Palm Beach County Water Resources Task Force (WRTF)

Tuesday April 15, 2025 1:30 PM

Vista Center, Room VC-1W-47 (1st Floor)

2300 North Jog Road, West Palm Beach, Florida 33411

Meeting Minutes

Water Resources Task Force Members

Seat ID	Member	Organization	Alternate	Organization
1	Malise Sundstrom	Town of Jupiter	Vacant	City elected official
2	Joaquin Almazan	City of Belle Glade	Vacant	City elected official
3	Reinaldo Diaz	City of Lake Worth Beach	Vacant	City elected official
4	DD Halpern	Town of Juno Beach	Vacant	City elected official
5	Karen Lythgoe	Town of Lantana	Vacant	City elected official
6	Greg Langowski	City of West Lake	Vacant	City elected official
7	Gregg Weiss (Chair)	Palm Beach County Mayor	Vacant	Palm Beach County Commissioner
8	Poonam Kalkat	City of Boynton Beach	Vacant	Water/Wastewater Provider Official
9	Tommy Strowd	Lake Worth Drainage District	Vacant	Lake Worth Drainage District
10	Vacant		Vacant	Drainage/Water Control District elected official
11	Jay Steinle	South Florida Water Management District	Mark Elsner	South Florida Water Management District
12	Rachelle Litt (Vice Chair)	Former Council Member City of PBG	Vacant	Environmental Representative
13	Robert Shorr	Town of Loxahatchee Groves	Vacant	Agricultural Representative
14	Michael Johnson	Indian Trail Improvement District	Greg Shafer	Indian Trail Improvement District

The following notes are a summary of the information provide at the discussions of the WRTF. This summary is not a transcript of the meeting.

Roll call was taken with sufficient attendance for quorum. During roll call there were nine of twelve appointed seats. Seat 2 was vacated by Reinaldo Diaz as he lost his reelection and Seat 10 remains unfilled. The members attending are listed below:

- Malise Sundstrom - Seat 1
- Joaquin Almazan – Seat 2
- DD Halpern – Seat 4
- Karen Lythgoe – Seat 5
- Gregg Weiss – Seat 7
- Poonam Kalkat – Seat 8
- Tommy Strowd – Seat 9
- Rachelle Litt – Seat 12
- Michael Johnson – Seat 14

The following three members were absent.

- Greg Langowski Seat 6
- Jay Steinle – Seat 11
- Robert Shorr – Seat 13

With quorum there was unanimous approval of the December 2, 2024 meeting minutes.

Paul Linton, Palm Beach County's Water Resources Manager provide a presentation on hydrology (Water Budget 101 – How water budget like finances). The presentation provided information on how soil storage, surface storage, rainfall rates, and evapotranspiration (ET) interact. Details included:

- How depth to water table (antecedent conditions) affect the amount of runoff. Specific example of an average groundwater depth of 2 feet provided the equivalent surface storage of four inches.
- How the runoff increase considerably when the rainfall volume exceed the groundwater and surface storage available.
- How shallow reservoirs are limited to only caring (storing) water from one wet season to the next dry season. How the long-term storage requirements for multiyear water shortages requires a reservoir with considerable depth. An example of a reservoir with ten feet storage depth should expected that ET will exceed the rainfall on the reservoir by four feet leaving only 6 feet of usable water (60% efficiency).
- The storage efficiency of Aquifer Storage and Recover (ASR) wells was described as being typically 70%.

After the presentation the following discussion occurred:

Question on how successful/typical the ASR well have been at achieving the 70% recovery. Paul Linton communicated that after the required number of initial cycles or that most of the ASR well in the upper Florida have achieved recovery efficiency of 70% complying with the 250 mg/l primary drinking water

standard for chloride content. Paul Linton discussed that well in the more permeable lower Floridian, such as the CWPB, have considerably lower recovery rates.

Tommy Strowd brought up the detail that access to the last one to two feet of a reservoir is difficult due to the flat topography and vegetation (for shallow reservoir) of reservoir.

Paul Linton, Palm Beach County's Water Resources Manager provide a presentation on the Status of Lake Okeechobee (Lake O) and Palm Beach County's dependency on Lake Okeechobee. Details included:

- Current Lake O level between the historical lower quartile (P25) and lower decile (P10) noting that levels are considered to be normal when the water level is between the lower quartile (P25) and the upper quartile (P75).
- Lake O is currently only about 0.7 feet above the Water Shortage Management Zone (WSMZ) and declining at a rate of over one foot per month.
- Currently there is over a 25 percent likelihood that Lake O will be remain in the WSMZ through the end of the 2025 wet season.
- Palm Beach County (PBC) sources of water is direct rainfall, water from WCA-1, and then Lake O. With WCA-1 only providing shallow storage it not capable of providing the water supply required for multi-year water shortages. WCA-1 often reaches its operational floor elevation (14.0 feet NGVD) before the end of the dry season. Once the water level falls below the operational floor elevation all water withdrawn from WCA-1 must be equal or exceeded by inflow. The inflows occur through STA-1 with Lake O being the source of water.
- The presentation identified the risk of overuse of the Zone D flexibility (up to 2,000 cfs to the Caloosahatchee River Estuary) during period of moderate to low stage in Lake Okeechobee and moderate to low rainfall which can meaningfully increase the risk of a water shortage.

After the presentation there was a question on the biggest water risks to Palm Beach County. Mr. Linton communicated that the two greatest water supply risk are 1) the potential treatment and disposal costs and additional raw water needs (increase of at least 10 percent) of treating forever chemical (e.g. PFAS) and 2) the increased water supply vulnerability due to the additional water demands for the everglades without the offsetting water supply components identified by the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP). Specifically, CERP identified three reservoirs and 104 ASR wells in eastern PBC (in addition to the 200 ASR wells proposed for Lake Okeechobee) to provide water to replace water needed by the everglades.

Paul Linton, Palm Beach County's Water Resources Manager provide a presentation on the Status of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) Loxahatchee River Watershed Restoration Plan (LRWRP) based on information provided by the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) in January. Details included:

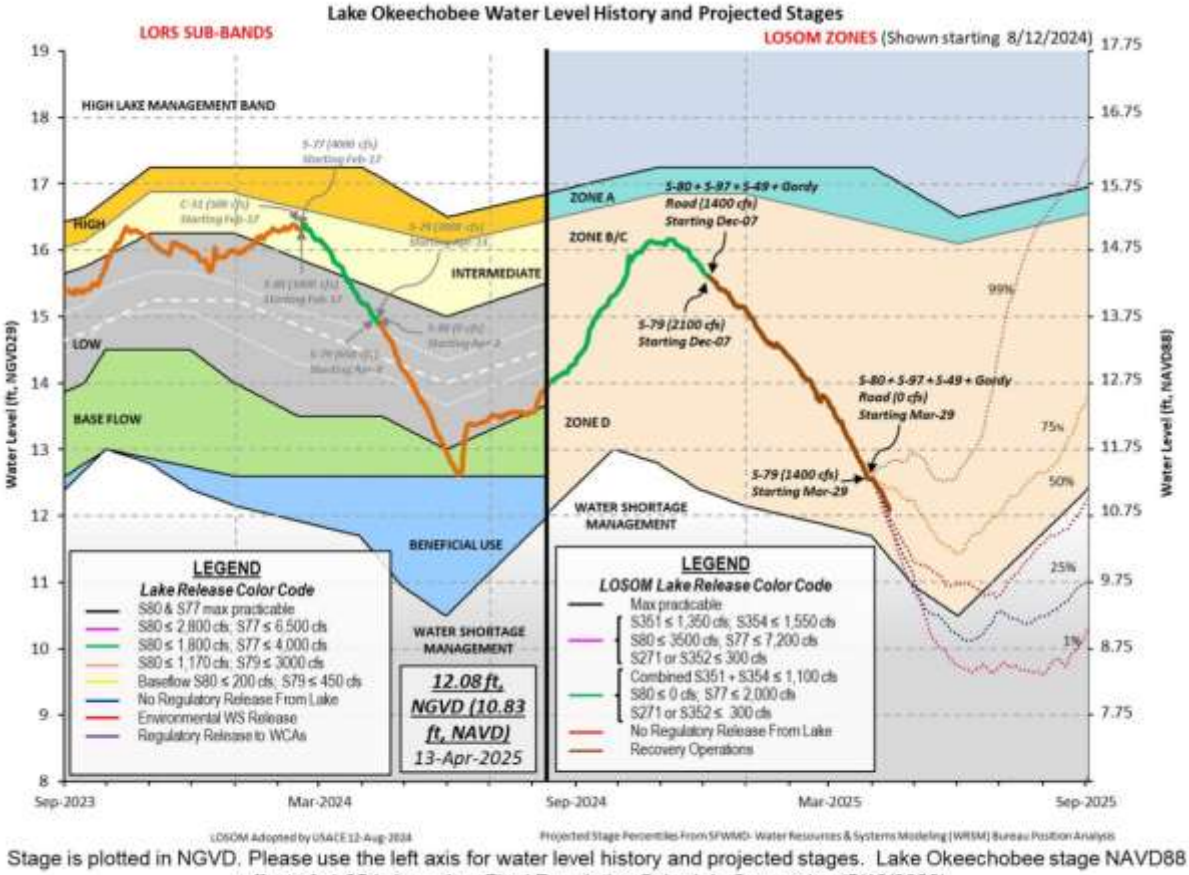
- The up dated schedule aspires to complete construction of C101W/L101W could begin in early 2027, although the potential need to relocate FPL transmission lines within the C101W footprint is a schedule risk.

- Design work for the main impoundment is expected to continue through 2027, with construction starting in 2028
- Currently the only route to provide the Northwest Fork of the Loxahatchee River (NWFLR) is through the City of West Palm Beach's (CWPB's) Grassy Waters Preserve (GWP). This route has limited capacity (e.g. < 30 cfs) and requires relatively high stages in GWP (see following figures)
- Palm Beach County Continues to explore providing a connection from the L-8 Basin to the NWFLR. This would make it possible for water to be delivered from the C-51 Reservoir Phase 2.

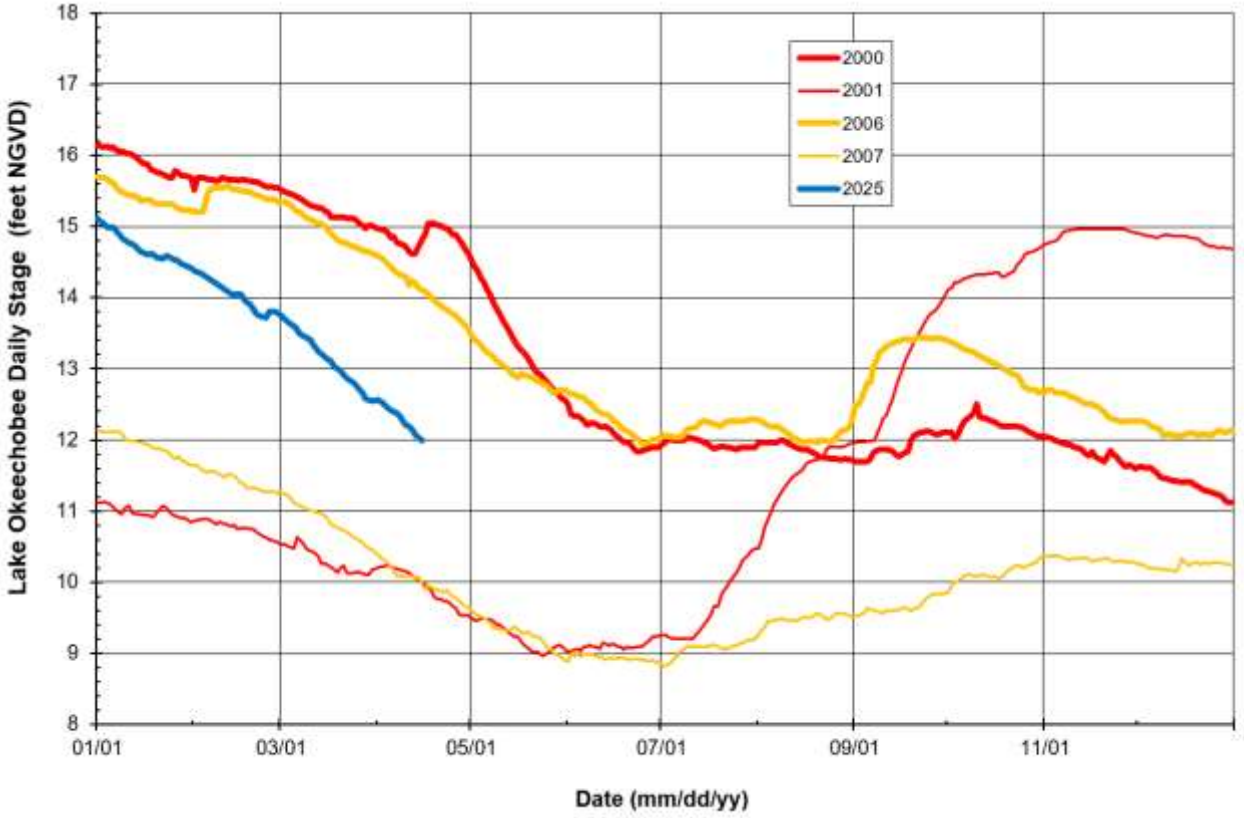
During Task Force comments the following requests were made:

- Request for a legislative update. Will request an update at the Joint meeting with Broward County's Water Advisory Board on Friday May 9, 2025.
- Request for information on the cost of treating wastewater to drinking water standards including treating forever chemicals. A request will be made to PBC Water Utility Department to provide a presentation.

The following figures are provide to document the stage of Lake Okeechobee at the time of the meeting and to show the current lake level relative to the starting years of the 2000-2001 and 2006-2007 drought.



Stage is plotted in NGVD. Please use the left axis for water level history and projected stages. Lake Okeechobee stage NAVD88 offset of -1.25 is based on Final Regulation Schedule Conversion (5/19/2020).


Lake Okeechobee Daily Stage (feet NGVD)
18
17
16
15
14
13
12
11
10
9
8
01/01
03/01
05/01
07/01
09/01
11/01
Date (mm/dd/yy)
2000
2001
2006
2007
2025