

Partners in Planning

A PUBLICATION OF THE HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY CITY-COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION



RIVER NEWS

Serving Tampa, Temple Terrace and Hillsborough County
DEFINING THE LOWER HILLSBOROUGH RIVER'S FUTURE

- Publications**
- RIVER NEWS
 - Newsletter
 - Permits Report
 - Economic & Demographic Summary
 - Tampa Neighborhood News



- Inside**
- TAC Meetings Summary, p. 2
 - Riverwalk Park Openings, p. 2
 - Manatee Season Notice, p. 2
 - Retrospect, p. 3
-

What is a river? According to Webster a river is “a natural stream of water, usually of considerable volume.” Encyclopedia Britannica expands on that theme defining a river as a “natural stream of water that flows in a channel with more or less defined banks. Rivers are a fundamental link in the hydrologic cycle and they play a major role in shaping the surface features of the Earth. River flow is sustained by the difference between water input and output. Rivers are fed by overland runoff, groundwater seepage, and meltwater released along the edges of snowfields and glaciers. Direct precipitation contributes only very small amounts of water. Losses of river water result from percolation into porous and permeable rock, gravel, or sand; evaporation; and ultimately outflow into the ocean.” It would seem this definition may need revision depending on how the lower Hillsborough River is managed over the next few years.

Three significant processes are underway congruently that will affect the Hillsborough River in one way or another; *minimum flow* is being set for the lower river, downstream of the dam, *alternative dissolved oxygen criteria* (ADOC) is being considered for the lower river and, Tampa Bay Water is seeking a permit to discharge treated wastewater into the lower river, downstream of the dam, as part of a larger plan to withdraw more water upstream in the river during high-flow periods. All three of these processes, together or individually, will strongly influence the vitality and viability of the river downstream of the dam.

The Southwest Florida Management District is currently working on finalizing a minimum flow study that will set guidelines as to what flow regime would best serve the environmental needs of the lower river. The preliminary study bases its findings on

See page 3

TAC Meetings Summary

The TAC met January 17th at the Tampa Union Train Station. Among discussion items and reports made at the TAC were:

- Election of Robert Carnahan (Temple Terrace Citizen) as the TAC Chair and Pete Owens (EPC staff) as Vice-Chair for 2006.
- Review and support for one Tampa Port Authority Minor Work Permit Application project located on the Hillsborough River.
- Discussion and support of a recommendation to be sent to the River Board encouraging the City of Tampa's efforts to acquire and operate an anti-pollution craft in the near future and to suggest funding alternatives for the craft's operation.
- A briefing by the TAC Chair on a meeting of the City of Tampa Mayor's Environmental Roundtable.
- An extensive report on Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) processes related to consideration of modified dissolved oxygen standards for the lower Hillsborough River.
- A briefing on a preliminary draft report recommending the establishment of a revised minimum flow of freshwater for the lower Hillsborough River, and discussion of potential contributions Sulphur Springs, the Tampa By-Pass Canal and highly treated effluent could supply to the river's future minimum flow.
- A status report on recent Hillsborough River levels.
- A report on the dedication/opening of MacDill Park as part of the downtown Tampa Riverwalk/Ribbon of Green project.
- A report on grants secured by the Tampa Parks & Recreation Department to improve shoreline conditions at River Tower Park in Sulphur Springs and Riverside Garden Park in the West Tampa area.
- A report regarding City of Tampa Greenways & Trails progress towards establishing a trails system in the City. The TAC supported sending a letter of commendation to the City in this regard.


Future TAC meetings scheduled are on the third Tuesday of each month. All TAC meetings are scheduled to be held at the Tampa Union Train Station, 601 N. Nebraska Avenue, Tampa, second floor meeting room unless otherwise noticed. TAC meetings begin at 1:30 p.m. To review River Board and TAC agendas visit our website at www.hillsboroughriver.org and click on *Agendas* under the River Board/TAC logo or contact staff at 273-3774, extension 323.

MANATEE SEASON
NOV 15 thru MARCH

**GO
SLOW**

It won't kill YOU!



Happy 
Valentines
Greeting.

Love YOUR River!

River Board to Be Briefed on TAC Work

The Hillsborough River Interlocal Planning Board is scheduled to meet Friday, March 3, 2006 at 11:00 a.m. at the historic Tampa Union Train Station.



MacDill Park in downtown Tampa

Tampa Expands Public Access to Downtown Riverfront - Welcome to MacDill and USF Parks

The City of Tampa has added two new riverfront park spaces to the downtown landscape. MacDill Park, located across Ashley Drive west of the AmSouth Building and USF Park, located north of Platt Street on Ashley Drive as well, are the latest jewels to be unveiled by the city.

MacDill Park celebrates the history of MacDill Air Force Base in the Tampa community and the USF Park marks the university's educational and economic impact to the area. Both parks will eventually be linked by a trail along the river and Ashley Drive. Both park spaces tout native plant species and provide for passive recreational opportunity along the river.

So come downtown and visit these brand new park spaces. Enjoy the views of the downtown skyline, watch the rowers pass by on the river or catch a sunset along the waterfront. Explore the Hillsborough River downtown!



USF Park in downtown Tampa

YOUR River Board wants to hear from YOU! Call the River Hotline at 272-5940



From page 1

scientific data, especially focusing on salinity levels and the needs of aquatic species. The study suggests a minimum flow of 26cfs of freshwater inflow would best meet the lower river's needs. Further discussion and possible variation on the proposed flow will come in the next few months. The main question in the minimum flow process is where will the additional freshwater come from, whatever the rate of flow. The City of Tampa won't want to let freshwater from the reservoir be diverted to this purpose and there are few other alternatives suggested so far, like Sulphur Springs, Blue Sink or diversion of treated wastewater to the lower river.

In the mean time, Tampa Bay Water (TBW), in seeking a permit to withdraw even more water from the river at high-flow periods, has hit a snag in a plan to direct treated wastewater to the lower river to make up for additional water TBW proposes to take out of the river. The lower river is designated impaired in comparison to statewide dissolved oxygen(DO) standards set for waters in our state. TBW contends the DO levels in the river would never meet the state standard due to natural conditions and man-made impacts. TBW is seeking a reduction in the level of DO standard for the lower river, and alternative dissolved oxygen criteria(ADOC). If lowering the DO standard is demonstrated to be scientifically supportable then a lower DO standard could be set for the lower Hillsborough River. This precedent-setting step would forever mean we accept a lower-quality river as efforts and expectations to improve the water quality and marine life habitats in the river would be limited by such a lower standard.

The third potential river-altering project is TBW's proposal to release treated wastewater into the lower river to off-set water TBW proposes to withdraw upstream in the river during high-flow periods. This is termed downstream augmentation. Of course TBW must first clear up the impairment problem it faces in regard to the lower river's DO levels as discussed previously, but even if that happens there are concerns regarding that waters' use in the lower river. As currently presented the downstream augmentation would only occur under high-flow conditions which means there would be a lot of additional freshwater flowing over the dam to mix with the treated wastewater and to force it out of the river and into the bay quickly. There has been concerns raised about this proposal on two fronts. First, while the treated wastewater quality is some of the finest it still carries minute amounts of contaminants that are difficult if not impossible to remove or monitor. What long-term cumulative impacts could result from these contaminants being released into the lower river? The other concern is that there may be the temptation to employ the augmentation capability in meeting the future minimum flow for the lower river. If that were the case the flushing action by additional high-flow freshwater coming over the dam and cleansing the lower river would not necessarily be present. The minimum flow could consist entirely of treated wastewater. The TAC has been advising the River Board that this scenario is not optimal for the lower river's management or recovery.

Perhaps the most sensible approach is to set the lower river's minimum flow and see how the river responds before moving forward with the ADOC process or TBW's

application to direct treated wastewater into the lower river. Utmost caution to preserve the balance for ecological function and other uses provided by the river to our communities must be taken. We don't want to think we are taking a step forward and find the river more impacted than it already has been. It is time for a recovery strategy to be given a chance to work.

For more information or directions to helpful websites regarding these issues, call the River Board/TAC staff at 273-3774, ext. 323.



THE RIVER BOARD & TAC- A 20-YEAR INTROSPECTION

The Hillsborough River Interlocal Planning Board & Technical Advisory Council have been working on the Hillsborough River's management, within Hillsborough County, Temple Terrace and Tampa, for 20 years. In recognition of this effort, during the year leading up to the River Board/TAC's anniversary date in June, each issue of the *River News* will feature an article highlighting the many fine agencies and people that have helped in this endeavor.

The Planning Commission has provided the River Board/TAC with support throughout their 20-years of river management efforts in two ways. First, the Planning Commission has been represented over the years by commissioners that actively worked to advance the river's community significance. Dr. Maxine Hatcher, Don Pellegrino, Jackie Wilson, Terri Cobb and Seth Boots are some of the commissioners that have served on the TAC. Planning Commissioner Jerry King is the current TAC representative. In addition to Planning Commissioner participation, the Planning Commission has provided staff support for its 20-years of operation. Through conducting public meetings, coordinating river management issues with various agencies and jurisdictions and providing public information, staff support has helped to make the River Board/TAC successful in their charge to keep river issues afloat in our communities.

Formulating and adopting a Hillsborough River Master Plan was the first order of business for the River Board/TAC back in 1986. Since that time, the Planning Commission staff has been instrumental in guiding and updating Goals, Objectives and Policies (GOPs) directed to the river's management, making the river better.

The Planning Commission staff, with direction from the River Board/TAC, has facilitated implementation of many GOPs in the local comprehensive plans. Shoreline restorations, land acquisitions, manatee protection, water quality and quantity issues, recreational opportunities, river clean-ups, and other benefits have been provided to the communities through the Planning Commission's continued dedication of staffing assistance and resources.

Thanks to the Planning Commission, the River Board/TAC will continue to strive to make the Hillsborough River and our communities better places in which to live and interact.

RIVER NEWS

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TAMPA, FL
Permit No. 295

Augmenting the River Using Treated Wastewater.....

What ARE you
doing in there
young lady?

I'm flushing the toilet so
there is more flow to the
lower Hillsborough
River, for manatees and
other critters!

Well that won't help you
get your scout water
conservation badge,
now will it??!!!

