so when we have low water discharges or not enough water being discharged to the Caloosahatchee, how is that affecting the ecosystem. Climate change, so we have these big rain events. We're having the lake filling up higher, faster. We need to know how to address that.

So to just wrap it up, we want to expedite the timeline. We want to know what you need from us to make that happen. We can lobby on your behalf. We can ask for resources, just let us know. And so anyway, thank you all and come back again this evening for more of this fun stuff.

MR. ENGLE: Therese Everly?

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: She has spoken already.

MR. ENGLE: Okay. Rachel Singletary? Last Paul Gray.

MR. GARY: If I am last, do I have a time limit? Paul Gray I work for Audubon Florida. I'm a staff scientist. I've been on or around Okeechobee for 30 years, and this is the fifth regulation schedule I've worked with. And as strange as it may sound, they've gotten progressively better for the natural systems Lake Okeechobee, Caloosahatchee. And so as we move forward, you know, Lake Okeechobee just went through a period where it hit 16 feet six years in a row. That's too deep, as everybody here knows when it gets to 16 feet the Corps is afraid a new storm will come in and the lake will really get deep and be really dangerous, and so they just have to make lease huge releases.

So we are going to ask the Corps to look at lowering the lake about six inches a year, which will give everybody six more inches of free water in any given year. It will be better for the lake too. And the long-term fix is building storage north/south east/west of the lake. That's going to take a long time. And so in the meantime we can take lowering the lake somewhat.

The other thing what LORS really got in the Caloosahatchee estuary is it got dry season flows. When we were working on (inaudible) there were several people in this room the previous schedule the lake would be too deep, and we would want to lower it and the Caloosahatchee would be too salty, and they needed water, we'd be like yes, you let water out, and we couldn't get that. With LORS involvement a lot of people in this room, and citizens like you, we got dry season flows. What we have right now is average of 650 when it's really dry. We have now learned that 800 to a 1,000 is a better number. So we're going to ask that the Corps to go back to look at the performance of these dry season flows, and model them 800 to 1,000. And that's up to people to work with.

And yes, so -- and also the MFL, that's kind of revision. We want to get a better MFL, because it's too low, we all agree. So we can look at these performance measures. In the last 10 years that they've been experimenting with releases, they've been doing pulses, they've been steady releases, they've been doing 650. Right now just for your information they are doing 800 to 1,000, that's the target and that's above what LORS calls for. So the Corps is hearing you, they are trying to respond. It is just I want to tell everybody in this room thank you for being here. Keep involved. And the harder we fight for this resource, we have this wonderful resource, adjust the water restoration project during dry season, we can get better improvement of this schedule. So thank you for being here.

MR. ENGLE: That is the last comment card that we had. I'd like to thank everybody for coming and for providing your comments. Anyone that didn't speak, if you have anything that you want to say, or if you want to say something more than what you did, please put it on a comment card. We have comment cards there. You can write an e-mail, you can write it on the card. We are looking for any and all input. So if you didn't get a chance today, please grab a card on your way out, send us an e-mail. There is a phone number there, so please contact us. Thank you.

(Meeting concluded at 3:05 p.m.)

CERTIFICATE OF REPORTER

I, Maryanne Wagner, RPR, FPR, Court Reporter, do hereby certify that I was authorized to and did report the foregoing proceedings, and that the transcript, pages 1 through 85, is a true and correct record of my stenographic notes.

Dated this 18th day of February, 2019, at Lee County, Florida.

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/s/ Maryanne Wagner, RPR, FPR  
Court Reporter  
Notary Public in and for the  
State of Florida at Large

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