PUBLIC SUPPLY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2025 – 1:00 PM
2379 BROAD STREET, BROOKSVILLE, FLORIDA 34604

MINUTES

Committee Members Present
Margaret Dorge – Citrus County Water Resources (alternate)
Irvin Lee – City of Bradenton Utilities (alternate)
Tania McMillan – City of Lakeland Water Utilities
Susan Brasefield – City of North Port Utilities (alternate)
Lynn Spivey – City of Plant City Utilities
Steve Adams – City of Punta Gorda Utilities
Sheree Greer – City of St. Petersburg Utilities
Ryan Smith – City of Tampa Water Department
Greg Harris – DeSoto County Utilities
David Glicksberg – Hillsborough County Utilities
Kathryn Quilty – Manatee County Utilities
Olga Wolanin – Manatee County Utilities (Chair) (alternate)
Tony Cunningham – Marion County Utilities
Josh Kramer – Marion County Utilities (alternate)
Katie Gilmore – Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority
David Adams – Pinellas County Utilities
Dan Umberger – Pinellas County Utilities (alternate)
Tamara Richardson – Polk County Utilities
Stoney Pope – Sarasota County Utilities
Brian Fagan – Sarasota County Utilities (alternate)
Cathleen Jonas – Tampa Bay Water
Erin Hayes – Tampa Bay Water (alternate)
Jamie Padgett – The Villages
Susannah Folsom – Withlacoochee Regional Water Supply Authority

Board Administrative Support
Virginia Singer
Barbara Matrone

Governing Board Liaison
Robert Stern

1. **Call to Order and Introductions**

The Public Supply Advisory Committee (PSAC) of the Southwest Florida Water Management District (District) met for its regular meeting at 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday, November 4, 2025, via Microsoft Teams.

Chair Olga Wolanin called the meeting to order, and attendance was called.

Governing Board Liaison Robert Stern greeted the committee.

2. **Additions and Deletions to the Agenda**

None.

3. **Approval of the August 12, 2025, Meeting Minutes**

A motion was made to approve the minutes from the August 12, 2025, meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

4. **Public Comments**
None.

5. **Lower Hillsborough River Third Five-Year Assessment**
Ms. Danielle Rogers, Environmental Project Manager, presented the findings from the third five-year assessment of the Lower Hillsborough River. As required by state law, the District and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection must establish Minimum Flows and Levels (MFLs) for priority water bodies to prevent significant harm resulting from water withdrawals. Minimum flows are designated for flowing systems such as springs, rivers and creeks, while minimum levels apply to standing water bodies including lakes, wetlands and aquifers. MFLs serve as essential tools for water management districts, supporting water supply planning, water use permitting and environmental resource permitting.

Ms. Rogers discussed the geography and history of the Lower Hillsborough River followed by a discussion of its current minimum flows. She explained that the primary objective of the minimum flow is to extend the low salinity habitat toward Sulphur Springs. The established minimum flow is set at 20 cubic feet per second (cfs) of freshwater equivalent from July through March and increases to 24 cfs freshwater equivalent from April through June.

Ms. Rogers outlined the requirements and timeline for the five-year assessments, as specified in the Florida Administrative Code. She explained that the District was mandated to complete three five-year assessments, each of which must evaluate river flows, water levels, key water quality parameters and biological conditions within the river system.

Ms. Rogers then reviewed the hydrology of the Lower Hillsborough River, presenting several maps illustrating model results and target zones for key water quality indicators, including salinity and dissolved oxygen. She also discussed the primary recovery sources for Blue Sink, the Tampa Bypass Canal and Sulphur Springs with Sulphur Springs contributing approximately 70% of the total recovery source water.

Ms. Rogers concluded by noting that the report confirms the successful extension of the low salinity habitat toward Sulphur Springs. However, she emphasized that the long-term sustainability of Sulphur Springs as a recovery source remains a concern. The next steps in the current five-year assessment include reviewing the comments received from the stakeholders that were due October 17, 2025, with the intent to present the findings to the Governing Board in the coming months.

Chair Wolanin asked how long salinity levels had remained elevated in that area before recovery began. Ms. Rogers explained that during the 1960s, there was a significant increase in water use for the reservoir's water supply. As a result, flows at the dam began to cease, leading to higher salinity levels along the river. She added that a minimum flow requirement for the river was later adopted in 2000. Chair Wolanin also inquired about the habitat conditions prior to recovery. Ms. Rogers responded that the biological indicators varied with changes in water quality. She noted that the biological analysis included in the study illustrates how the biological community appeared before the implementation of minimum flows and how it changed afterward.

6. **Reevaluated Minimum Levels for Lake Angelo and Lake Denton**
Mr. Jordan Miller, Environmental Scientist, presented the reevaluation of minimum levels for Lake Angelo and Lake Denton. He explained that a minimum lake level represents a water elevation that must be met or exceeded at least 50% of the time, while a high minimum level must be met or exceeded at least 10% of the time. These thresholds are designed to protect key environmental values outlined in state regulations, including recreation, fish and wildlife habitats, and the aesthetic and scenic qualities of the lakes.

The process for establishing minimum and high minimum lake levels begins with the development of a water budget model based on historical conditions. Environmental criteria are then applied,

with a primary focus on determining the appropriate minimum lake level. The P50 percentile represents the highest confidence level, indicating that the lake level should be met or exceeded 50% of the time. In contrast, the P10 percentile is less sensitive to groundwater influences and reflects a level expected to be met or exceeded only 10% of the time.

Mr. Miller explained the development of the water budget model used to establish historic lake levels and generate MFL conditions. He noted that changes in lake stage or volume are calculated by comparing total inflows and outflows over a defined time period. This analysis forms the basis for determining historic percentiles. To extend the water level record back 60 years, a rainfall regression model is applied. Mr. Miller also reviewed the standards and screening criteria used to set MFLs, emphasizing their alignment with environmental benchmarks.

Lakes Denton and Angelo, located in Highlands County, are undergoing minimum level evaluations. One of the initial steps in this process involves acquiring updated bathymetric data for each lake. A consultant is engaged to collect detailed bathymetry and elevation data for key topographic features. This information is then used to develop a digital elevation model, which supports the calculation of stage–area–volume relationships essential for establishing minimum lake levels.

Mr. Miller discussed the impacts of groundwater pumping on Lakes Angelo and Denton, referencing both historical and long-term water level trends derived from water budget models. He explained how these models were used to simulate MFL conditions. Additionally, he reviewed the aquatic habitat zone screenings conducted for both lakes, along with evaluations related to aesthetic value, basin connectivity and dock usability.

Mr. Miller concluded by presenting the proposed MFLs and statuses for Lakes Denton and Angelo. He noted that both lakes are currently meeting the proposed MFLs, eliminating the need for a recovery strategy. Additionally, projections indicate that the minimum levels will continue to be met throughout the 20-year planning horizon, so a prevention strategy is not required. The peer review process is ongoing, and its final public meeting is on November 12, 2025. Draft reports outlining the proposed levels for both lakes are available on the District's website. Public comment may be submitted online at www.watermatters.org/projects/mfls/lake-mfl-review-and-comments.

Chair Wolanin asked whether there were plans to revisit these lakes in the future unless additional issues were identified. Mr. Miller responded that all priority-listed lakes are revisited periodically as needed, based on new developments such as emerging products or changes in regional water use. He added that the monitoring is tracked annually and follows a schedule determined by the District's MFLs Priority List and Schedule.

7. Florida Water Star Stakeholder Survey Results

Ms. Robin Grantham, Lead Communications Strategist, provided an overview of the Florida Water Star℠ (FWS) program and summarized the results of the stakeholder survey. FWS is a statewide certification program that recognizes new residential and commercial projects designed to meet high standards of water efficiency.

To achieve FWS certification, projects must meet specific criteria in three key areas: irrigation, landscape and indoor water use. Within a single-family home, the program emphasizes the use of WaterSense®-labeled fixtures such as toilets, showerheads, faucets and ENERGY STAR®-rated appliances, including washing machines and dishwashers.

The greatest water savings typically occur within the irrigation system. The program limits sprinkler irrigation to no more than 60% of the landscaped area, while the remaining 40% may consist of expanded planting beds, micro irrigated ground covers or unirrigated drought-tolerant turfgrass. Within the irrigation system, several criteria must be met to ensure efficiency and compliance with best practices. These include proper pressure regulation so that all irrigation components operate

according to manufacturers' specifications; installation of check valves to prevent spray heads from leaking; and the use of micro irrigation, which delivers water directly to the plant roots while using fewer gallons per minute on plant beds.

Additionally, landscape design criteria are evaluated in coordination with the Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ program to establish plant selection requirements. This process ensures that no invasive exotic species are used, that plants are chosen based on site-specific conditions and that the appropriate species are selected for each hydrozone.

Overall water savings amount to about 48,000 gallons of water per year per residential home which also equates to savings on utility and water bills for homeowners of approximately $530.

Ms. Grantham then discussed the results of the FWS stakeholder survey. The survey was done to understand stakeholder opinions regarding FWS program awareness and their understanding and support of the program, their understanding of regional water supply challenges and their level of support for drought-tolerant turfgrass. The survey was distributed from June 10 through July 31, 2025. It was distributed via a SurveyMoney link and received 218 completed responses. The results will be used to make changes and upgrades to the turfgrass communications plan and look at development of a communications plan targeted toward the builder industry.

Mr. David Glicksberg asked why support from the building industry appeared to be somewhat limited, and whether this might be related to perceived homeowner expectations. Ms. Grantham responded that the issue is not a lack of support for water conservation, but rather the challenge of adapting to long-standing practices and resistance to change. She explained that it involves overcoming a learning curve, as well as navigating the varying requirements set by different cities and local governments. Mr. Glicksberg also inquired about the additional costs incurred by builders when constructing an FWS-certified home versus a traditional home. Ms. Grantham responded that the additional cost for an FWS-certified home compared to a conventional one has typically ranged from $700 to $1,400. However, she noted that these figures are currently being reevaluated, as the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly affected costs and product availability within the building industry.

Chair Wolanin asked whether the affidavit for FWS certification is verified by District staff or if builders are permitted to submit their own affidavit confirming compliance with program provisions. Ms. Grantham clarified that FWS-certified homes are not inspected by District staff. She explained that while the District supports the program and provides educational resources, all FWS inspections are conducted by independent third-party inspectors. Chair Wolanin also asked if there was a lot of noncompliance. Ms. Grantham responded that the builder would notify her quickly if changes needed to be made.

8. <u>Field Trip Discussion</u>

Chair Wolanin asked committee members to share any ideas, proposed projects or specific environmental or conservation initiatives they would like to feature as part of an upcoming tour. Ms. Virginia Singer stated that she would be happy to contribute a few ideas. She noted that in the past, a joint tour was conducted with the Industrial, Commercial and Institutional Advisory Committee. A half-day tour of the CEMEX plant in Brooksville is currently being scheduled for February, and possible dates are being considered. It will be decided whether the tour will be combined or if one will be held exclusively for the PSAC. Additional details will be shared once the poll results are available.

9. <u>Development of Agenda Topics</u>

Chair Wolanin expressed interest in receiving another update on hydrologic conditions and specifically learning whether any watering restrictions had been proposed. Ms. Robyn Felix noted that a similar presentation had been given by Ms. Tamera McBride at the October Governing Board meeting. At the conclusion of that presentation, Ms. McBride indicated to the Board that a Phase 1

water shortage recommendation would likely be presented at the November Governing Board meeting. Ms. Singer stated that this topic would be included in the draft minutes and a presentation will be put together for a future meeting. In addition, a hydrologic conditions report can be viewed on the District's website at https://www.swfwmd.state.fl.us/resources/weather-hydrology/hydrologic-conditions-reports.

10. Announcements and Other Business

Chair Wolanin noted that the American Water Works Association (AWWA) Region 10 will be hosting a drinking water contest on November 14, and that the AWWA Conference will take place December 1 – 3. Ms. Katie Gilmore added that the annual Friends of Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority barbeque will also be held on November 14, following the drinking water contest at the Authority's facility in Arcadia.

11. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:48 p.m.