

**East-West Spring Lake Wastewater Pilot Program
Stakeholder Committee Meeting Report
Wednesday, February 27, 2013
2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.**

On Wednesday, February 27th, Banks Engineering held the second in a series of East-West Spring Lake Wastewater Pilot Program stakeholder committee meetings. Nineteen stakeholders attended the meeting which was convened by Todd Rebol of Banks Engineering and facilitated by Joy Hazell from University of Florida/IFAS/Florida Sea Grant. Stakeholders represented seven community groups including the Chamber of Commerce, Team Punta Gorda, and the Curmudgeon Club. The balance of the committee was filled with residents of the pilot community. The residents were randomly selected to be on the committee from a pool of interested parties. The workshop objectives were to:

- Provide information on the East-West Spring Lake Wastewater Pilot Program
- Prioritize East-West Spring Lake Wastewater Pilot Program benefits and concerns
- Brainstorm possible solutions to the concerns

The workshop began with a short icebreaker and an affirmation of stakeholder committee goals, meeting objectives and the ground rules, which were generated at the initial meeting. A guest speaker, Jim Miller was introduced to meeting participants. Jim Miller is the Project Manager of the Marco Island, FL [Septic Tank Replacement Program](#). He was invited to provide information on Marco Island's transition to sewer and answer any questions the stakeholders might have on how the program worked in Marco Island.

Todd Rebol gave a presentation outlining a general comparison of septic and sewer. It included comparisons of cost, environmental impact, maintenance, and reliability. Participants took almost the entire remainder of the time given asking questions of Todd and Jim. Questions and concerns included:

- If you need a new septic system now, when would the new central system program start assuming it is approved?
- How many systems have failed inspection?
- Has anything been done to research our funding position on State Revolving Fund to secure a low interest rate?
- How is Charlotte County providing for future sewer expansion programs? Would these programs be at the same interest rate?

Participants were then asked to spend 10 minutes discussing what they would like to see at the next meeting. There was an approximate 50/50 split between those wanting more information from a water quality expert and those wishing to move the stakeholder input process forward. Additional comments included the following:

- Get the stakeholders involved at the very beginning when starting a phase II if that occurs
- A master plan is needed for the entire county on septic (if we need sewer so does the rest of Port Charlotte that is currently on septic)

The next meeting will be held Tuesday, March 12, 2013 from 2:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m. The guest speaker will be the TMDL coordinator for Lee County, Karen Bickford and the meeting will focus on moving the group forward to provide input to the Board of County Commissioners on the East-West Spring Lake Wastewater Pilot Program.

Additional Comments received from General Public:

- This is not the first time a central sewer system (CSS) has been considered for this area. If the decision to continue with septic systems goes forward – there is a reasonable chance the issue of a CSS will come up again! At an increased inflated cost with time. This as an important point to make when costs are compared. It is feasible to continue paying for repairs on a septic system for another x number of years and still have a CSS installed 5-10 years from now. I strongly support a CSS now vs later on a 20-year prorated basis; I don't want to pay for a CSS upfront when I won't be here for the life of a CSS.
- County installed some kind of pipe on corner lots to see if there is sewage into groundwater. Are we going to see results??
- County spends money on Murdock Village, Parkside, etc. Why can't we as a county find a way to pay for sewer projects as opposed to billing residents directly!
- Sidewalks or bike lanes or both on Pt. Charlotte Blvd. Back water valve to street.
- Back water valves should absolutely be installed. Other than that, go for it.
- General concern about providing financial hardship funding for some who maybe can't afford the sewer and a possible credit/rebate program for those who recently put in a septic system