

EPC Wetlands Protection

Improving the Process, Maintaining the Protection



EPC Board Meeting
August 16, 2007

Overview of Benefits of Hybrid Approach

- Significant cost savings of \$367,859
- Consolidates multiple agency approvals
- Reduces applicant's time seeking project approvals
- Addresses minor activities
- New Basis of Review & Applicant Handbook
- Customer Service improvements
- Maintains local government oversight

What will the Hybrid Option accomplish?

Immediate rules changes to address common concerns

- Clarify permitting for minor activities in wetlands
- Establish new exemptions from permitting

Establish other significant rule changes within one year

- Define the Reasonable Use standard
- Create a “Basis of Review” document to clarify permitting
- Create an “Applicant’s Handbook” for wetland permitting
- Create classification system for wetlands based on function
- Consider “net environmental benefits” for wetland impacts
- Create Specific Criteria for Agriculture
- Further develop Miscellaneous Activities allowances
- Create time frames in Rule

What will the Hybrid Option accomplish?

Customer Service Improvements

Create a Technical Advisory Committee for rule improvements

Create an on-line application form

Assign a Wetlands Ombudsman: Christina Bryant

Encourage additional Mitigation Banks

Process Improvements

Creates one-stop permitting in the County for the following:

FDEP Environmental Resource Permitting (ERP)

Army Corps (State Programmatic General Permit)

Tampa Port Authority minor works

EPC Wetland and Mangrove Trimming permits

What will the Hybrid Option accomplish?

Audit of the Development Review Process

Have the Internal Auditor review EPC's activities in the Development Review Process to streamline or eliminate unnecessary reviews

Increased coordination with SWFWMD

Increased coordination on project reviews and wetland delineations; EPC handles mitigation compliance and is first respondent on wetland complaints

What will the Hybrid Option accomplish?

- New Criteria for Agriculture
 - EPC will join SWFWMD AGSWM project review meetings to exempt successful AGSWM agricultural projects from EPC reasonable use criteria
 - For AGSWM projects and certain other bona fide agricultural activities, mitigation will be required for cumulative impacts greater than $\frac{1}{2}$ acre and for individual isolated wetlands greater than $\frac{1}{4}$ acre

Why should EPC be given the chance to implement the Hybrid Option?

- The changes set forth in the Hybrid Plan have been designed to preserve the integrity of the rule but address the regulated community's concerns
- A one-year time period should be given to EPC staff to prove the Hybrid changes can be instituted and to show they are in fact achievable even with less staff
- The County Administrator's duplication study will not be complete until December 2007

Why should EPC be given the chance to implement the Hybrid Option?

- Internal Performance Auditor Process Review should have an opportunity to be completed
- Quarterly reports will be made to the Board checking off each task as it is achieved
- During the August 2008 EPC meeting we will summarize progress and achievements of the Hybrid Model

Why should EPC be given the chance to implement the Hybrid Option?

- Complete Hybrid Option tasks within one year. Further develop prioritized timeline goals to accomplish Future Proposed Rule Changes within first 9 months. The timeline goals will have milestones similar to the following:
 - Agricultural rule adopted within 60 days
 - FDEP delegation and rule adoption within 120 days
 - Classification of wetlands, consideration of net environmental benefits and Basis of Review by May 2008

Hybrid Timeline

✓ July 26	Board gives direction. Sets public hearing for August 16 th to amend Chapter 1-11
✓ July 27	Executive Director designates Wetlands Ombudsman Budget submitted with 5 FTE's cut in Wetlands Division
✓ July 30	Request assistance from Internal Performance Auditor
✓ August 1-10	Host technical rule workshops. Meet with CEAC and stakeholders
✓ August 16	Bring revised Chapter 1-11 to the Board for approval
August 30	Establish Wetlands Technical Advisory Committee
September 20	Submit milestone goals for further Hybrid rules adoption
December 13	Review of EPC/PGMD Process back to the EPC Board
August '08	Quarterly reports on rule work, permitting efficiencies, and wetlands protection with a year-end summary

EPC Wetlands Protection: Improving the Process, Maintaining the Protection

- **Summary of Results**
 - Savings of \$367,859 (including Five FTE's)
 - Streamlined permitting process and faster turnaround time
 - Clearer rules
 - Consolidates most multiple agency approvals
 - Priorities set on wetlands protection
 - Exemption for minor activities
 - Reduces real or perceived duplication
 - Emphasizes customer service
 - Maintains resource protection
 - Many items have short term implementation; full implementation 1 year

Staff Recommendations

- Give direction to proceed with Hybrid Plan and adopt today's proposed rule changes which begin the implementation of the Plan
- Provide quarterly updates and readdress the Plan at the August 2008 EPC meeting and determine at that time whether the Plan has been fully implemented and has achieved meaningful results