Pinellas County Monitoring Program Review

Task 1: Technical Memorandum: Timeseries Trend Analysis

Submitted to: Pinellas County Watershed Management

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September 30, 2014

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1 Introduction

Pinellas County conducts routine sampling of its waterbodies eight times per year. Sampling includes fixed station locations in tributaries throughout the County (Figure 1-1) as well as a probabilistic (random sampling) design to sample the open bay estuarine waters (Figure 1-2). While sampling has been conducted since 1992 in Pinellas County waters, the sampling routine was redesigned and implemented and location of many sites moved in 2003. This report assesses data collected since 2003 through 2013 for all routine ambient monitoring data collected by the Pinellas County Department of Environment and Infrastructure's Watershed Management Division.

The objective of this report is to provide analytical results of statistical timeseries trend analysis for both the land based (fixed station) data and the estuarine and lake (probabilistic) data collected since 2003. To facilitate reporting the results of the trend analysis, Pinellas County was divided into 5 "Major Basins" based on previous management delineations used by either Pinellas County or by local Inter-governmental agencies. The major basins are depicted in Figure 1-3 below and include the Clearwater Harbor and Saint Joseph Sound management area in North Western Pinellas County (CHSJS), Boca Ciega Bay and adjacent waters (Boca Ciega), Southeast Pinellas County which drains principally to Middle Tampa Bay (MTB), and Northeast Pinellas which drains to Old Tampa Bay (OTB). Old Tampa Bay is further subdivided into North (OTB-North) and South (OTB-South) to distinguish the drainage areas associate with Lake Tarpon and that portion of OTB above the Courtney Campbell Causeway from the remainder of the large area of Old Tampa Bay. The specific waterbodies within each Major Basin along with station number Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) waterbody Identifier (WBID) and WBID class are listed in [Table](#page-9-0) [1-1.](#page-9-0)

Figure 1-1. Location of Pinellas County fixed station sampling sites in tributaries and lakes.

Figure 1-2. Probabilistic sampling strata used for sampling estuarine waters, Lake Seminole and Lake Tarpon.

Figure 1-3. Major Basin geographic delineations for reporting trend results for individual stations and strata.

2 Methods

The core statistical trend used for this project is the seasonal Kendall Tau Test for Trend (Helsel and Hirsch 1982). Implementation of the procedure follows the description provide by Reckhow et al. (1993). This procedure is based upon Kendall Tau Fortran programs developed by the United States Environmental Protection Agency and available from the USEPA Laboratory in Corvallis, Oregon. Janicki Environmental has develop software to drive these Fortran programs and summarize the output for reporting using Statistical Analysis Systems (SAS Institute, 2011).

The "seasonal" aspect of the test was defined by the eight sampling periods currently used by Pinellas County for conducting their routine monitoring. For periods when Pinellas County utilized nine sampling periods, the samples were grouped into the eight sampling periods currently used and averaged. The eight sampling periods are defined as follows:

- Period 1: January 21^{st} – March 12^{th}
- Period 2: March 13^{th} May 2^{nd}
- Period 3: May 3^{rd} June 11th
- Period 4: June $12th$ July 22nd
- Period 5: July 23^{rd} August 31st
- Period 6: September $1st$ October 10th
- Period 7: October 11^{th} November 30^{th}
- Period 8: December $1st$ January $20th$

Reckhow et al (1993) describe a multi-step process for implementing the Kendall Tau test for trend which is summarized in the following paragraphs below. For each step in the analysis, the procedure produces a page of graphical output and intermediate datasets that are combined and used to provide detailed results for each test as well as graphical output provided for each result on the water quality appendices.

In the first step of each trend analysis a time series plot of the raw timeseries is prepared for the period of record. [Figure 2-1](#page-12-0) provides a sample page of the actual output from a previous trend test. This figure provides a valuable overall view of the timeseries trend in the data.

Figure 2-1. Sample trend results output for step 1.

In the second step of the trend analysis, the distribution of values for each sampling period are provided to describe the within and across season variability in the data across years [\(Figure 2-2\)](#page-13-0). A complete set of univariate statistics is calculated and the figure provides a valuable overall view of the seasonality of the data.

Figure 2-2. Sample seasonal univariate results output for step 2.

Figure 2-2 presents an example page from the results of the second step. The annotated labels indicate the following features: $1 =$ parameter of interest, $2 =$ the maximum value, $3 =$ the minimum value, $4 =$ the median value, $5 =$ the upper 95% confidence limit of the median value, 6 = the mean value, 7 = the 75th percentile, 8 = the 25th percentile and lower 95% confidence interval. If the confidence limits around the medians for any pair of seasons do not overlap, then the medians are considered to significantly different at an alpha level of 0.05.

In the third step of the analysis, a correlation analysis is performed for each seasonal value, the previous season's value, two seasons prior, etc., until correlation statistics have been calculated for all previous seasons up to 15 seasons prior. A table of these values is provided in the output.

In the fourth step of the analysis, a determination is made as to whether seasonality exists in the time series of data. An operationally defined and objective test to identify the presence of seasonality was applied.

A correlogram is provided as part of the output (example in [Figure 2-3\)](#page-14-0). If a correlation value on this plot is statistically significant then it will lie beyond the confidence limits shown. If the data presented by the plot have seasonality, then one would expect the 6-season lag values to be negatively correlated and the 12-season lag values to be positively

Figure 2-3. Sample seasonality test information output for step 4.

correlated. The objective test measures the proportional distance between the zero line and the lower 95% confidence limit for the 6-season lag correlation (label 9), and the proportional distance between the zero reference line and the upper 95% confidence limit for the 12-season lag correlation (label 10). If the sum of distance 9 and 10 are greater than 1, or if distance 10 is greater than 1 then seasonality is determined to exist.

If the data are determined to be seasonal, then the data are adjusted for season by subtracting the median seasonal value from each data point. The season-adjusted data are then applied to a Kendall Tau. The Kendall Tau test determines the slope of the time series of data, and p-values for various data conditions. Tables of these values are provided in the results (examples not shown). However, in all cases summary trend tables are provided showing the appropriate p values, slopes, and significance results for each trend.

The next step is to test the data for autocorrelation in a similar fashion to that completed to identify seasonality. In the first phase of this analysis, the season-adjusted data are de-trended by removing the effects of the slope identified. A diagnostic figure is then provided of these data [\(Figure 2-4\)](#page-15-0).

Figure 2-4. An example of the season adjusted and de-trended data.

In the next step of the analysis, the season adjusted and de-trended data are prepared in the form of a correlogram to test for the presence of autocorrelation in the time series. [Figure 2-5](#page-16-0) presents an example of this page of the detailed output. If the 1-season lag (label 11) or the 2-season lag (label 12) are significantly correlated with the present values, then the data are identified as autocorrelated and an adjustment is made to the p-value.

In the final step of each trend analysis the appropriate p-value (corrected for auto-correlation if necessary), significance assessment (based on alpha=0.05), slope, autocorrelation assessment (present/absent), and seasonality assessment (present/absent) of the trend analysis are compiled and mapped to provide a results summary for each parameter across stations and also tabulated in a summary table of trend test results.

Figure 2-5. Sample autocorrelation test figure.

Because Pinellas County does not sample at fixed station sites when there is no freshwater inflow at the site at the time of sampling, the nominal minimal requirement of 60 samples necessary to conduct the trend test was relaxed to 40 samples. The test does allow for missing data so this artifact is handled appropriately in generating the test statistic and associated critical value used to assess significance. To define the magnitude of the trend for reporting purposes, the slope statistic was expressed as a proportion of the median value and a 10% threshold was used as an ad hoc definition of a "Large" versus "Small" trend. That is, when the slope estimate was greater than 10% of the median value across the period of record, the trend was reported to be of "Large" magnitude and otherwise "Small".

Due to the large number of station/parameter combinations tested, an adjustment was made to the p values when declaring significance of the findings for summarizing results of such a large number of comparisons. In essence, while each test criterion applied a type 1 error rate of 5% (i.e., alpha=0.05), due to the number of tests conducted the probability of a type 1 error is inflated (see Benjamini and Hochberg 1995 for details). The Benjamini and Hochberg False Discovery Rate procedure was therefore applied to the results of the individual parameter tests to control the type 1 error rate at 5% which is the statistical norm.

3 Results

This report provides complete trend analysis information ranging from very broad regional patterns down to very detailed statistical analysis results. The chapter is formatted to allow the reader to "drill down" from broad scale summarizations of results to results for individual stations, sample levels (i.e., surface or bottom) and water quality parameters of interest. For the purposes of this report, "small trends" are defined as statistically significant trends with a rate of change less than 10% of the median value per year, and "large trends" are defined as statistically significant trends with a rate of change greater than or equal to 10% of the median value per year. Thus, "small trends" represent water quality conditions that are changing (either increasing or decreasing) at a lesser rate of change than for "large trends." These are relative terms, and the precise rates of change (i.e. the slopes) are presented for each station/parameter in the detailed statistical appendices. The terms "large" and "small" do not imply either ecological significance or the lack of ecological significance. We further differentiate results based on the trend direction; however, It should be noted that while for most parameters increases in concentration equate to declining water quality, for some parameters (e.g., dissolved oxygen) increases are related to improving conditions. Lastly, the terms "surface waters" or "surface" trends define samples collected at or within 1 meter of the water surface while "bottom" refers to samples collected near the bottom.

Near bottom samples were collected only for in situ physical chemistry parameters including salinity, dissolved oxygen water temperature and pH. Results of trend analysis on "Bottom" samples resulted in no detected trends indicating stable conditions for all physical chemistry parameters throughout Pinellas County with a single exemption; a small magnitude increasing trend in bottom salinity in Alligator Lake (Station 14-07). Mid water samples were similarly stable throughout with the exception of a single increasing trend in salinity at the same Station in Alligator Lake (14-07) and a single increasing trend in dissolved oxygen in Stratum B of Lake Seminole. Based on these results, only the surface results are presented below; however, results for all station/level combinations are provided in Appendix A.

The results of the trend analysis for surface samples are summarized in several ways in the sections below. First, an overview of the results is provided by Major Basin for the principal water quality parameters used either as regulatory standards or indicative of changes in physical chemistry of the sampled waterbody. Next, results are summarized by parameter. Maps and tables are provided that describe the trends across Major Basins by parameter. Finally, an appendix is provided that contains hyperlinks to each individual station or strata monitoring by Pinellas County with sufficient information for reporting trend results (i.e., at least 40 samples). Each link corresponds to detailed station information for all parameters tested with graphics provided as described in the Methods section of this report.

3.1 Trend Summaries by Major Basin for Principal Constituents

The following paragraphs describe general trends by Major Basin for the principal water quality constituents (parameters) monitored by Pinellas County. These parameters include: Chlorophyll *a* (Chla µg/l), Dissolved Oxygen (DO mg/l), Total Nitrogen (TN mg/l), Total Phosphorus (TP mg/l), Salinity (PSU), and Turbidity (NTU).

3.1.1 Boca Ciega

The Boca Ciega Major Basin includes all of Boca Ciega Bay as well as portions of the Intracoastal Waterway from Treasure Island to Madiera Beach, Tierra Verde to the south, and the watershed areas of Lake Seminole, Joe's Creek, Niles Creek, and portions of Cross Bayou. Between 2003 and 2013 In Boca Ciega there was a single decreasing trend in Chla, two increasing trends in DO (Lake Seminole Strata A and B), four decreasing trends in TN, seven decreasing trends in TP, a single increasing trend in salinity, and a single increasing and three decreasing trends in turbidity [\(Figure](#page-19-0) [3-1\)](#page-19-0).

Figure 3-1. Distribution of trend test results for principal water quality parameters measured in Boca Ciega.

3.1.2 Clearwater Harbor and Saint Joseph Sound (CHSJS)

There were no trends in Chla in CHSJS, a single decreasing trend in DO equivalent to 3.7% of all tests conducted, three decreasing trends in TN (ca 19% of TN tests) , a single increasing trend in TP, seven increasing trends in salinity (ca 25%), and three increasing and two decreasing trends in turbidity ([Figure 3-2\)](#page-20-1).

Figure 3-2. Distribution of trend test results for principal water quality parameters measured in Clearwater Harbor and Saint Joseph Sound.

3.1.3 Middle Tampa Bay (MTB)

In Middle Tampa Bay, TP was decreasing in all estuarine strata (i.e. E6, E7 and RB). No fixed site land based stations contained enough data for trend testing. No other trends for any of the principal parameters resulted from the trend tests after accounting for multiple comparisons [\(Figure](#page-21-1) [3-3\)](#page-21-1) .

Figure 3-3. Distribution of trend test results for principal water quality parameters measured in Middle Tampa Bay.

3.1.4 Old Tampa Bay North (OTB–North)

In Old Tampa Bay North, there were no trends in Chla or DO, two decreasing trends in TN (ca 16%), one decreasing TP trend, five increasing salinity trends (ca. 23%), and 2 increasing and three decreasing trends in turbidity [\(Figure 3-4\)](#page-22-1).

Figure 3-4. Distribution of trend test results for principal water quality parameters measured in Old Tampa Bay North.

3.1.5 Old Tampa Bay South (OTB-South)

In Old Tampa Bay South, there was a single decreasing Chla trend, three decreasing DO trends (ca. 12%), no trends in TN, seven decreasing trends in TP (ca 54%), no trends in salinity, and a single increasing trend in turbidity [\(Figure 3-5\)](#page-23-1).

Figure 3-5. Distribution of trend test results for principal water quality parameters measured in Old Tampa Bay South.

3.2 Basin Summaries by Parameter

This section summarizes the trend results for both fixed station tributary and lake sampling as well as probabilistic sampling in estuarine and major lakes by parameter in alphabetical order.

3.2.1 Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD mg/l)

Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD) was collected only in Lake Seminole (Strata A and B) and in Lake Tarpon. These data were collected using the probabilistic design and were aggregated by sampling period for the purposes of conducting the trend test. In all strata, BOD values were stable over time with no significant trends detected [\(Figure 3-6:](#page-25-0) [Table 3-1\)](#page-25-1). Since the statistical test was not significant the slope was set to zero.

Figure 3-6. Summary of seasonal Kendal Tau trend test results for Biological Oxygen Demand.

3.2.2 Chlorophyll *a* (Chla μ g/l):

Chlorophyll *a* concentrations were mostly stable throughout Pinellas County between 2003 and 2013. Only 2 of the possible 55 stations or strata with sufficient data resulted in significant trends after accounting for multiple comparisons. The significant chlorophyll trends were both decreasing in magnitude, indicating improving water quality conditions in Lake Seminole (Stratum B) and Allen's Creek (19-08). Chlorophyll concentrations at Allen's Creek station 19-08 were found to be decreasing by-0.15 µg/l/year and were as well below regulatory criteria. Chlorophyll concentrations in 2003 averaged ca. 4.5 µg/l in 2003 and decreased to near 2 µg/l by 2013 at station 19-08. An additional 8 stations which would have otherwise been considered statistically significant were identified as potential false positive values by the Benjamini and Hochberg correction for multiple comparisons. Five negative slopes and 3 positive slopes met that definition and the slope statistic is provided for these stations in [Table 3-2](#page-28-0) as an indication to the reader of the non-statistical trend direction but is reported as "No Trend" and mapped as such.

Figure 3-7. Summary of seasonal Kendal Tau trend test results for Chlorophyll a.

3.2.3 Color (Colored Dissolved Organic Matter PCU)

Color is measured routinely in Lakes Seminole, Tarpon and Chautauqua and was collected as part of a special study in Old Tampa Bay between 2005 and 2008 which corresponded to a very wet period to a dry period. . Color concentrations were decreasing in Lakes Seminole (both strata) and in three of the six strata in OTB. However in Lake Chautauqua, color concentrations significantly increased over the same period of record [\(Figure 3-8\)](#page-30-1). One additional strata (E1) was identified as a false positive result [\(Table 3-3\)](#page-31-1).

Figure 3-8. Summary of seasonal Kendal Tau trend test results for Color.

Note: * Color collected as part of a special study in Old Tampa Bay between 2005 and 2008

3.2.4 Dissolved Oxygen (mg/l):

Surface dissolved oxygen (DO) concentrations were also mostly stable over the period of record [\(Figure 3-9\)](#page-32-0). Three decreasing and one increasing trend in DO resulted from the trend tests. The single increasing trend in DO was in Lake Seminole, Stratum B. The three decreasing trends were Allen's Creek (station 19-10), Cross Bayou (Station 24-02) and Rattlesnake Creek (17-03) [\(Table](#page-33-0) [3-4\)](#page-33-0). An additional four increasing and three decreasing trends were identified as false positive results.

Figure 3-9. Summary of seasonal Kendal Tau trend test results for Dissolved Oxygen (mg/l).

3.2.5 Dissolved Oxygen Percent Saturation (DO %Sat)

Dissolved Oxygen measured as percent saturation takes into account the effect of temperature (and to a lesser extent salinity) on waters ability to hold oxygen. Higher temperatures reduce the capacity of water to hold oxygen which is seen in the typically depressed dissolved oxygen concentrations in summertime measurements in Florida. Percent saturation was calculated based on temperature (and salinity in estuarine waters) for this assessment until 2013 when DO %Sat was measured using field instrumentation. Fewer trends resulted when using DO %Sat [\(Figure 3-10\)](#page-35-1) with only a single significant trend at station 19-10 in Allen's Creek.

Figure 3-10. Summary of seasonal Kendal Tau trend test results for DO %sat.

3.2.6 Light Attenuation (LiCor 1/m):

Light Attenuation as measured by the Licor Instrument was routinely measured in all estuarine strata and was stable over the period of record for all strata tested [\(Figure 3-11:](#page-36-0) [Table 3-5\)](#page-37-1). Accounting for multiple comparisons had no effect on the outcome of the trend tests for LiCor.

Figure 3-11. Summary of seasonal Kendal Tau trend test results for LiCor.

3.2.7 Nitrogen as Ammonia (NH3 mg/l):

There were six decreasing trends in Ammonia and the other 50 stations were stable over time [\(Figure 3-12](#page-38-0) [Table 3-6\)](#page-39-0). The six stations with decreasing trends including Cross Bayou station 24- 01, two of the three stations in Joes Creek (35-09 and 35-11), Miles Creek station 35-12, Rattlesnake Creek (17-01) and Smith Creek (08-03). An additional six decreasing trends were identified as false positive results along with one increasing trend [\(Table 3-6\)](#page-39-0).

Figure 3-12. Summary of seasonal Kendal Tau trend test results for Ammonia.

3.2.8 Nitrate - Nitrite as Nitrogen (NO23 mg/l)

There were seven statistically significant decreasing trends in NO23 comparisons including Joe's Creek (35-10), Strata W5, Curlew Creek (10-02), Rattlesnake (17-01 and 17-03), Smith Creek (08- 03), and Briar Creek (11-05) indicating improving conditions at these stations [\(Figure 3-13\)](#page-41-0). No increasing trends resulted from the trend tests. An additional two decreasing and one increasing trend were identified as false positive results [\(Table 3-7\)](#page-42-0).

Figure 3-13. Summary of seasonal Kendal Tau trend test results for Nitrate-Nitrite.

3.2.9 Orthophosphate (OP mg/l)

There were 10 decreasing, 2 increasing and 44 stable OP trends [\(Figure 3-14\)](#page-44-0). The increasing trends occurred in Smith Creek (08-03) and Spring Branch (15-04).Decreasing trends were evident in Cross Bayou (24-01), and many of the estuarine strata including W5, W8, Riviera Bay, All 5 estuarine strata in Old Tampa Bay (E1-E5), as well as the fixed station site in Roosevelt (23-08) [\(Table 3-8\)](#page-45-0).

Figure 3-14. Summary of seasonal Kendal Tau trend test results for Orthophosphate.

3.2.10 pH (pH mg/l)

Two decreasing trends in pH, a single increasing trend in pH, and 56 stations with stable timeseries resulted from the trend tests [\(Figure 3-15\)](#page-47-0). The decreasing trends were located in Miles Creek (35- 09), and Mullet Creek (13-05) and one increasing pH Trend located in Allen's creek (19-02) [\(Table](#page-48-0) [3-9\)](#page-48-0).

Figure 3-15. Summary of seasonal Kendal Tau trend test results for pH.

3.2.11 Salinity (PSU)

There were 11 increasing trends in salinity and 46 stations with stable salinity over the period of record [\(Figure 3-16\)](#page-50-0). There were no decreasing trends in salinity. Stations with increasing salinity included Miles Creek (35-12), Cedar Creek (09-03), Church Creek (27-08), McKay Creek (27-03 and 27-10), Rattlesnake Creek (17-01 and 17-03), Alligator Lake (14-07), Briar Creek (11-05), and Cow Branch (06-03). An additional 7 stations with increasing trends were identified as false positive results. [\(Table 3-10\)](#page-51-0).

Figure 3-16. Summary of seasonal Kendal Tau trend test results for Salinity.

3.2.12 Secchi Disk (1/m)

No trends in secchi disk were evident in the timeseries data [\(Figure 3-17\)](#page-53-0) although multiple comparisons excluded both strata in Lake Seminole with increasing slopes indicating potentially, but not statistically significant improvements in secchi disk depth [\(Table 3-11\)](#page-54-0). Interestingly, the results for transmissivity presented in section 3.2.18 were similar but statistically significant in both Strata suggesting that transmissivity may be a more powerful metric for measuring water clarity that secchi disk depth though transmissivity only measures a specific wavelength of light horizontally through the water column.

3.2.13 Water Temperature (^OC)

comparisons [\(](#page-56-0)

[Figure](#page-56-0) 3-18) though four increasing slopes and two decreasing slopes were identified as false positives [\(Table 3-12\)](#page-57-0).

Figure 3-18. Summary of seasonal Kendal Tau trend test results for Water Temperature.

3.2.14 Total Kjeldahl Nitrogen (TKN mg/l)

There were six decreasing trends in TKN [\(Figure 3-19\)](#page-59-0). Decreasing trends were found in Cross Bayou (24-01), Joe's Creek (35-11), Lake Seminole (Stratum B), Curlew Creek (10-02), Smith Creek (08-03), and Allen's Creek (19-08). An additional 10 stations with decreasing slopes were identified as false positive results [\(Table 3-13\)](#page-60-0).

Figure 3-19. Summary of seasonal Kendal Tau trend test results for Total Kjeldahl Nitrogen.

3.2.15 Total Nitrogen (TN mg/l)

[Figure](#page-64-0) 3-20) and no stations had increasing trends. Decreasing trends were found in Cross Bayou (24-01), Joe's Creek (35-10 and 35-11) Lake Seminole (Stratum B), Curlew Creek (10-02), Rattlesnake Creek (17-01), Smith Creek (08-03), Alligator Lake (14-07), and Briar Creek (11-05). Eight additional decreasing slopes and 2 increasing slopes were identified as false positives [\(Table](#page-65-0) [3-14\)](#page-65-0).

3.2.16 Total Phosphorus (TP mg/l)

[Figure](#page-68-0) 3-21). The single increasing trend was located in Smith Creek (08-03). Decreasing trends included stations in Cross Bayou (24-01), Lake Seminole (both Strata), Strata W5, W6, W7, W8, E6,

E7 and Riviera Bay in Middle Tampa Bay, E1-E5 in Old Tampa Bay, as well as Allen's Creek (19- 02), Cross Bayou (24-02) and the Roosevelt station (23-08: [Table 3-15\)](#page-69-0). An additional three decreasing and two increasing trends were identified as potential false positive results.

3.2.17 Total Suspended Solids (TSS mg/l)

There were no increasing trends in TSS and four decreasing trends [\(Figure 3-22\)](#page-71-0). Four decreasing trends were observed including Joe's Creek (35-11), Lake Seminole (both Strata), and Alligator Lake (14-07). An additional 8 decreasing and two increasing trends were identified as false positive results after accounting for multiple comparisons [\(Table 3-16\)](#page-72-0).

Figure 3-22. **Summary of seasonal Kendal Tau trend test results for Total Suspended Solids.**

3.2.18 Transmissivity (%)

The transmissometer used by Pinellas County measures the amount light that is transmitted at a specific wave length (660 nm; red light) over a fixed distance (10 cm path length). Both absorption and scattering by particles affect the amount of light lost along the pathway and therefore the transmissometer is a measure of water clarity in the horizontal plane. Pinellas County reports transmission as percent transmittance, which is the ratio of the sample to a clean water reference expressed as percentage voltage. Transmissivity is only recorded for the probabilistic design in estuarine waters, and in lakes Tarpon and Seminole. Transsmissivity was stable throughout the estuarine waters over the 2003-2013 time period and was found to be significantly increasing in both strata of Lake Seminole [\(Figure 3-23\)](#page-74-0).

Figure 3-23. Summary of seasonal Kendal Tau trend test results for Transmissivity.

3.2.19 Turbidity (NTU)

The results of trend test on turbidity were quite mixed with an approximately equal number of increasing and decreasing trends. Turbidity significantly decreased at eight stations and increased

[Figure](#page-76-0) 3-24). Turbidity decreased at two stations in Joe's Creek (35-10 and 35-11), in Lake Seminole (Stratum B), McKay Creek (27-10) and Rattlesnake Creek (17-01), Alligator Lake (14-07), Lake Chautauqua (14-02) and Mullet Creek (13-05). Increasing trends were observed at Strata W4, Anclote River (01-08), W2, and W3, North Bishop Creek (12-02), Tarpon Bypass Canal (06-04), and Allen's Creek (19-10) [\(Table 3-17\)](#page-76-1). An additional 3 increasing and 3 decreasing trends were identified as false positive results when accounting for multiple comparisons.

Figure 3-24. Summary of seasonal Kendal Tau trend test results for Turbidity.

4 Summary of Kendall Tau Trend Test Results

In total 786 trend tests of surface water quality samples were conducted for this report. Of those tests, 81 resulted in statistically significant decreasing trends after accounting for multiple comparisons and 24 tests were found to be increasing in magnitude over the 2003 – 2013 time period. Salinity accounted for nearly half of the increasing trends. The remaining trends were stable over time indicating stable water quality conditions. Total phosphorus trends were found to be improving over time in many stations, particularly in the estuarine strata tested. Total nitrogen and total kjeldahl nitrogen were found to be decreasing at many fixed station sites in the watershed. Dissolved oxygen was stable at most sites, and secchi disk, water temperature and LiCor were stable throughout all tests conducted. The individual station results for all parameters tested are provided in Appendix A as a hyperlinked document that will allow the user to drill down to find individual station results with all accompanying detailed statistical output. In the next section of this report, parametric trend tests are conducted along with power analysis to estimate the relative merits of adding covariates as explanatory variables in the trend test and to estimate the power of the sampling program to detect trends in these parameters under alternative sampling intensities and temporal assessment scales.

5 Parametric Trend Detection and Power Analysis

The purpose of this analysis was to:

• Compare the relative power of a parametric statistical timeseries model that was constructed in analogous fashion to the nonparametric seasonal Kendall Tau approach described above by incorporating a seasonal term and a variance component to account for autocorrelation in the timeseries.

- Attempt to add explanatory terms to the parametric model to account for explanatory factors that may affect the observed timeseries.
- Use the parametric model to create a simulation dataset containing the estimated timeseries for a particular parameter of interest and include natural variability.
- Conduct power analysis to evaluate the relative gains and losses in power by adjusting the annual sampling frequency of Pinellas County's monitoring program, and
- provide an expectation of the relative magnitude of change that could be detected over time by the sampling program with statistical certainty under the current and potential alternative designs.

5.1 Comparing Parametric and Kendall Tau Test Results:

Ninety three comparisons were conducted between the parametric timeseries model with only time and season as explanatory variables and the nonparametric KT test. For 88% of those tests, the outcome was identical, either identifying no trend or a decreasing trend. This results in a Cohen's Kappa Coefficient of 0.80 indicative of substantial agreement between the models (Cohen 1960). The Kendall Tau test was somewhat more powerful than the parametric test in that an additional 7 decreasing trends and 4 increasing trends were detected using the KT approach when the parametric approach yielded a result of no trend [\(Table 5-4-1](#page-79-0)). Adjustments for multiple comparisons were not considered for either the KT or parametric analysis for this assessment.

5.2 Power Analysis

The ability to detect a trend in a given water quality parameter is a function of the magnitude of the trend, the sampling intensity, the statistical certainty (alpha level) and the unexplained variability in the measurement as well as the length of the period of record tested. To estimate the power of the current sampling design to detect trends in water quality, we used a method accepted by the South Florida Water Management District for optimization of their water quality monitoring network (Rust 2005). This method is constructed based on a parametric statistical modeling techniques and then utilizes the 5000 iterations of the seasonal Kendall Tau test for trend (Reckhow et al., 1993) based on a simulated dataset constructed from the parametric model.

Briefly, a timeseries of empirical water quality data was modeled using a parametric covariance pattern model. This method is constructed based on a parametric statistical modeling techniques and therefore uses natural log transformation of the response parameter to conform to the parametric model assumption of normal error distribution. A simulation data pool was constructed using the prediction timeseries equation and random natural variability was added to the time series using the error covariance matrix. Five thousand iterations of the seasonal Kendall Tau test for trend (Reckhow et al., 1993) were then performed by randomly subsampling a timeseries from the data pool to test alternative sampling frequency scenarios against the current sampling regime. For example, comparisons were made for a specific geographic sampling unit (e.g., E1) based on the current design $(n=8)$, a bi-monthly design $(n=6)$, a quarterly design $(n=4)$, a design that samples 10 times per year, and a monthly design $(n=12)$. These alternative sampling frequency scenarios were run for each geographic reporting unit sampled under the probabilistic design. These sampling intensities were also tested under various temporal assessment scales. For example, the results reported in Task 1a were based on 11 years of sampling between 2003 and 2013. We varied the length of the simulation timeseries from 10 to 25 years in 5 year increments (e.g. 10 years or 25 years) to assess the power of the design as a function of time as well as sampling intensity.

Again, for each temporal and sampling frequency scenario, a simulated (modeled) timeseries for a particular water quality parameter of interest was constructed from the data pool based on an assumed sampling intensity (e.g., bimonthly) and a seasonal Kendall Tau test was performed. This was repeated 5000 times. The results were then pooled and the power of each design to detect a trend in the water quality parameter of interest was computed by calculating the proportion of times that the test resulted in a statistically significant slope estimate. Four water quality parameters were included in the assessment: chlorophyll *a* (µg/l); dissolved oxygen (DO) (mg/l); total nitrogen (mg/l) and total phosphorus (mg/l).

To synthesize the results of the comparisons, box and whisker plots of the distribution of the percent change in the magnitude that could be detected with statistical confidence were constructed for each parameter. The box and whisker plots depict the percent change in two ways; as a function of the number of samples taken per year, and as a function of the length of the timeseries tested. For example, [Figure 5-4-1](#page-82-0) depicts the results for the chlorophyll power analysis. Each separate colored boxplot represents an annual sampling intensity tested. These box and whisker plots are grouped for each temporal assessment category (x axis). The results suggest a nonlinear decrease in the power of the test as a function of both decreasing sampling intensity and time. Under the current design scheme, the power of the KT test to detect changes in chlorophyll is approximately 60% as a median value for the ten year interval but the power increases by the 25 year interval to be able to detect a change as small as 36% as a median value. The boxplots tend to be elongated for the upper quartiles and the mean tends to be higher than the median value indicating that the power of the test is strata dependent (results were grouped across strata in these plots) with some strata resulting in disproportionally lower power than others with the minimum detectable change as high as 100% (i.e., concentrations would need to double) in some cases to be statistically significant.

Figure 5-4-1. Results of the power analysis for chlorophyll a $(\mu g/I)$.

Dissolved oxygen data tended to have much higher power to detect trends relative to chlorophyll with the average percent change detectable of about 20% at the current sampling intensity at the 10 year time interval [\(Figure 5-4-2\)](#page-83-0). Outlier observations show up in the dissolved oxygen results for each temporal scale indicating for some stations, a near 50% change in DO would be necessary to be statistically significant.

Figure 5-4-2. Results of power analysis for dissolved oxygen.

For total nitrogen, the median percent change under the current sampling intensity was 35% at the ten year interval but the mean percent change detectable was ca. 50% [\(Figure 5-4-3\)](#page-84-0) and for some stations, a 150% increase in total nitrogen was necessary to be declared statistically significant.

Figure 5-4-3. Results of power analysis for total nitrogen (mg/l).

For total phosphorus, the percent change was ca. 50% under the current sampling intensity at a 10 year temporal sampling assessment. However, as with total nitrogen, some strata have very low power to detect change expressed as a percentage [Figure 5-4-4.](#page-85-0) For total phosphorus this results was due to the preponderance of detection limit values reported for TP in Strata W1.

Figure 5-4-4. Results of power analysis for total phosphorus (mg/l).

The detailed results including the minimum, median, mean, and maximum percent change detectable for each parameter, sampling intensity, and temporal assessment scale is provided in Appendix B.

In summary, the current sampling program has sufficient power to detect a reasonable percent change in a parameter of interest at a ten year interval in most strata though the results were strata specific. There was some convergence issues with the mixed modeling procedure used to generate the sampling data pool to conduct the power analysis in some cases. These cases tended to be where the serial correlation could not effectively stabilize. These strata included strata RB for total nitrogen, W1 for total phosphorus, SA and W2 for DO and E1 and W5 for chlorophyll. Further, the procedure does not allow for missing data and therefore may have resulted in somewhat more robust estimates of the power of the test when translating these results to stations with a higher proportion of missing data. Despite these issues, the power analysis provides an expectation for the power of the sampling program to detect changes in important indicators of water quality at a reasonable time interval and illustrates the benefits of maintaining a long term program where compounding gains in the power of the monitoring program are achieved to accomplish objectives related to the ability to detect trends in water quality over time. The question of whether it is more

efficient to increase sampling intensity or wait a longer period of time to increase the power or the test is a management decision based on available resources and constraints; however, because of multiyear oscillations in weather patterns such as droughts, and ENSO events, testing the results over a longer temporal assessment scale is beneficial to avoid reporting of results that are affected by these short term oscillations as the trend tests used only test for a monotonic trend in the timeseries and are not generally considered explanatory models. The ability to develop more explanatory models is described in the next section of this report.

5.3 Adding explanatory variables

A principal advantage of using the parametric models is that they allow for additional explanatory factors to be included in the models. Adding an explanatory factor can account for a potential confounding factor in the relationship between the magnitude of a particular parameter and time. This is especially true for short timeseries that could be influenced by meteorological oscillations resulting in drought and/or flood conditions that affect water quality responses. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP 2013) has proposed to use timeseries analysis as weight of evidence in assigning impairment to waterbodies even if they may be currently attaining water quality standards and has described the need to account for confounding factors in the evaluation of timeseries trends. The FDEP did not sufficiently detail the methodology they propose to perform this test and this task is an initial effort to conduct such analysis.

The methods described above for conducting the parametric timeseries analysis were used to evaluate the potential for meteorological factors to affect the timeseries trend for the parameters used in the analysis above. Importantly the analysis above includes variance components that account for seasonality and autocorrelation in the statistical result, two factors not mentioned by FDEP that can significantly inflate the type I error (i.e., the probability of falsely declaring a trend as statistically significant) associated with the statistical outcome.

As part of a separate task for this work assignment (Task 5), a hydrologic index was developed to characterize rainfall and hydrologic conditions relative to their expected, long term monthly values. This index is very similar to standard methods used to characterize drought conditions such as the Standardized Precipitation Index, Palmer Drought Severity Scores (Guttman 1998), and even the El Nino Southern Oscillation (ENSO). These indices use a methodology that describes deviations from expected conditions in terms of "Departure from Normal". We developed a similar index for Pinellas County based on the same concept that we refer to in this report as the "Pinellas County Precipitation Index (PCPI)". The PCPI uses long term rainfall records from Tarpon Springs (Coopid $= 8824$), Clearwater Beach (Coopid $= 1632$), St. Petersburg Clearwater Airport (Coopid $=12873$) and Albert Whitted Airport in St Petersburg (Coopid 7886). The monthly rainfall summations for each station were cubic root transformed to help normalize the distribution and then the long term monthly average rainfall was calculated for each station. An index was developed for each station by standardizing a particular month's value to the long term average:

That is:

$$
PCPI_Targon = \frac{X_{mi} - \mu_m}{\sigma_m}
$$

Where:

 x_{mi} = monthly rain at Tarpon Springs for month *i*

 μ_m = the long term monthly mean value for Tarpon Springs

 σ_m = standard deviation of the monthly mean values

The individual station PCPI's were then averaged to represent an average index for the County. The average was used to create three parameters representing the month's particular value, the sum of the month and the previous month and the, 3 month cumulative sum. These cumulative totals represent antecedent conditions that can be tested in the timeseries modeling. An example plot of the index and the cumulative departures are provided in [Figure 5-4-5](#page-88-0) for the entire period of record. In [Figure 5-4-6,](#page-89-0) the same data are plotted for only the 2003-2013 time period. In these plots negative values represent drier than normal conditions and positive values represent wetter than normal conditions. Horizontal reference lines at 1 and -1 represent deviations of a magnitude that have occurred approximately 15 percent of the time over the historical record.

Figure 5-4-5. Pinellas County Precipitation Index for the long term period of record.

Figure 5-4-6. Pinellas County Precipitation Index between 2003 and 2014.

The PCPI parameters described above were used to assess the effects of variation in meteorological conditions on the trend test results. Out of the 80 tests conducted above, 10 of those tests resulted in a statistically significant effect due to the 3 month cumulative PCPI. Those stations included all four of the parameters tested. Four of those results were located in Lake Seminole and indicated that increased rainfall resulted in decreasing concentrations of Chlorophyll, TN, and TP in Stratum B and decreased TN in Stratum A [\(Table 5-4-3\)](#page-90-0). Alternatively, in Strata E4 and E5 in Old Tampa Bay, increased rainfall resulted in increased chlorophyll concentrations.

The inclusion of the PCPI only altered the trend test results in a single case where in Stratum E2, DO was found to be increasing once the PCPI was included in the model while both the parametric model without the PCPI term and the KT test results suggested no trend. However, the addition of the PCPI did, where significant, account for an approximately 5% reduction in the timeseries slope.

These results suggest that while climatological variation was a significant factor affecting water quality concentrations in several cases, its effect on the trend test results were minimal using the antecedent lags tested. Longer antecedent averages and testing the effects over a longer time series that had higher power to detect trends as demonstrated above would be beneficial to ensure that the relationships between antecedent rainfall conditions and variations in water quality were robust to forecast the effects of meteorological variation on water quality in these systems.

6 References

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Appendix A- Detailed Trend Results

Hyperlink

Appendix B – Trend Power Results

Appendix B. Results of timeseries power analysis across strata used in Pinellas County's probabilistic design. Statistics represent the % change detectable with statistical certainty under various potential alternative sampling frequencies and temporal scales. Higher numbers for these statistics represent lower power to detect.

