

**Technical Advisory Group**  
**Classification Sub-Committee**  
**5/21/08 Meeting Minutes**  
**5PM to 7PM**

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ATTENDEES: Lee Cook, Tom Crisman, Derek Doughty, Scott Emery (via phone), Rhonda Evans, Ann Hodgson, Jason Mickel

EPC ATTENDEES: Debbie Sinko, Bob Stetler, Kim Tapley

HANDOUTS: Classification Agenda  
Mitigation Banking and Wetlands Categorization by The Wildlife Society

Sub-Committee discussed the Classification agenda topics and Tom Crisman added to the topics while the discussion occurred (see the draft Classification white paper dated 5-21-08).

Sub-committee members discussed that there should be an opening introduction to the white paper explaining what this classification system would address since there are already numerous wetland classification systems available such as the FLUCCS.

Committee agreed that they are not creating a new classification system, but to use the existing classification systems and realizing that there are two components: structure & function.

FLUCCS categorizes habitat mapping, UMAM not a mapping protocol but a measure of function. NWI system is a well recognized system.

A Sub-Committee member asked what is the purpose of EPC to create a wetlands classification system?

Bob Stetler noted that Dr. Garrity's paragraph in the Hybrid discussed classification. This section of the hybrid was because the developer comes in with the plans and staff is told not to consider in the layout of the plan that there may be different qualities of wetlands, staff as per the rule have to look at all of the wetlands equally. It wasn't Dr. Garrity's intent to change the rule, but to change intent and policy. However, Dr. Garrity thought it was important in the beginning of the process that the wetlands are noted as being different in regards to their quality and functions. And therefore if the developer did need to impact a wetland onsite it would potentially occur in one of these lower quality wetlands.

A Sub-committee member notes, first identify the types of wetlands (NWI) then layer FLUCCS codes this would give standard nomenclature. Then layer on the jurisdictional wetland line then layer on an evaluation process that identifies the condition of the wetlands. Audubon of Florida objects to the way UMAM evaluates wetlands because in many cases it misinterprets the function of wetlands and there is not enough weight given to some types of wetlands that have important functions.

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Wetland locations in the landscape and soils mapping should both be used in the classification.

The classification white paper has the categories: structure, function, & quality. The mitigation subcommittee references publications for underlying guidance in their white paper draft, it was suggested that the classification white paper is done the same way.

Site plan design is important because if onsite mitigation is needed, a relic wetland soil unit could be a great area for the mitigation. A TAG member asked, if under UMAM, a wetland is rehydrated as opposed to a new wetland creating area, would there be more points involved for the re-hydration? Another TAG member said that if the risk factor was low then there should be more points for re-hydration because the created wetland would have a higher risk. It makes more sense to use an area that may be upland now but has hydric soils for the wetland creation then to go to a brand new area and try to create a wetland from scratch.

A TAG member noted that doing these evaluations (classification evaluation, reasonable use, avoidance & minimization) early on in the process is better than waiting later because there is so much money invested in site design without having the evaluation factors the more frustrating it becomes.

Bob Stetler noted that issue has been concerning Dr. Garrity. Another TAG member noted that at anytime a developer can call EPC and schedule a meeting to discuss the preliminary concepts of a project. Then that EPC staff person would guide the applicant through the process.

Bob Stetler noted that the redesign of a site plan to avoid high quality wetland impacts to lower quality wetland impacts may fit into the redesign section of the reasonable use definition.

A TAG member noted that because some mitigation banks are still under WAP, this should be added under the UMAM section in the white paper.

Functions: things that wetlands do, assessed by UMAM and WAP

Values: provide humans with economic justifications

Citations and definitions can be added to the paper at a later date.

A TAG member asked if EPC had all of the wetlands in the county mapped. Bob Stetler noted that it can be done with FLUCCS, but no, not every wetland in the county has been field verified or mapped individually because there is not enough staff to take on this task.

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TAG members noted if EPC does not have the data of all of the wetlands in the county then how can some wetlands be categorized as unique? Bob Stetler noted that you don't need to categorize all of the wetlands to know that a huge fern marsh is a unique wetland.

A TAG member noted that the relative importance of certain types of rare wetlands are already known such as the fern marsh, bay swamps, headwaters, etc. and the type of wetlands system could be created into a list of unique wetlands in the county.

Some TAG members recommend that the mapping of all of the wetlands in the county be preformed.

A TAG member noted that in a recent study 54 headwater sources to the Alafia River have been lost in the last 10 years.

TAG members discussed the rare/unique wetlands in the county and listed them. It was suggested that the EPC map these areas so that the development community knows where these areas are and to avoid these wetlands for impact.

A TAG member noted that UMAM was never opened up for peer review before it was state mandated.

TAG members discussed that there should be coordinated training on delineations and UMAMs.

TAG members discussed not discrediting a created wetland, just because it was created and not a "natural" wetland. An example was a saltwater wetland system that was created by the airport but later was impacted for a toll road. One of the factors for impact was the argument that it was a created wetland and not a natural one, therefore it had less value. Bob Stetler noted that this is not the case of EPC, once the mitigation is released it is viewed as just another wetland, not a created wetland.

The TAG members discussed the timing at which the classification should be addressed, see white paper for specific language.

The TAG members were encouraged to submit their citations for the paper. The paper should be finished prior to the June 2<sup>nd</sup> for the Stakeholders meeting.

Meeting adjourned.