Palm Beach County Water Resources Task Force (WRTF)

Tuesday November 20, 2025 9:00 AM

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

2300 North Jog Road, West Palm Beach, Florida 33411

Meeting Minutes

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

Water Resources Task Force Members

Seat ID	Member	Organization	Alternate	Organization
1	Vacant	Vacant	Vacant	City elected official
2	Joaquin Almazan	City of Belle Glade	Vacant	City elected official
3	Lisa Interlandi	Village of North Palm 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

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

- Lisa Interlandi – Seat 3
- Karen Lythgoe – Seat 5
- Marci Woodard as the Alternate for Gregg Weiss – Seat 7
- Tommy Strowd – Seat 9
- Mark Elsner as the Alternate for Jay Steinle Seat 11
- Rachelle Litt – Seat 12
- Robert Shorr – Seat 13
- Michael Johnson – Seat 14

The following three members were absent.

- Malise Sundstrom - Seat 1
- Joaquin Almazan – Seat 2
- DD Halpern – Seat 4
- Poonam Kalkat – Seat 8
- Greg Langowski Seat 6

With quorum there was unanimous approval of the July 15, 2025 meeting minutes.

Paul Linton, Palm Beach County's Water Resources Manager provided a presentation on the status of Lake Okeechobee including the following information (Recovery Operations) to improve the submerged aquatic vegetation in the lake's littoral zone:

- Lake Okeechobee's stage at the end of the 2025 Wet Season is was just below 14 feet NGVD which is two feet lower than last year.
- The current stage is a little below the lower quartile for the 1931 through 2020 period.
- The 2024 through 2025 dry season was exceptional dry and this combined with the additional releases from Lake Okeechobee (Recovery Criteria) performed to provide improved littoral conditions to encourage new aquatic vegetation results in a drawdown of five feet.
- Expect two to three feet of drawdown in the 2025 through 2026 dry season.
- Water level is current below and expected to stay below the Recovery Envelope. After the meeting the following information was provided by Paul Gray. To date the lowered water level has resulted in the growth of about 28,000 acre of new aquatic vegetation in the littoral zone. grass. Paul Gray expects considerable improvement this dry season.
- The current water supply issue is flow to the Caloosahatchee River Estuary (CRE). USACE is currently delivering about 250 cfs with the USACE considering to increase it to 350 cfs. 350 cfs is below the Minimum Flow and Level (MFL) of 457 cfs and the desired flow of at least 700 cfs. There is currently no obligation to meet the MFL as there recovery plan for the CRE includes completion of the C-43 Reservoir.

Member Lisa Interlandi made the clarify point that flows below the MFL results in Significant Harm which is harm that take more than two year to recover from (historically, loss of sea grass in the CRS take much longer than two years).

Member Rachelle Litt asked if what is the likelihood of a water shortage. Mr. Linton responded low (looking at the SFWMD position analysis the likelihood of follow below the Water Shortage Management Band and then below 10.5 feet NGVD is a little less than 25 percent].

Paul Linton, Palm Beach County's Water Resources Manager provided a presentation of LiDAR data acquired in 2025. The presentation provided LiDAR images from the Belle Glade's Marina and Torry Island Campground, Golf Course, Agricultural Fields, and SFWMD Structures and Canals.

Member Robert Shorr asked if this LiDAR would be used to update the FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs). Mr. Linton responded yes and communicated that FEMA will be using PBC LiDAR to update the FIRMs around Lake Okeechobee to reflect the lower risk of flooding with the USACE rehabilitation of the Herbert Hoover Dike. The LiDAR will also be used to update the FIRM maps for Eastern PBC included C-15, C-16, C-51, and C-18 (also Hillsoboro Canal and C-17).

Brendan Brown, PWS of CDM-Smith provide a presentation on Drones and AI. Mr. Brown's presentation started with explaining the difference between Administrative AI (e.g. writing reports) which use large about of public data (with the risk of incorrect data0 and Technical AI which use disciplined data sets for a specific objective. Mr. Brown communicated how Technical AI is quickly becoming cost effective due to the increase computing speed and the availability of GPS drones and multichannel high resolution cameras. Mr. Brown discussed the need to have calibration and validation data. Mr. Brown provide the following case studies:

- Tracking Marsh Restoration in Savannah River. Tracking growth and viability of planted sea grass.
- Monitoring Ecosystems in Vero Beach – Identifying Red Mangrove, Australian Pine, and Seagrass when clear water conditions allowed.
- Identify Vegetation in Wildlife-Urban Interface to monitor exotics and fire risk
- Presentation on how AI can make mistakes if not provide with appropriate information. The case study of providing of cancerous and non-cancerous mole be compromised by the inclusion of measuring rules in the pictures of cancerous moles more than non-cancerous moles resulted in the AI correlating the risk of cancer to the presence of a measuring rule in the image.
- Solar Site Feasibility and Wetland Mapping. For this Study CDM Smith used deep learning to evaluate the extent of uplands and wetlands in support of solar site feasibility.

The presentation uploaded to the WRTF webpage includes additional case studies.

Vice Mayor Marci Woodard. Thanked Brandan for the present and communicated that it was good to see the discipline approach used by Technical AI as the frequent hallucinations of (administrative) AI has been concerning.

Mr. Brown's presentation included information/encouragement that AI will improve engineering and environmental productivity. Increased productivity is need as "There is a 400,000 to 800,000 position deficit each year". There were some questions about the source of this range of numbers as it seems high. Mr. Linton is following up with Brandan on his sources.