MEETING SUMMARY
SWF RAMP
APRIL 2, 2003

SOUTHWEST FLORIDA
REGIONAL AMBIENT MONITORING PROGRAM
Weedon Island Preserve Cultural & Natural History Center

1. Introductory Remarks (Andy Squires and Keith Kibbey, Co-chairs).

An agenda item to discuss NELAC was added to the printed agenda.

2. Review of December 2002 sample results.

Nearly all sample results among labs were very similar. The results from Flowers Laboratory, a first time participant in our interlaboratory comparisons, were somewhat different from the rest of the laboratories, especially for TSS. John Lindsey of Flowers said they have investigated the TSS values and thought salt residue on their filters caused the higher values. They will be examining their fresh water rinsing protocols. Flowers uses a different method (EPA 6010) to measure total phosphorus compared to the other labs. John said a presentation on their TP method could be done at the next RAMP meeting. TKN values measured by Flowers were also somewhat elevated compared to the group.

A question was raised about whether chlorophyll-a should be reported as corrected or uncorrected. Apparently FDEP has requested that corrected values be reported for TMDL purposes. On the other hand, all the TBEP chlorophyll – light relationships have used uncorrected values measured by EPC of Hillsborough County. It was decided that the SWF RAMP group should report both values.

An examination and/or analysis of interlab comparisons over time was discussed. Bill D'Angelo of USGS mentioned that a round-robin analysis could be done with a minimum of seven labs. Various RAMP members mentioned other labs doing work in the region. The group decided that those other labs should be encouraged to join our quarterly interlaboratory sample analyses comparisons. Several RAMP participants agreed to invite labs to partake in our next meeting and sample exchange in July. Holly Greening suggested a simple time series plot by each parameter showing the range of different lab results by parameter through time. The range of results for a given parameter should be a smaller or remain stable with time. Andy Squires agreed to look into getting past lab results into a database to allow creation of such plots.

The group discussed the possibility to include laboratory-measured salinity and specific conductance to our round robin data analyses. The group reached consensus

that both salinity and specific conductance should be measured in each respective lab in all future RAMP samples.

3. NELAC

Keith Kibbey discussed some current NELAC issues with regard to proficiency testing and performance audits.

In the NECAC Quality Systems, chapter 5, Keith noted that there is some verbiage about interlaboratory comparisons.

The following is from the 1999 NELAC Standards:

> 5.5.3.4 Performance Audits
>
> In addition to periodic audits, the laboratory shall ensure the quality of results provided to clients by implementing checks to monitor the quality of the laboratory's analytical activities. Examples of such checks are:
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> b) participation in proficiency testing or other interlaboratory comparisons (See Chapter 2);
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> A review of chapter 2 showed only references to proficiency testing. During the discussion participants talked about how results should be evaluated, and that a pass/fail evaluation should be used. It was noted that USGS has already worked up statistics to do this but SWF RAMP would need more labs participating to use their statistical analysis method. The participants then diverged into a discussion about getting more labs to participate.

4. Transmissivity

Roger Johansson (City of Tampa) summarized how he has been experimenting with the measurement of transmissivity (at 660nm) to estimate Secchi disk disappearance depth and light extinction coefficients (K_d). A transmissivity measurement can be used to estimate water clarity and can be taken in very shallow water. Secchi disks and light (PAR) sensors cannot be used in shallow water. Pinellas County has also borrowed the City of Tampa's transmissometer and made about 30 measurements in western County coastal estuarine waters. Both the City and County have found a very tight linear relationship between transmissivity and Secchi, but not as good a relationships between transmissivity and K_d. Pinellas County plans to purchase a transmissometer and begin using the measurements for their ambient monitoring program as an indicator of water clarity and possibly light attenuation.

5. STORET

Sue Myers (Pinellas County) mentioned the difficult process involved to convert monitoring data into the required STORET format. Representatives from Sarasota County, Lee County, EPC, and Charlotte Harbor NEP discussed how they were handling, or planned to handle, the necessary conversions. Sue mentioned the SAS JMP module FDEP staff use, but they are no longer providing the service to local governments. Most agencies had either contracted help to make the conversion, or had a special program written to make the conversion from their existing database format.

6. TMDLs

Andy Squires discussed how Pinellas County was handling the evolving TMDL program administered by FDEP. FDEP, via e-mail to Pinellas County, indicated that the door is shut for using reasonable assurance to delist any verified Group 1 water bodies. Conversely, Daryll Joyner of FDEP did say that submittal of water body management plans for verified impaired Group 1 waters by about March 2004 would likely make the TMDL allocation process much easier for all concerned parties.

One major obstacle to FDEP is to identify the source of Fecal and Total Coliform bacteria. A second issue is dealing with dissolved oxygen impairments. Manatee County has been tasked to develop SACs (specific alternative criteria) for dissolved oxygen. These SACs are used to determine that State water quality standards are inappropriate for specific water bodies, rather than what many scientists and managers believe is more appropriate… and that is to change the State water quality standards to more meaningful values. Finally, another issue is the lack of numeric nutrient criteria. There has only been very slow progress (one meeting) on FDEP's work to develop nutrient criteria for the State.

7. Methods & Data Comparability Board

Andy Squires walked through the latest (and first) newsletter of the Methods & Data Comparability Board. The Board is part of the National Water Quality Monitoring Council (NWQMC) and appears to have objectives similar to SWF RAMP. Several Board workgroups have formed covering the topics of possible interest to RAMP including: the National Environmental Method Index, Nutrients, Water Quality Data Elements, New Technologies, and Outreach. Rob Brown agreed to take a closer look at this Board and report his findings at our next meeting. The "Across the Board" newsletter can be viewed at www.nemi.gov.

8. SWF RAMP mission, vision, action items.

Andy Squires briefly discussed a past mission statement, and listed some suggested new mission, goal and strategy statements for SWF RAMP. Andy offered to further

develop RAMP mission, goal, and strategy statements, with input from Keith Kibbey, Rob Brown, and Holly Greening… and present them at the next meeting.

9. Next Meeting (bring Hydrolabs and YSI units!!!!!)

The next meeting will be hosted by Manatee County sometime in early July. We will be collecting a freshwater sample… and the group will be comparing in situ multimeter parameter measurements. So bring your calibrated Hydrolabs and YSI units to the next meeting!