

**ICHETUCKNEE ALLIANCE
MEETING MINUTES
Saturday, June 21, 2014, @ Rum 138**

Present

John Jopling
Bob Knight
Charles Maxwell
Lucinda Merritt
Terri Skiles
Cathy Street

Members & Guests

Gina Alvarez
Jasmine Hagan
Scott Jantz
Sue Karcher
Jill Lingard
Fritzi Olson
Mackinsey Shipec
Jim Tatum
Alan Weinkle
Gary Weinkle
Lisa Wilson

President **John Jopling** called the meeting to order shortly after 9:40 a.m.

1. Agenda approval/additions/deletions. We added discussion/election of new board members and a new vice president. Charles Maxwell expressed concerns about the need to educate governmental agencies about the importance of wise water use (see item #s 26 and 27, below).

REPORTS

2. Review/approval of May 17 meeting minutes. Terri Skiles asked for a correction, which was made. Bob Knight moved that the minutes be approved; Charles Maxwell seconded. The minutes were approved with Terri's correction.

3. Treasurer's report. Terri Skiles reported that the Alliance has \$2592.13 in the bank. We have received an extension until October 15 for postcard filing of our first year's financial report (federal), since filing will be much easier once we obtain official nonprofit status. Word should be forthcoming soon about our 501(c)(3) application.

4. Staff Assistant's report. Lu Merritt thanked everyone who traveled to Tallahassee to ensure that the Ichetucknee Alliance would be granted legal standing to proceed with the challenge to the MFLs. There were no questions about the staff assistant's report.

5. Report on SRWMD June 10 meeting. A lively discussion ensued about consumptive use permits. Many concerns were expressed about the precedents now being set for water banking in the Suwannee River Water Management District, with people being granted permits that they do not intend to use except to sell their land for higher profits.

6. Report on FSI Springs Roundtable on June 19. Charles Maxwell reported that the meeting provided good

opportunities for sharing among springs alliance groups in a “support group” atmosphere and that the Alliance’s profile is heightened. Bob Knight mentioned Debbie Segal’s presentation for high school students—a presentation that can also be adapted for adult groups and to specific water bodies. Knight also mentioned the formation of a steering committee for a Florida Springs Alliance, a meta-group that would facilitate communications between and activities among all the springs-related groups. John Jopling volunteered to serve on that planning group and Lu Merritt has nominated Merrilee Malwitz-Jipson (Our Santa Fe River) to serve. Knight made the point that there are thousands of members in all the springs groups and that there is strength in those numbers.

7. Science Team report. Tabled until next meeting.

OLD BUSINESS

8. Update on water conservation award for Trini Johannesen to be presented at Columbia County Commission meeting. Given time spent at the administrative hearing, Lu Merritt has not had time to work on this; she anticipates getting to this task in July.

9. Update on MFL administrative hearing. John Jopling reported that he spoke with David Guest of Earthjustice after the hearing was over. Jopling described Guest as being “cautiously optimistic” about the outcome of the hearing with Judge Bram Canter. Jopling described the need for a challenge as “counterbalancing” the ongoing issuance of permits by the Suwannee River Water Management District, even though the district acknowledges that the Santa Fe and Ichetucknee Rivers are suffering. Merritt made the point that even without an MFL, she thinks that the district has the power to rein in permitting.

10. Update on funding an updated report card for the Ichetucknee. Tabled until next meeting.

11. Update on plans for Intermodal Park in Lake City. No updates.

12. Update on plans for summer social/BBQ at Three Rivers Estates. The date was set for September 27, giving time to plan and allowing for people’s return from their summer vacations.

13. Update on a plan to show “Following the Ichetucknee” to elected officials & civic groups. Given time spent at the administrative hearing, Lu Merritt has not had time to work on this; she anticipates getting to this task in July.

14. Update/approval of membership recruitment flyer & printing estimate. John Jopling moved to produce 10,000 of the brochures at Alta Printing and Bob Knight seconded the motion, which passed unanimously. Lu Merritt will ask Stewart Thomas to put the brochure in tri-fold format so that it will fit in a standard brochure display case. We will also investigate the possibility of having some of the brochures printed in grey scale (black and white). The need to add an emotional component to the text (“Save the Ichetucknee”) and the need for quick turnaround were stressed.

NEW BUSINESS

15. Contact w. Ann Shortelle of SRWMD re: a nitrate-monitoring project at Blue Hole. John Jopling reported that at her request, he would be meeting with Ann Shortelle to learn how the WMD would like for us to participate in this project. We may be asked to help produce an interpretive sign to explain the “ugly box” that will be used to monitor nitrates. Bob Knight commented that it is “wonderful to do it at Blue Hole as long as they make the data available—that should be our only condition.” He mentioned the importance of having continuous data that can help pinpoint what is causing the nitrate problem. The issues of flow monitoring and pharmaceutical monitoring were raised during this discussion (see item #16). Pharmaceutical monitoring is not currently required by the State of Florida. Flow monitoring stopped when funding was cut from WMD budgets.

16. *Does the Alliance want to call a meeting w. Ann Shortelle about our concerns for the river and springs?* Lu Merritt raised this issue as a counterbalance to the meetings JEA held with WMD staff that resulted in a revision to the MFL recovery strategy. Merritt stated that the Alliance should take a proactive stance by presenting the WMD a list of actions that could help with restoration of the river and springs. Pushing the WMD to reinstitute flow monitoring should be at the top of this list. Other suggested action items, such as making consumptive use permit (CUP) applications easier to track, will be developed. After we have a good list, we will set a meeting.

17. *Inviting Trini Johannesen and Valerie Thomas to make a presentation about the Fort White Middle/High School PARKnership program at an upcoming meeting.* Everyone agreed that this is a good idea. Lu Merritt will invite them to our July meeting.

18. *Potential project for fertilizer reduction?* John Jopling will call John Wheeler to find out what The Ichetucknee Partnership is doing about this. Bob Knight pointed out that a voluntary reduction of fertilizer use by half, especially in karstic areas, would be a big help. A guest mentioned a “green yard of the month” award. Garden clubs and neighborhood associations could help with this effort if they chose to do so.

19. *Workload issue/need help reviewing CUP applications.* A new attorney in John Jopling’s office, Chris Long, has made a formal public records request of the SRWMD for information on all new permits.

20. *Using a crowd-funding Internet site to raise money.* A good discussion ensued, with helpful suggestions from guests including the need to be project-specific, the need for emotional appeal and the need for lots of publicity. Indiegogo was mentioned as the best site for nonprofits such as the Alliance. Lu Merritt will draft a concept for a crowd-funding campaign and circulate it for refinement.

21. *IA t-shirts for Lifetime members, sell to others?* Terri Skiles will work on a t-shirt concept.

22. *Board dinner date for Joplings’ river house, Board members check calendars.* Date was set for Saturday, July 12.

23. *Do we need a summer retreat/planning session?* Tabled.

24. *Date of the next river-monitoring event?* Terri Skiles will communicate with Jacqui Sulek and they will communicate with the Science Team to set a date.

25. *Date of the next meeting?* The date was set for Saturday, July 19.

AGENDA ADDITIONS

26. Bob Knight mentioned the need for a vice president and additional board members. Charles Maxwell moved that Cathy Street be named vice president; John Jopling seconded. Street was elected unanimously. Jill Lingard and Sue Karcher volunteered to come on the board and were elected unanimously.

27. Charles Maxwell mentioned concerns about water that will need to be used to irrigate newly planted palms near the I-75 interchanges in Lake City. He said that we should think about the need to “push the government” to set a good example for others. This idea should factor into the Alliance’s plans for public education.

Respectfully submitted,
Lucinda Faulkner Merritt, Secretary