

Natural Resources Branch Meeting

Meeting Minutes

10:30 AM TO 12:00 PM | APRIL 21, 2023 | CAPTIVA CIVIC ASSOCIATION| 11550 CHAPIN LANE, CAPTIVA, FL, 33924| PUBLIC MEETING

Call to Order

At 10:32 AM on April 21st, 2023, the Natural Resources Branch Meeting convened with the following members present:

- Dan Delisi, Lead
- Maya Robert
- Daniel Andrew
- James Evans
- Holly Milbrandt
- Chadd Chustz
- Bethany Brosious
- Joanne Ribble
- Kate Gooderham
- Samantha Selbach, alternate for MaryBeth Saunders

Facilitators and Branch Support

- Terry Mazany, Collaboratory
- Shanna Snider, Hagerty Consulting
- Robbie Heere, Hagerty Consulting

Introductions

Branch members introduced themselves. Terry Mazany, the Branch facilitator began the presentation.

Recovery Task Force (RTF) Updates and Problem-Solving Process

Mr. Mazany provided a review of the RTF and Branches in the recovery and resilience planning process and provided a review of the unmet needs committee and the separate

group. Robert Heere provided a review of the work of the RTF since the last meeting, including the community engagement plan priorities and information regarding the Community Development Block Grant – Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) program.

Mr. Mazany outlined the work of this meeting and provided a review of the problem-solving process in identifying solutions and recommendations for the Recovery & Resilience (R&R) planning process.

Research and Data Presentation and Discussion

The key challenges and findings for the three Branch identified priorities regarding Natural Resources were presented and members reviewed the experience to gain a shared understanding of solutions to explore in the process of creating recommendations. Branch members were assured that more of the branch priorities would be addressed in the plan as data continues to be built out. The three priorities discussed were:

1. Direct actions to improve hydrological and ecological conditions.
2. Determine regulatory actions and incentives to address impacts on natural resources.
3. Public education and awareness campaigns to reduce the impact on natural resources.

The following was discussed by the Branch members:

- Beach renourishment and dune restoration.
- Members wanted to know how to provide input and feedback on the key findings.
 - Mr. Mazany requested input be emailed to info@resilientlee.org.
- How to work with local government to best connect what the Branch is trying to do locally with what is happening at the state level.
- It was suggested that priorities need to be identified in the plan prior to advocating to the county.
- Suggested subject matter experts:
 - Nature conservancy with a coastal resiliency plan.

Sanibel and Captiva Impact Presentation

Dr. Carrie Schuman, the coastal resiliency manager for Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation (SCCF) presented on the physical conditions during Hurricane Ian, specifically towards Sanibel and Captiva.

She compared Hurricane Ian to Hurricane Charley as a good metal anchor to use, noting the key differences being that the pathway and landfall were very similar, but speed and storm size were significantly different. Hurricane Ian is the third costliest hurricane in

United States history and the deadliest since the 1935 Labor Day hurricane. The two key patterns were:

- The intensity of storms, more high intensity storms are a pattern scientists expect to continue; and
- Hurricanes are expected to linger over land for longer.

Dr. Schuman stated that Hurricane Ian is representative of climate change trends. She pointed out the challenges around storm data are that the data for Captiva and Sanibel are more limited and there is a challenge around scientific instrumentation.

Dr. Schuman discussed the RECON Network:

- Measured wind speed – sustained speed peaked at 94 mph with peak of 126 mph.
- Wave direction (recorded by a SCCF wave buoy) – originated from the southeast and traveled towards the northwest, which continued for a few days after the storm.
- Storm surge – additional height of water a storm introduces above what is typical. Influenced by size, intensity, forward speed, approach angle of a storm, shape of coastline, and slope of ocean floor, local features, and barriers.
- Do not have specific measurements for Sanibel/Captiva, but surges measured at 12.5 feet outside Sanibel.
- Inundation: water level above normally dry ground (storm surge, tides, waves, and freshwater repositories).
 - General pattern: Sanibel 0-10 feet, Captiva 0-4 feet.
- Large Scale Impacts:
 - Bridges did okay; approaches to bridges did not.
 - 5 out of 6 failed – soil washed out between.
 - Significant Ebb Scour Channels on Sanibel Beaches.
 - Large movement of sand into submerged beach profile of Captiva Beaches.

Branch members commented on the importance of using this data when developing plan recommendations.

Past Studies and County Projects Presentation

Roland Ottolini, the Director at Lee County Division of Natural Resources, presented on the County Response to Flood Mitigation and Coastal Recovery. He reviewed 92L, Hurricane Irma response phases, and rainfall distribution before, during, and after Hurricane Irma. He presented the Lee County watershed map and historic flow way connections. He pointed out that Lee County does not have any major flood control systems and rely heavily on natural systems.

Mr. Ottolini discussed the long-term plan mitigation strategy and reviewed examples of projects and potential funding sources.

Steve Boutelle, presented on the Florida Division of Emergency Management Vessel & Marine Debris Missions. He discussed the magnitude of the debris problem and the synergy between the county and the state on dealing with the debris in the water. He elaborated on the need to address remaining vessel and wet debris removal activities. Clean-up efforts could still take a year or two. He discussed that the role of the county has translated to one of catalyst and facilitator for removal needs, resources, and execution. He discussed that shrimping companies/trawlers and other smaller companies are not able to recover quickly.

The beach impacts and recovery were discussed:

- The State of Florida created a joint coalition to assess beach impacts and recovery efforts.
- Beaches were assessed regardless of where they were located.
- 118 million erosion damage was estimated countywide.
 - A minimum of 20.5 million remains to be funded or efforts planned.
- The County is working on a comprehensive vulnerability assessment, which will take two years and look at coastlines, surge, sea level rising (SLR), rainfall, and compound events.

Branch members discussed the following:

- Corporate umbrellas are in bankruptcy and are indicating that they want to get back up and running.
- Suggestion to discuss docks and boat ramps in the future.
- How to incorporate changes in tides into modeling.
 - Doing modeling analysis, putting some relatively predictable tide indications into the planning, and putting in a reasonable amount on top of the normal tide and adjusting based on requests for different studies.

Next Steps

The schedule of meetings was shared with the Branch members.

Discussion and Questions

The Branch members were offered the chance to walk out to the beach on Captiva Island.

Public Comment

Jennifer Hecker of Coastal & Heartland National Estuary (CHNE) commented that restoration planning needs to be forward looking. CHNE has done surface modeling for South Lee County water initiatives and is assessing how to hydrologically restore conditions while understanding what changes are already occurring. Ms. Hecker suggested meeting with federal agencies and stakeholders on common themes about what is needed. CHNE is a useful resource for the Branch and the members committee and offered to support with letters of support for grants.

Michelle Mandez of The Clinic for the Rehabilitation of Wildlife (CROW) thanked the Branch and the members. CROW has begun to start treating patients again and are seeing more wildlife return.

Concluding Remarks and Adjournment

Upon hearing public comments, the members clarified the Community Disaster Block Grant-Disaster Recovery funding opportunity.

Mr. Mazany thanked the members for attending and then adjourned the meeting at 12:01 PM.