

Meeting Minutes
**WATER QUALITY PROTECTION PROGRAM CANAL
RESTORATION ADVISORY SUBCOMMITTEE**
December 12, 2013

10:00 am – 12:45 pm
Murray Nelson, Meeting Room
10200 Overseas Highway, Key Largo, FL 33037

Member and Advisory Attendees: Gus Rios - FDEP; Mayor George Neugent - Monroe County (on the phone); Susan Sprunt - Islamorada;; Karl Bursa for George Garrett - Marathon; Alison Higgins – Key West (on phone); Skip Haring - Layton; Charlie Causey – WQPP SC Member; John Hunt – FWC (FWRI) Nancy Diersing for Billy Causey – FKNMS NOAA, Steven Blackburn – USEPA.

Members not in Attendance: Commissioner John DeNeale - Key Colony Beach.

Advisory: Rhonda Haag – Monroe County, Wendy Blondin – AMEC, Annie McGreenery – FWC (FWRI), meeting minutes.

Guest Speakers: Henry Briceno and Jim Fourquaran, Florida International University (FIU) both discussed the Water Quality and Benthic Resources Monitoring Program and Lisa Tennyson, Legislative Director, Monroe County, discussed the BP RESTORE application for the local pot of funds.

1. **Introduction and Approval of the September 27, 2013 Meeting Minutes.** Gus Rios called the meeting to order at 10:00 am. **Skip Haring moved** that the Minutes from the October 18th meeting be approved and **Susan Sprunt seconded**, all **approved**.

John Hunt thanked the committee members for meeting in Key Largo to accommodate his schedule associated with the Biscayne National Park Management Plan hearings.

Gus Rios reviewed the agenda for this meeting and items that would be discussed. Gus pointed out that during Public Comments item each person from the Public has 3 minutes to speak and encouraged the public to keep to the 3 minute time frame. Gus asked members of the public who wished to speak to sign the Public Comment form at the table of the meeting room, so that we have a record of who was speaking.

2. **Public Comments #1**, there were no speakers.
3. **Discussion on the Local Application Process for the RESTORE Act Funds for Canal Projects:**

Wendy Blondin explained that Lisa Tennyson had offered to attend the local RESTORE group meeting in order to address potential questions related to multiple canal restoration submittals that were submitted by unincorporated Monroe County, Key Colony Beach, Marathon, and Islamorada. There are now individual submittals on canal restoration requests for funding for water quality improvements. It was a confusing issue to the committee on the selection process; they did not understand where the applications stood in the comparability and how they related to the canal master plan. It was suggested that one way to address that issue might be to resubmit one application for all parties. That is up for discussion today.

Currently there are three applications, by Advisory Team members, the question today is how to proceed to ensure for the best review by the local committee team. One is to submit a joint application, and then determine a contribution to the individual municipalities and County.

Lisa Tennyson discussed the RESTORE Act Funds. The RESTORE Act Funds will result from the BP settlement around civil fines. We do not know when the money may be received – nor do we have any idea how much money there may be. There are several pots of money. The pot discussed today is considered the “local pot”. There are three pots of RESTORE Act Funds available that could potential affect Monroe County. The three pots are Federal pot, State pot and the local pot. We could potentially have a stake in the State and Federal pots. The pot that we are looking at currently is the local pot. The local pot will definitely come to Monroe County. The amount that will come to the county is determined by a formula. The formula is set in the legislation. If the ultimate settlement with BP is \$ 10 billion, then we know that there will be a fixed amount based upon the formula that is in legislation now. There are numbers we are using just to give people an idea, so a \$10 billion dollar settlement is a midrange settlement that has been thrown around. The longer we proceed along the litigation route with BP the lower this settlement is likely going to be. So, assuming that the settlement was \$10 billion, the way the formula is set, the local pot amount would be about \$11 million dollars. So you can assume that if the settlement with BP is \$ 5 billion dollars then the money at the local level with be about \$ 5 million dollars.

The local pot of money that Monroe County is looking at might be about \$11 million dollars, but that is an estimate to give people an idea. There is a local RESTORE Act Advisory Committee that represents folks from all the municipalities as well as appointees of each of the County Commissioners. The County has proceeded along the solicitation process to gather applications from folks for projects in funding from the local pot. The advisory committee had a process and that application closed the end of August, 2013. A nice listing of projects was received, there were about 33 applications and the total requests were about \$ 50 million dollars, far exceeding the availability of money. Among those projects were several canal projects. Each of the municipalities had something related to canals. Some were dredging and some were canal water quality technologies.

In the interim the RESTORE Act Advisory Committee reopened the solicitation process. When we reopened the solicitation process Wendy Blondin thought the Canal Restoration Advisory Subcommittee could rethink its strategy and perhaps apply in a different way. Instead of individual entities applying for funding, we could submit a single application with a better more cohesive strategy that could be presented to the reviewers. The strategy would stronger and more competitive in applying for funding. Lisa felt that this is a stronger and better strategy.

She wanted to stress that water quality is one of the focuses and priorities at the Federal level. The State level funding pot is a consortium of 23 coastal counties that have joined together as a formal entity. They will be determining how the State money will get spent. They are just beginning to talk about what their solicitation process will look like for expending the funds at the State level. Water quality will probably be a priority for the State level, it just has not been formally determined yet.

So there is an opportunity at the local level to make an argument at the State level and the Federal level that we have utilized out local pot for water quality and therefore we can leverage that money in making an argument at the State level and Federal level for their funds. Monroe County submitted a canal restoration proposal to the Federal Council a long time ago. But if we could specify that we used x percent of local dollars or we have used 100% for our local dollars for canal restoration that makes a stronger argument to the Feds and that they should kick in money as well.

Lisa wanted to throw this information out for consideration to the subcommittee. There are ten or eleven available uses for RESTORE Act dollars. Projects can request funding for a broad range. Any entity within Monroe County can apply for that funding; not-for-profits, universities, municipalities, and the county. Water quality is the biggest theme across the bigger pots of money. It is not necessary the biggest theme at the local level. However all the applications, during the first round tend to be environmental and all of the environmental projects are ultimately water quality.

Wendy Blondin emphasized that there already are three applications submitted to the RESTORE Act local level; Monroe County, Islamorada, and Marathon specifically referencing the Canal Management Master Plan and requesting funds from the local RESTORE Act pot for canal restoration for water quality improvement. The focus for today was to discuss whether the three applications should stay as individual applications or is there a potential opportunity to change how that is submitted for improving the potential for more money.

Gus Rios clarified the question posed to the group. Wendy and Lisa are asking for the group's opinion of whether to combine the three applications into one application or leave them separate? Who specifically submitted the applications? **Wendy** stated that it was the City of Marathon, Monroe County and the Village of Islamorada.

Lisa pointed out that the three applications might be in a stronger position if they combined their applications rather than competing against each other.

George Neugent wanted to chime in and support Wendy's and Lisa's opinion. There is strength as a collective group in applying together in the application process as opposed to competing against ourselves.

Susan Sprunt pointed out that the three different applications had three different amounts. Monroe County was \$2 millions, Marathon was close to \$4 million and Islamorada was \$ 3.89 million, so there are different amounts for each application. She has no objection to have a stronger application. That would be a tremendous asset to make sure that it was funded and it is a very important project. The deadline to get a new application in is Friday December 20th, 2013. Her concern would be that the different percentages of the moneys would need to go to each entity, and we do not have a formula worked out for the distribution of the dollars. This will need to be discussed between the entities who are submitting the application. Will there be an issue with the committee that awards the moneys? **Karl Bursa** agreed with the same concern. He said that Marathon was concerned with how the funds would be appropriated. Who would control the project and would we be creating an initial bureaucracy that would filter things out and slow the projects down.

Lisa Tennyson pointed out that if the three entities apply separately they will be competing against each other. The formula would need to be devised to determine how much will go to Marathon, Islamorada, and Monroe County. In administering on the back end it will make it simpler not more complicated.

Lisa continued to express that the Canal Master Plan is a powerful document. In a much as you use that as a foundation for your scopes of work you will be in very good shape.

John Hunt pointed out that the most we can do is recommend to the entities that this approach would make sense and encourage the three entities to get together but it is ultimately their job to get together and do this. At this committee level there is no need to discuss the partitioning whatever amount of dollars they want to submit to the local level pot and in whatever proportions. That is not the roll of this committee and outside of our prevue. The logic of doing one proposal is certainly sound and that is about the most this committee could say.

George Neugent said that it is premature for the entities involved in submitting their applications to determine how the three entities are going to split the money up should the project be awarded funding. However he felt that this is important enough to bring it back to the commission and hopefully have enough attendance to determine the split. So this would eventually wind up at the county commission level. **Rhonda Haag** explained that the alternate is to agree on a joint application and leave the percentage split to elected officials determine later. **George Neugent** stressed that this is only a suggestion but would leave it up to the group.

Gus Rios chimed in and expressed what he heard. At this point it is logically better to have one single application rather than three and that it carries more weight whether it is Tallahassee, Federal Government or the local level pot. They will look at this if the local governments are united in this application. But he also hears that there are concerns by the applicants on the division of the funds by the County, Marathon and the Village. He is not sure that this committee can provide a motion on this issue and he also stressed a disclaimer as a DEP employee that he cannot be a participant of the solicitation of funds. But what it was is a discussion to the committee on whether there should be a single application versus three.

George Neugent felt that funding would be a group decision with the priorities that have already been identified.

Wendy Blondin volunteered to help the three municipalities get together and set up a three way conference to combine the three entity applications and combine and resolve any issues.

Lisa wanted to make one more comment that may impact the three entities decision. The local committee will only be recommendations for project funding and project that they deem should be awarded. The ultimate decision will be made by the BOCC in terms of which projects and how much money will be awarded.

Gus Rios thanked everyone who participated in the discussion and would encourage the three entities to get together and resolve any issues they may have. He did also mention that there are concerns with the other entities and he is not sure as a group they are ready to move forward with any action at this point.

Skip Haring pointed that it is not this committee job to make any decision regarding the merging into one application. He pointed out that the committee does not have the knowledge to make any decision or even to make a comment on this process. The concept is good to get together but it is up to the three entities to get involved.

4. Water Quality and Benthic Resources Monitoring Program:

Gus Rios announced that Steve Blackburn is attending this meeting. EPA is funding the monitoring program. Historically, this committee decided that there needed to be a water quality monitoring plan for canal restoration. The monitoring is to determine the success of the Canal Restoration projects. EPA stepped up to the plate and provided funding. They already had a contract with FIU, so that contract was modified to include the monitoring program. The principal investigators are present and will be working on the monitoring program. Dr. Henry Briceno will talk about the Water Quality component of the Monitoring Plan and Dr. Jim Fourquaran, will addressing the benthic component.

John Hunt asked how much money was funded for this project. **Steve Blackburn** stated that there was \$300,000 and could be funded for a period of up to 3 years, and it was not a problem to extend the funds. **John Hunt** wanted clarification on the length and amount of this monitoring program.

A. Presentation of Water Quality Monitoring Plan – **Henry Briceno**, FIU

Henry Briceno gave a PowerPoint presentation of Water Quality Monitoring: Demonstration of Remediation Methods. The different slides and discussion covered: What is wanted from the monitoring program; Before-After Control-Impact with Multiple Sites; Conceptual model guidelines – Action, Goal, Consequences, Expected Change, and Index Toolkit; Biogeochemical Site Characterization – Where to measure (mouth, middle, head); Water sampling to measure/Lab determinations; Calendar of events; Potential Targets and Monthly Scorecard.

John Hunt asked if Henry was proposing to measure different variables for different indices. The answer was yes. John has an issue with that, the committee needs to know whether there is a change in stratification and whether a technology does not affect the pH just as much as to whether it does. He encouraged them to re-think that part of this and measure the same variables at every site. **Henry** assured John that all the technologies will be tested the same way. **John** stressed that at the end we need to know is what the limitation of one technology over another technology. As long as you are going to measure every variable under every technology then I am good with your testing. **Henry** stated that he is proposing that type of measurement technique.

Gus Rios pointed out to Henry, one of the things that the committee is looking for is to evaluate the technologies based on how they perform and how this translates into water quality but also one of the reasons we are doing this is because the canals were designated as impaired and specifically for the dissolved oxygen (D.O.). So when we have the testing plan in place we want to be able to measure the compliance with the D.O. standard for Class III marine waters in the State Rule (Chapter 62-302 of the Florida Administration Code). The D.O. standard for Class III marine waters changed from a minimum D.O. concentration of 4.0 mg/L to a minimum average daily % saturation value of 42% in at least 10% of the values. This means that you will need to have multiple samples to determine compliance with the D.O. standard.

Gus Rios suggested that part of the report needs to have the ability to state whether the canal meets the standard or not. He wanted to emphasize that since there is a limited pot of money from EPA we will need to prioritize the type of testing that will be completed. The D.O. is a high priority test. The other tests provide a wealth of information however we are trying to improve the physical attributes of the canals so that they flush better and have better water circulation. We need to determine how much money we can invest in testing the nutrients and the fecal bacteria, etc. We need to see what testing will provide the best results for the money EPA is providing. What are the parameters that will help determine the success of the different projects we are doing.

Steve Blackburn mentioned that we do not even know if we currently have high bacterial numbers. It seems like we are skipping a step when we go right to the PCR without saying that we do have high bacterial numbers. Make sure you include monitoring in the master plan as it relates to performance.

Gus Rios commended Henry on his PowerPoint and it being well presented. Henry presented his action, the engineering, the remedial action and the goals by setting up the parameters and working his way down through the tests. However it is very important to focus on the budget and the goals. The dissolved oxygen is very critical and we want to be sure that we obtain this type of testing adequately.

Question and Answers for Henry:

Charlie Causey asked if there would be tests of the nutrient load and the degradation starting to drop off in 10 ft to 18 ft. Will we be using this in our calculations on what it is going to cost in our demonstration project? **Wendy Blondin** replied that this information will be used for the final design as one of the more interesting information that Henry will determine. Charlie furthered followed with the reiteration that the subcommittee will be able to use this in the final design.

Gus Rios wanted to bring up to Henry the fact that we have a new canal that was approved for permitting and DEP is actually funding this project. The project involves the installation of a culvert between canals #470 and #472 on Geiger Key in order to improve tidal circulation. This project was not included in the original group of canals. This project may be developed fairly rapidly. It may be one of the first that will happen. Gus wanted to know if Henry can include this in his study. Gus asked the subcommittee if they had any objections that we include this canal in Henry's study. No objections were made.

Wendy Blondin requested that Henry send her a list of the finalized selected controls, etc. She said it would be helpful to review. Henry agreed.

- B. Presentation of Benthic Resource Monitoring Plan – **Jim Fourquaran**, FIU
Jim Fourquaran gave a PowerPoint presentation.

Jim Fourquaran is following the same design and he and Henry are using the same canals. His study will be looking at how the biological systems in the canals are responding to the remediation projects. What he will be looking at the cover and abundance of stuff on the bottom, the mouth of the canals as well as the walls of the canals. This will be conducted with MC2 observations and divers with quadrates. They will score the relative abundance of all the identifiable organisms within those quadrates. The basic idea in ecology is that the more nutrients available the more likely fast growing plants, like macroalgae can become dominant. Microalgae is the fastest growing as seen in polluted canals and then the slowest growing are sea grasses which thrive in clean water. The team will be looking at the elemental concentration of nutrients in the sea grasses. They will also look at the light penetration in the column. They will have control canals in addition to the restored canals for comparison. They will also conduct benthic surveys using various transects throughout the canals and extending offshore from the mouth of the canals.

Wendy Blondin reiterated that the benthic surveys that will be performed should provide adequate information for the permitting process. Part of this overlap is to save money on the collecting of this data required for the permits.

Gus Rios pointed out that the subcommittee is trying to coordinate with the permitting agencies to make sure that everyone is on the same page and working together. Each agency will have someone on the same team through the permitting process. He encouraged Henry and Jim to be part of the permitting process, if they are available.

11:45 am a break was taken.

General discussion of the monitoring of the canals:

John Hunt felt we were going to see more of a monitoring plan that was a little more defined. He was not sure what the subcommittee roll is. His expectation is that there is going to be a much more explicit monitoring plan developed, in some fashion, either this subcommittee evaluates or through the Water Quality Protection Plan. Perhaps some of the subcommittee could have a

discussion on how to maximize small dollars that need to last for a long enough time so that we can at least have a chance in detecting change within a canal what occurs.

Jim Fourqueran wants to know what was missing from the plan. He and Henry knew that the canals had to be remedial.

John Hunt continued on whether to do PCR or not do PCR monitoring and all the other kind of testing. A discussion more on the lines of if you go down this path of testing and monitoring, how will this affect the testing versus not go down this path and how this will affect the trade off's. Also discussed the limitations on what we can learn from this given the nature of the project. Do we take something like testing PCR and look at the conceptual model? There could be logic to only do some of the more analytical approach under certain kinds of conditions. He would like to have the ability to understand that because his objective as a subcommittee member is have this monitoring do as much as possible within the limitations. He stressed that this is not an experimental design but that this gives the opportunity to inform future planning of future restorations so that we don't fall into a potential trap in the Florida Keys of concluding right now that just doing one simple restoration technology is the solution to all of our problems. It is a discussion which is bouncing between science, policy and the future. So, when he states plan, he is eluding to this type of discussion that perhaps should be held with a smaller group of this subcommittee.

Gus Rios said the purpose of the agenda topic and presentation was to allow the subcommittee to review and discuss the proposed monitoring program. Gus understands that as of right now you have a design of the sampling, which was presented today, but the subcommittee does not have the template or final draft yet because you have to determine exactly where the sampling stations should sit. Gus agreed with John that we need to have a complete monitoring program that we can review. But he pointed out that he does want the process to proceed. The primary purpose of this monitoring Program is to determine the success of each of the projects or the lack of success. We may not get all the answers of whether this technology will be the best technology that we can use but we must be able to determine if the technology is adequate to improve water quality in the restore canals.

Gus reminded the subcommittee that we have limited funding for water quality monitoring. We were fortunate to receive funding for USEPA, but we must prioritize the water quality testing parameters and testing frequencies to make sure we have enough money to complete the pre-construction and post-construction monitoring. So FIU must do the coast analysis to determine if they will be able to complete the two-year monitoring program that was presented by Dr. Briceno and stay within the budget approved by USEPA.

John Hunt pointed out that there is value in every parameter presented by Henry and Jim. He also does not have concerns about the ability of FIU to accomplish these tests. He just wants to figure out how to maximize the water quality monitoring; how often do you sample and what you need to sample.

Gus joined in and pointed out that from a DEP perspective and interest in the monitoring of water quality. Gus threw out that one of the critical tests would be to determine that we are meeting the dissolved oxygen water quality standard. The monitoring team has the concept there but we as a group need to figure out how many times the sampling will occur. So the question to the monitoring team is when we can see the whole perspective.

Henry Briceno pointed out that just a few weeks ago he began taking samples to understand the magnitude of what the problem was as well as understanding the characteristics of the canals. He wants to go back, in January, and look just at the physical and chemical properties. That way he can have all the canals measured in a week to a 1 ½ weeks. After the initial investigation he will be able to come back to the subcommittee and present what parameters he feels should be done. This program will rely more on the measurements than on actual chemical analysis.

Henry expressed that the Pre-construction phase will be a complete chemical analysis of the canals. Then what ever remediation is performed then we will perform an after of a complete characterizations of the canals. Then perhaps as we go along, maybe every quarter, we will test the physical and chemical parameters.

John Hunt emphasized that he is quite comfortable with the direction that the monitoring is going. All things are important in testing the various components, but ultimately this is about nutrients, nutrient, and nutrients. That is the issue with canals once you get down to it and as long we have the ability to understand how those nutrients change both through concentration level and about water quality of measuring through the benthic community we will know about the change in the nutrients.

Gus Rios pointed out that it will be difficult to determine if any changes observed in nutrient concentrations can be attributed to the canal restoration, since a significant source of nutrient loading is from land-based discharges that will not be affected by the canal restoration project. The ongoing wastewater and storm water improvements will address the land-based discharges. So at some point we need to use water quality indicators that are adequate and simple enough to show whether the water quality improved or not. It is a fact that even after you have remediation, like Little Venice, it took years to see all the improvements in the nutrient and bacterial concentrations. However, if the canal restoration projects are successful, we expect to observe physical changes in the water column, such as less turbidity and improved D.O.

Gus asked when Henry and Jim could have something in writing, not only with the conceptual approach you showed us today where the stages are going to be and the frequency and the parameters. Henry could present an initial plan on characterization if required. **Wendy Blondin** felt that an initial plan on his characterization would be very helpful to better understand the proper controls, and background information for the master plan. At least a list and what you are planning on testing. **Henry** agreed to an initial plan however, Henry stated that this would be early March for the final report.

Rhonda Haag expressed that at yesterdays Monroe County Commission meeting (12/11/13), there was an agenda item on for the design of the demonstration canals. They approved it and the design solicitation will be out on the street next week. It will be out for 30 days and is on a fast track schedule. She plans on going back to the Monroe County March Commission meeting with the approved contract with the winner. They will be immediately starting the design after that. The County wanted construction to start by late spring.

Gus Rios stressed that we are going to have eight canals. The canals are moving forward with the permitting, etc.

Wendy Blondin asked Henry if the January characterization of all the canals his baseline. **Henry Briceno** said it was however there are baselines and there are baselines. He is going to show a shot of what it was in January. It does not mean it is the same as all over.

Rhonda Haag stressed that Monroe County is starting construction in late spring and that the initial monitoring from Henry and Jim has to be complete.

John Hunt identified that once the monitoring team sketches out what they want to accomplish to then present to the group a sense of what they will accomplish and what they will abandon from this broader scope of work. At that point in time then the subcommittee can discuss what they feel is a higher priority or not. **Gus** mentioned that EPA framed the monitoring project was \$300,000 in 3 years.

5. Update on the FDEP Funding Agreement with Monroe County:

Rhonda Haag said that the County Commissioners approved the FDEP funding agreement and that is was FEDEX'd to AMEC.

Wendy Blondin has scheduled field work next week to begin working on the culvert canal restoration project canal #472/#470. This will start the benthic survey, the land survey, and the engineering evaluation. The scope is to design the permit for the at Geiger Key culvert. This will be used for the preliminary data that will be used to sit down with the regulators. This information will be used for instigating the permit process for the culvert at Geiger Key. Another part of this project is to collect sediment data that will come up for final design in this next step for two other canals (#266 and #290). Since organic removal has been one of the harder conceptual technologies to cost and evaluate some additional sampling was allowed in the grant to get additional sediment profiles. The first deliverable is the end of January to have a report of all the data.

Gus Rios mentioned that this is the 3rd culvert project; the first two were already approved by the County. He continued stating that the DEP money had to be used quickly due to the June 30th 2014 deadline. Wendy and the County proposed that we could do the engineering of this canal so that we could do the permitting.

6. Update on the Permitting Team for the Canal Demonstration Projects:

Gus Rios wanted to brief everyone on the permitting. We will need State, Federal and other agencies to be involved in the permitting process. We want to define a team. A letter was sent to all the permitting agencies requesting their support and to identify staff that will be able to help during the permit process. Two projects will be involved in the initial permitting process: the culvert that AMEC is working on and Treasure Harbor.

Susan Sprunt mentioned that the Village is moving very rapidly and is ready to begin the permitting process. Getting the permitting agency staff identified is wonderful however there are other items that need to be decided to move forward in the permitting process. The Village is the point where they are ready to start talking to the various agencies.

Gus explained that the identified staff will be available to review the applications for the permitting of the above mentioned two projects. The applicant has not been decided. The permitting will be moving forward with the DEP culvert project and the Villages' – Treasure Harbor project. We will ask the permitting team to be available for a teleconference meeting. We have a general scope of work for both. In order to set up a meeting with the permitting team we do need a scope of work. A pre-application meeting can be set up then each agency can tell the applicant the specific requirements required.

Susan wanted to also discuss with the committee the concept of a blanket permit so that we could do these projects throughout the whole county. She understands that each canal and each technology used is different but felt that when it comes to permitting over all perhaps that could be done as a blanket permit. She felt that this is a bigger picture perspective that could be addressed at this subcommittee level. **Gus** asked Susan if she had any ideas on how to have a more comprehensive process to address permitting for the projects. **Susan** discussed perhaps having a smaller group to discuss the issues. The Village is already discussing the process with their attorneys.

Gus would not support creating another advisory subcommittee, but that members of our subcommittee with the help of the interagency permitting team could accomplish this task. The process would not only address piecemeal projects but a more comprehensive view of all the projects. When we talk to the permitting team it is a fact finding mission. The permitting team will tell us what their requirements are and how to best approach the permit application. One thing that needs to be decided is who is going to take the lead in preparing those applications. In the Master Plan we discussed homeowners apply individually or have municipalities and the county apply. He stressed that even if we do not have a plan in place for comprehensive “blanket” application process yet, that projects that are ready to move forward and should not be delayed. Once we know who the applicants are we can move forward.

Wendy Blondin pointed out that she does not feel that money to pay for restorations by homeowners is always the real issue, it is the permitting process. If this group can streamline the permitting process possibly by a blanket permit, a homeowners association could just come in and have everything worked out. She feels that more homeowners will participate in the funding. That is one reason for pushing the blanket permitting.

Susan Sprunt pointed out that there are many associations that have tried to complete the permitting process on their own, and got right up to the permitting process and dropped the project because of permits.

Gus pointed out that that was a same thing that happened to the waste water process. Perhaps we need to review the waste water permitting process and learn from their lessons. Large canal restoration projects, similar to the centralized wastewater projects, are costly and complex and they are usually beyond the capabilities of the individual property owners. It would be beneficial to include the permitting process in the master plan. Eventually you will have to identify the entities who will take the lead in completing and submitting the permit applications to the permitting agencies. The homeowners association can always apply for a permit and DEP and the other agencies have to serve them as well.

Terry Peters – Treasure Harbor homeowners association discussed how the homeowners were able to get the permits to proceed. They had a teleconference and used affiliated political influence to gain approval.

Gus asked if the local government or homeowners should hire consultants to complete the permit application. When it comes to permit applications for large projects as canal restoration, the homeowners or the local governments should hire consultants to assist with the project design and with completing the applications. Regardless of who the applicant will be, the interagency permitting team will be available to assist with the permit application review process. So the applicant will get together with the team and help them through the process. Applicants should bring in the consultants to the pre-application meetings.

Susan will bring back some action tasks that the subcommittee can discuss for the bigger picture, possibly a blanket permit process. Then we may potentially submit a permit for the entire canal restoration projects as a blanket permit.

Gus recommended that Susan talk to the Village entities, Rhonda does the same at the County level to discuss the pre-application process and propose a way to move forward with the permit applications. The permitting team will be ready to assist. When you want to move forward we will set up the meeting. We will determine what will need to be required by the agencies.

The permitting process will be a topic for the next meeting. Susan and Rhonda will return to the subcommittee and report some recommendations from the Village and the County since they are the first entities who need to go through the permit application process. For example can a homeowner from the unincorporated Monroe County be the applicant when it is the County's money or does the County have to be the applicant. This is information that is needed for the subcommittee.

7. Outreach Update:

Nancy Diersing said that the Waterways and the canal restoration demonstration project is an episode that appears on county TV and UTube. This was created by **EPA, the National Park Service and NOAA**. This is an environmental television series. It can be seen at the Everglades National Parks web site.

8. Public Comment #2 there were no speakers:

9. Email Update on Canal #288:

Rhonda stated that the County Commission approved adding canal # 288 to the canal restoration list which will provide technology of a weed barrier at the mouth of the canal.

10. Next meeting date, place, and agenda topics:

Gus Rios discussed the topics for next meeting:

One topic will be the permitting process and the water quality monitoring.

Gus Rios intends to go to the Steering Committee and review the progress that the subcommittee had made and present how it intends to move forward.

Next meeting was scheduled for **Friday January 31st, 2013** at the **Monroe County BOCC** meeting room from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 12:45 pm.