

Palm Beach County Water (PBC) Resources Task Force (WRTF)

Thursday July 16, 2026, 1:30 PM

Vista Center Conference Room VC-1W-47-HearingRoom-Chamber,

2300 North Jog Road West Palm Beach FL 33411

Meeting Minutes

The following meeting minutes are not transcripts of the meeting, rather they are a summary to capture the key information of the presentations and the discussion that resulted from the presentations. Copies of the presentation are available on the WRTF web page.

Water Resources Task Force			
<u>Seat ID</u>	<u>Member</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Alternate</u>
1	Rick Sartory	Town of Tequesta	Vacant
2	Joaquin Almazan	City of Belle Glade	Vacant
3	Lisa Interlandi	Village of North Palm Beach	Vacant
4	DD Halpern	Town of Juno Beach	Vacant
5	Karen Lythgoe	Town of Lantana	Vacant
6	Greg Langowski	City of Westlake	Vacant
7	Greg Weiss (Chair)	Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners	Marci Woodward
8	Poonam Kalkat	City of Boynton Beach	Vacant
9	Tommy Strowd	Lake Worth Drainage District	Vacant
10	Vacant		Vacant
11	Jay Steinle	South Florida Water Management District	Sherry McCorkle
12	Rachelle Litt (Vice Chair)	City of Palm Beach Gardens	Chip Block
13	Robert Shorr	Town of Loxahatchee Groves	Vacant
14	Michael Johnson	Indian Town Improvement District	Greg Shafer

Roll call was taken with sufficient attendance for quorum. During roll call there were nine of thirteen appointed seats present. The members attending are listed below:

- Rick Sartory – Seat 1
- Joaquin Almazan – Seat 2
- Lisa Interlandi – Seat 3
- Karen Lythgoe – Seat 5
- Greg Langowski-Seat 6
- Marci Woodward – Seat 7 – Alternate
- Poonam Kalkat – Seat 8
- Robert Shorr – Seat 13
- Michael Johnson – Seat 14

The following four members were absent:

- DD Halpern – Seat 4
- Tommy Strowd – Seat 9
- Jay Steinle – Seat 11
- Rachelle Litt (Vice Chair) – Seat 12

The previous meeting focused on PFAS, including historical context, emerging concerns, legislation, and potential water supply impacts.

The group expressed interest in continuing PFAS-related discussions as the May presentation resulted in unanswered questions. Paul Linton introduced the speaker, and the intent to provide more Palm Beach County (PBC) specific information about progress made in PBC on PFAS and PFOS (forever chemicals).

Ali Bayat, Department Director PBC Water Utilities Department (PBC WUD), gave a presentation on PBC water treatment plants.

- per- and polyfluoroalkyl substance (PFAS) concerns continue nationally and regionally as described in previous presentations.
- Today's presentation aimed to provide a positive update on what PBC is doing regarding PFAS and PFOS treatment and future improvements.
- PBC WUD is known nationwide for innovative programs.
- PBC WUD maintains the only nationally certified program for capital improvement (CIP) asset management in the U.S., and program development has been ongoing for nearly ten years.
- PBC WUD currently operates with zero violations.
- Southern Region Water Reclamation Facility (SRWRF) Wastewater facility earned the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) award for 100 percent compliance over five consecutive years, a recognition achieved by very few utilities nationwide.

- PBC WUD serves approximately 645,000 residents.
 - Two distinct systems:
 - Western (Glades) service area (approximately 25,000 residents) with its own permit and plant.
 - Eastern service area (approximately 620,000 residents) covering multiple plants connected across the region.
- The PFOS and PFAS compliance levels lowered from 200 ppt in 2009 to 4 ppt in 2025 making compliance more difficult. This lower compliance level makes membrane based WTP the most reliable method for a wide range of PFAS and PFOS levels in the raw water.
- PBC has already achieved full compliance with three of its Water Treatment Plants (WTP Numbers 3, 9, and 11)
- The PFOS and PFAS levels at PBC WUD two remaining Water Treatment Plants (WTP Numbers 2 and 8) are between 10 and 20 ppt.
- PBC WUD will be constructing State-of-the-Art Membrane Treatment Plants to replace WTPs 2 and 8 at an estimated total cost of \$500,000 (\$250,000 each)
- PBC WUD will shortly be the only South Florida utility capable of removing PFAS and PFOS from wastewater. This is part of the Green Cay Phase 2 Project. A ceremony is expected in about six months; all members will be invited.

Task Force member Poonam Kalkat (Seat 8) brought up the timeline for compliance and Ali Bayat discussed the different criteria for the time frame of compliance.

Paul Linton presented on behalf of Tommy Strowd on *Potential Infrastructure Required to Change Route of Lake Okeechobee Discharges and Increase PBC Water Supply Resilience*.

- This proposal is an alternative to discharging Lake Okeechobee releases through the C-51 Canal's S-155 into the middle of the Lake Worth Lagoon (LWL). With the large distances from S-155 to the inlets a large portion of the sediment settles in the LWL Estuary.
- The desire is to route Lake Okeechobee releases to a discharge point located closer to an ocean inlet.
- Currently it is possible to route water to the C-16 Canal's S-41 Structure through LWDD E-4 Canal. The C-16 canal discharges through the S-41 Structure about one mile south of the Boynton Beach Inlet. Unfortunately, this route flows through several lakes with the associated concern for sediment load. This route is also hydraulically challenging.
- The proposed route would use two pump stations to move water from the C-51 canal through LWDD's E-3 canal to the C-16 Canal avoiding flowing through the eastern lakes.

- The pump stations would provide water supply resilience by facilitating LWDD capture of excess water from the C-51 Canal before it is discharged to tide.
- Scope consists of two electrical driven pump stations, each with two 50 CFS units, with no backup power as these pump stations are not for flood control.
- Estimated order of magnitude cost estimated at \$10M built to LWDD standards. With both PBC and LWDD receiving benefits, a cost-share between PBC and LWDD is appropriate.
- Cost share could be PBC providing 50 percent of the design and capital costs up to \$5M. LWDD would be responsible for the Operation, Maintenance, Repair, Rehabilitation, and Replacement (OMRRR) costs, and would have an obligation to convey Lake Okeechobee Releases when LWDD has capacity.

Paul Linton provided an update on Lake Okeechobee conditions.

- Lake Okeechobee was at 10.96 feet NGVD on July 13, 2026, which is 0.57 feet lower than a year ago and 2.6 feet below average.
- It will now take upper quartile inflows to raise Lake Okeechobee to an average stage by the end of the wet season.
- Lake Okeechobee is clearly low with the only mitigating factor being the forecast for a strong to very strong El-Nino during the 2026-2027 dry season which is likely to enhance frontal rainfall events.

Paul Linton solicited input on topic for future WRTF Meeting. Task Force member Lisa Interlandi (Seat 3) requested an update on the C-51 Reservoir Phase 2 and efforts to identify the changes required to deliver water from the C-51 Reservoir Phase 2 to the Northwest Fork of the Loxahatchee River (NWFLR). Vice Mayor Marci Woodward identified that with the moratorium on data centers, that a meeting on data center water use and other water resources issues would be appropriate and should be scheduled.