

DR/GR Ad Hoc Committee
August 1, 2008

Board of Lee County Commissioners
PO Box xxxx
etc

RE: Recommend Dover Kohl Scenario 1 with modifications for G/W modeling;
Rational for recommendations

This letter recommends Dover Kohl Scenario One with modifications, discusses the key concept of understanding the DRGR as a “system” and acting from that understanding for the benefit of Lee County. It informs you about the committee’s thinking on the outcomes necessary for sustainability of the DRGR, then provides you with the committee’s reasoning and further recommendations as to land use policy and ??? in the DRGR.

Scenario Recommendation Summary

A super-majority of the DRGR Ad Hoc Committee recommends the BOCC proceed with the Integrated Surface and Groundwater Modeling for Dover Kohl Scenario One. Additionally, the committee recommends that Groundwater Modeling be extended to portions of Scenario Two: Specifically the areas highlighted in yellow in the map on page B-9. Should Groundwater Modeling indicate that all or part (of the yellow highlighted areas on page B-9) could be mined while successfully restoring flows to the Estero River and not altering other flows in the DRGR, these areas could be considered as preferred mining areas. Further specific recommendations are provided in a subsequent paragraph.

The DRGR as a System

All members of the committee recognize the complex systemic nature of the DRGR area: multiple variables all interact and influence one another in complex cause-and-effect relationships. To make informed decisions about the DRGR we need to better understand the interrelationships, interdependency and the innate tendencies of the DRGR systems that lead to feedback, growth or stability over time. For example, delays before an impact is felt have enormous influence in a system, frequently accentuating the impact of other forces and sometimes dramatically changing the behavior of the system.

In a review of the compilation of studies referencing the DRGR, the McLane study notes “The studies, when viewed as a whole, reveal the resources and ecological systems within the DR/GR area are interrelated in complex ways” and “the DR/GR is an intricate mosaic of landscapes that serves a number of natural resource functions that would be difficult and expensive replicate if they were lost.”

The Dover Kohl recommendations further explain the nature of systems within the DRGR, impacts to regional systems well beyond the DRGR borders, and many of the effects of human land use within the DRGR. The Conservation, Development, Mining and Transportation Principles that Dover Kohl derived with direct community input all address systemic effects of human impact. Dover Kohl further suggests “the highest priority be given to protection of the pathways that water takes to Estero Bay...” stating that “most waters that pass through the DR/GR ultimately drain into Estero Bay; the two systems are inextricable linked.”

The Lee County Visitor and Convention Bureau state that our beaches and ecology are the main draw of Lee County. To the extent that Lee County relies on tourism dollars by attracting visitors that enjoy the Estero Bay Aquatic Preserve and other near by ecological resources, the viability and sustainability of the DRGR is tied to Lee County’s economic capability to attract tourism income.

Outcomes for DRGR Sustainability

All DRGR committee members agreed to the following outcomes necessary for sustainability of the DRGR and compatibility of land uses.

- Water – clean and free of potential contaminants; ample supply through aquifer recharge; availability in the right place at the right time; restore and maintain flows to bays, neighboring uplands and wetlands, as well as coastal estuaries with their connection to regional ecosystems, flowways and the Everglades.
- Habitat – improve strategic habitat for endangered species and ecosystems.
- Keep Lee County’s tourism industry economically viable by eliminating impacts and potential impacts on coastal estuaries, ecosystems, and habitats. Provide adequate aggregate resources to sustain the needs of Lee County through the year 2030.
- Provide a rural quality of life which includes sustainable agriculture (Kevin and whomever else would like to try– could you please flesh out this sentence)

Measurements -- capable of capturing the complex interrelated systemic effects in the DRGR -- need to be created, tested and put in place to ensure these outcomes. All measurements should be treated as a vehicle for learning how to control the effects of human action and how this complex DRGR natural system operates. Future corrections and changes to land use policy should be directed by feedback from these measures.

Further Comments on Scenario One

A super majority of the DRGR committee agreed that Scenario One best supports both the Dover Kohl planning principles and the Committee’s own “DRGR Outcomes for Sustainability”. The committee prefers that any final recommendation be predicated on the outcome of the Surface and Groundwater Modeling. In keeping

with this preference the committee would like to include the area designated by yellow in the map on the Dover Kohl report page B-9 as part of the Surface and Groundwater Modeling. This area includes flowways through the mining area as well as (JASON L. Help with the language here about land contours, drop off, etc.)

Two members of the committee did not agree with the recommendation of Scenario One. They believe that the selection of Scenario One will leave large amounts of aggregate in the ground; fail to offer the Alico Road corridor for the trucking supply chain; shift mining outside the DRGR near the airport; there is a better, more environmentally sound method of mining that will preserve the ecology.

Other Recommendations

Primary and secondary mining zones need to be established based on economic modeling and overlays, which should be focused on the clear identification of the true demand for aggregate now and in the future.

Mining needs to be done differently in the future, pointing to the need for more assertive regulation and enforcement, including the provision of an analysis of potential cumulative impacts prior to permit issuance.

Measurement of the impact of human uses should focus on systemic effects including time delays and interrelationships, rather than simply measuring what is easiest. Measurement should be a continual feedback and change process to optimize the purpose of protecting the DRGR.

Permitting within a designated Preferred Mining Area should not be considered for permitting until the limerock needs of the Lee County market require its resources within the next 8 years.

Consider primary and secondary mining areas. The majority of DRGR committee members concur that several methods of aggregate demand indicate we have enough aggregate to meet Lee County needs until the year 2030. However, to avoid future land use conflicts, secondary mining areas should be designated to indicate to all where future mining might occur if demand merits. Two members believe we do not have adequate aggregate resources and that demand will rise dramatically.

Mixed use communities and any adjacent communities should be capable of providing residents of the community with easy access to shopping schools, employment, etc. Further they should be located immediately adjacent to existing infrastructure thereby not requiring large public investments of new roads sewers, water and other utilities that, in turn, will encourage further development.

Give first priority to transferring the vast majority of DR/GR density to Lee County's Transit Corridors. Second priority should go a mixed-use community site to serve

the needs of existing rural residents. The next priority should go to community sites along the outer boundary of the entire DR/GR (not simply the Lee County portion) served by existing major thoroughfares.

All uses must be ecologically sound. Devise a plan that will correct the practices that have interrupted historic surface and groundwater flows including agricultural drainage, roads, mines, residences, and recreational areas.
The protection of rural residential lifestyle must be assured.

Do not increase the Lee Plan's Future Land Use Map population of 1,430,000.

Support the implementation steps applicable to Dover Kohl's Scenario One.

Take steps to reduce demand for aggregate; incentivize recycling and development of alternative materials.

I'm sure there are more.

Summary paragraph should say thank you for the opportunity to serve and tell " 'em what we told 'em" in 3 or 4 sentences.