

Southwest Florida Water Management District

5060 U.S. HIGHWAY 41, SOUTH — BROOKSVILLE, FLORIDA 33512
PHONE (904) 796-7211

BRUCE A. SAMSON, Chairman, Tampa
Wm. O. STUBBS, JR., Vice Chairman, Dade City
JAMES CAMPBELL, Secretary, Plant City
RONALD B. LAMBERT, Treasurer, Wauchula

B. T. LONGINO, Sarasota
CLIFF STEPHENS, Clearwater
DON CRANE, St. Petersburg

JIM KIMBROUGH, Brooksville
ARCH UPDIKE, JR., Lake Wales

DONALD R. FEASTER, Executive Director



April 20, 1981

Mr. Eugene C. Engman, Acting Chairman
Dona & Robert's Bays Environmental Society, Inc.
106 Bayview Parkway
Nokomis, Florida 33555

RE: Cow Pen Slough Water Management Investigation Phase I

Dear Mr. Engman:

Enclosed is a copy of the final report entitled, "Cow Pen Slough Water Management Investigation Phase I." The final report has taken into consideration the review comments received on the earlier draft report which was provided to the Advisory Committee for review and comment.

The Board of County Commissioners, Sarasota County and the Sarasota Soil and Water Conservation District have each been sent ten copies of the final report. Enclosed are copies of the letters of transmittal that were sent with those reports.

If you have any questions pertaining to the investigation or the final report, please feel free to call either Rich McLean or me.

Very truly yours,

J. A. MANN
Sr. Project Hydrologist
Project Development Section

JAM:cdl

Enclosures: As stated

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DONALD R. FEASTER, Executive Director

April 20, 1981

The Honorable Dallas Dort, Chairman
Sarasota Soil & Water Conservation District
2900 Ringling Blvd.
Sarasota, Florida 33577

RE: Cow Pen Slough Water Management Investigation

Dear Chairman Dort:

At the request of the Sarasota County Commission and the Sarasota Soil and Water Conservation District, the Manasota Basin Board of our District agreed (letter from Mr. Feaster to Mrs. Clay and Mr. Daniels dated March 27, 1979) to conduct a long range program of investigation of the Sarasota West Coast Watershed Project; locally known as the Cow Pen Slough Project. The Phase I report, entitled "Cow Pen Slough Water Management Investigation Phase I" has been completed and ten copies are herewith enclosed.

The Phase I Study is a preliminary Staff effort to determine whether further construction should be undertaken and/or changes made in the original project. The specific analytical objectives of Phase I Study are as follows:

1. Adjustment of the Cow Pen Slough (CPS) hydroperiod to reduce detrimental impacts to Dona and Robert's Bays (DARB).
2. Development of the municipal water supply potential of CPS including possible use of Phillippi Creek and Myakka River.
3. Drainage and flood control in CPS Watershed.
4. Flood control in the agriculturally productive muck lands east of Sarasota.
5. Resolution and disposition of the partially completed Public Law-566, SWCWP.

The following recommendations are made based on our Phase I preliminary analysis.

1. The existing structures in Cow Pen Slough (CPS) should be operated to simulate natural outflow conditions. However, storage within the canal itself is small, so the positive impacts of such an operation schedule will probably be slight and additional structures in the canal would also be of little value in hydro-period modification. Aquatic weeds in CPS should be controlled to limit their movement into Dona Bay.

2. Development of a public water supply using CPS and the Myakka River is possible, however, the presence of a sanitary landfill in the upper reaches of CPS is a major concern and should probably preclude further investigation of CPS as a source. Additionally, other projects in the area already include the possible use of the Myakka as a source. Diversion of CPS waters to Braden River is possible, but such a diversion probably would be of little use; because when the Braden River is low and requires more water to meet the Bradenton water demand, CPS is also low and has little water to offer.
3. Drainage in the completed portion of CPS is adequate and no additional drainage is warranted.
4. Flooding in the CPS Basin is potentially the most severe problem in the area. The retaining levee has been breached in several places, and the King's Gate development is in notable peril; since it is actually within the slough itself. The past years have been relatively dry, but there will be flooding in these areas in the future. Actions should be undertaken now to remedy the existing situations and to prevent their occurrence in the future.
5. Flooding in the muckland farming areas will still cause economic loss to the farming interests. The problem can be compounded if housing developments were allowed to move into the area as farming ceases. If it is deemed economically feasible and desirable, a project alternative should be pursued to reduce flooding in the muckland farming areas. Strict zoning and land management regulation should keep housing out of such a flood prone area.
6. The Sarasota West Coast Watershed Project should not be completed as originally planned. The existing facilities should be refurbished and maintained, and Structure #3 should be made operational.

The CPS Project is a highly emotional subject among local interests, and any contemplated action will probably meet with strong opposition. The original Project was conceived almost twenty years ago and, the nature of the County itself has changed radically since that time. For these reasons, the importance of completing this particular Project has diminished. Therefore, with the exception of the actions discussed above, it is recommended that the original Project be considered complete in its present state.

Very truly yours,



D. R. FEASTER, P.E.
Executive Director

DRF:JAM:RVM:cd1

Enclosures: (1) Letter of March 27, 1979
(2) 10 copies of the report

B.R.Z. 1/14/79
C.N.M. [Signature]
W.F.S. [Signature]

21-200-PUB-28-01
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March 27, 1979

The Honorable Beverly Clay, Chairman
Sarasota County Board of Commissioners
Post Office Box 8
Sarasota, FL 33578

Re: Sarasota West Coast Watershed Project (Cow Pen Slough)

Dear Chairman Clay:

As a result of your letter of November 27, 1978 on the referenced project, the Southwest Florida Water Management District (SWFWMD) Staff made a study of the operation, maintenance and repair of Cow Pen Slough. The study, a copy of which is attached hereto, reached the following conclusions:

- a. The aquatic weed program is being performed in a good manner. There appears to be no reason for change.
- b. Required repairs are extensive, an estimated \$161,000. This figure is contingent on the project sponsors getting the property owners to agree to donate the right-of-way for fencing to keep cattle off the slough banks.
- c. Because of the proximity of the Sarasota County Staff, it appears to be more feasible for the County to run the needed repair and maintenance program.

At its regular meeting on March 14, 1979, the Manasota Basin Board accepted the Staff recommendation to undertake no repair or maintenance work at this time, and recognized that any repair or maintenance by the District should be on a one-time contract basis, or by financial participation with the County in support of their repair and maintenance program. The District Staff will be available to work with the County and SCS Staffs to reach agreement on an acceptable program, and to obtain Basin Board approval therefor.

The Board also approved the concept of a long range study which will examine the original Sarasota West Coast Watershed Project, analyze the development and other changes which have occurred, and include all

The Honorable Beverly Clay, Chairman
March 26, 1979
Page Two

current concerns such as municipal water supply sources and environmental impacts. This study should determine the best water management methods for solving the complex problems of the area.

We look forward to working with your staff to bring the Cow Pen Slough Project to a successful conclusion.

Sincerely,

D. R. Feaster, P.E.
Executive Director

DRF:WFS:bb

Enclosure: Cow Pen Slough Study

cc: Sarasota County Commission Members (w/enclosure)
Manasota Basin Board Members (w/enclosure)
Henry H. Daniels, Chairman, Sarasota Soil & Water Conservation District
Anthony Polizos, USNA, SCS (w/enclosure)

bcc: J. B. Butler
E. Hoyt
C. H. Hiller
R. Gates
P. A. Lambert
J. A. Mann
R. McLean

March 27, 1979

Mr. Henry M. Daniels, Chairman
Sarasota Soil and Water
Conservation District
2900 Ringling Boulevard
Sarasota, FL 33577

Re: Sarasota West Coast Watershed Project (Cow Pen Slough)

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Mr. Henry M. Daniels, Chairman
March 26, 1979
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We look forward to working with your staff to bring the Cow Pen Slough Project to a successful conclusion.

Sincerely,

D. R. Feaster, P.E.
Executive Director

DRF:WFS:bh

Enclosure: Cow Pen Slough Study

cc: Mrs. Beverly Clay, Chairman, Sarasota County Commission
Sarasota County Commission Members
Manasota Basin Board Members
Anthony Polizos, USDA, SCS

bcc: J. B. Butler
E. Hoyt
C. H. Miller
R. Gates
P. A. Lambert
J. A. Mann
R. McLean