

# **Maple Leaf Golf and Country Club**

***2100 Kings Highway, Port Charlotte***

***Florida***

## **Committee for Improvement of Stormwater Quality**

*January 2014*

### **Background**

Surface waters at Maple Leaf Golf and Country Club (MLG&CC) are part of a natural drainage system fed principally by storm water runoff and supplemented with purchased reclaimed water during the winter months. Over the last 30 years, the inflowing storm water quality has steadily deteriorated. The MLG&CC Water Asset Management Committee met with South West Florida Water Management (SWFWMD) and Charlotte County personnel in 2003 and 2004 with complaints of high suspended solid (SS) loads, discoloration and flooding due to berm failures along Rampart Boulevard. Although numerous decisions have been awarded in MLG&CC's favor no follow-up action on water quality has occurred and no monetary remuneration has been received for damage from flooding. In 2013 Rampart Boulevard underwent construction and installation of a small municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) with water transport conveyances that should have improved stormwater handling and water quality. To date any expected improvement has not occurred. On the contrary, MLG&CC water quality appears to have worsened.

### **MLG&CC Environmental Stewardship**

Operations at MLG&CC adhere to strict Best Management Practices (BMP) for Green Industries and Golf Course protocols. MLG&CC is a designated Audubon wildlife preserve and quite conscious of its environmental footprint. MLG&CC uses licensed pesticide applicators and adheres to strict State accounting and rate requirements for the applications of fertilizers. The golf course has an onsite Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) monitoring well which is sampled four times a year and MLG&CC procures annual water quality measurements on the main irrigation pond. Over the past ten years MLG&CC has made significant expenditures on shoreline stabilization, seawalls, two water control gates, cleaning and repair of stormwater drains, aeration, planting of aquatic vegetation and removal of pond sediments. These expenditures were performed to improve MLG&CC water quality and adhere to SWFWMD flow compliance regulations.

### **Water Quality Impairment**

Since 1995, the water entering MLG&CC from the Rampart Boulevard inflow has exhibited an intolerable level of suspended solids (SS), oil, debris and a colored orange to red sludge like substance. As of 2014 the situation remains unchanged, and in the spring of 2013 the first receiving pond experienced large fish kills during high flow periods. Currently (January 2014), at low flow conditions, the total SS concentration is in the order of 5.9 ppm of which a significant portion is colloidal with a static 40 hour settling rate. Oil sheens are constantly present and are having a negative impact on the

filtering vegetation. Although association of heavy metals and organic contaminants is *statistically correlated* with sediment loads, MLG&CC has no documented measurements for these pollutants. The impairment which originates from undetermined nonpoint sources (NPS) complicates remediation efforts. Impaired water quality also has a significant economic impact for MLG&CC itself as well as the 40 homeowners whose property is devalued because of water aesthetics and odor.

### **Water Authorities (Areas of Responsibility)**

Florida DEP and SWFWMD describe storm runoff to be the “greatest threat to clean water”. Florida statutes describe untreated runoff to as a “reasonable source of pollution”. Pursuant to the new State Wide Unified Stormwater Rule and Florida Statute Chapter 62-25, the 2013 stormwater construction performed on Rampart Boulevard should have addressed MLG&CC stormwater concerns and “improved” the impairment. The lack of improved water quality should be a contradiction with Charlotte County stormwater management (SWM) goals and policies 1.1.4-4/2.1.2a, and inconsistent with Charlotte County’s 2003 NPDES (National Pollution Discharge Elimination System) permitting for small MS4s. New MS4s are required to reduce the discharge of pollutants to the maximum extent practicable. The fact that the MLG&CC watercourse is a natural system that discharges indirectly to the Peace River and Charlotte Harbor estuary should generate some requirement for improvement of degraded water quality from nonpoint source pollution as noted in Florida Statute 373.451 the “Surface Water improvement and Management Act” (SWIM ).

It is MLG&CC’s position that our inflow water quality should NOT be of lower quality than our receiving waters. SWFWMD views the MLG&CC watercourse, not as surface water, but rather as part of a stormwater management system. The economic impact to MLG&CC and homeowners for providing this management is significant, and to add insult to injury, in 2012 and 2013 MLG&CC was assessed with an additional \$31,000 in annual stormwater utility taxes. The fact that MLG&CC as a residential complex also contributes \$2-\$2.5 million annually in property taxes should provide incentive to include a project in the Charlotte County Capital Improvements Program (CIP) for reduction of the water inflow impairment. It can be argued that MLG&CC should be receiving compensation rather than taxation for stormwater management.

### **Recommendations for Future Action**

- Identify why the inflow retention pond is not functioning well.
- Possible remediation designs/structures for the MS4 retention inflow pond.
- Solutions/designs for a MLG&CC filtration system.
- Meet with responsible water authorities.
- Suggest Areas for Cooperation.
- Estimate costs.
- Discuss funding possibilities: SWIM trust Fund; Stimulus funding, Florida DEP Section 319 Grant Funding, SWFWMD Cooperative Funding initiative.
- Compensation for current stormwater management efforts.

## **Committee Members**

Michael Comba

Hope Croskey

Gary Croskey

John Anderson

Tom McKennell

All Committee members are residents of MLG&CC.

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