



**SOUTHWEST FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT
PUBLIC SUPPLY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY, MAY 5, 2026 – 1:00 PM
MINUTES**

Committee Members

Bryan Schmalz – Bay Laurel Center Community Development District
Debra Burden – Citrus County Water Resources
Ed Ference – City of Bradenton Utilities
Irvin Lee – City of Bradenton Utilities (alternate)
Tania McMillan – City of Lakeland Water Utilities
Lynn Spivey – City of Plant City Utilities
Steve Adams – City of Punta Gorda Utilities
Sheree Greer – City of St. Petersburg Utilities
Darryl Vaci – City of Tarpon Springs Utilities (alternate)
Greg Harris – DeSoto County Utilities
Alys Brockway – Hernando County Utilities
David Glicksberg – Hillsborough County Utilities
Kathryn Quilty – Manatee County Utilities
Olga Wolanin – Manatee County Utilities (alternate)
Katie Gilmore – Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority
David Adams – Pinellas County Utilities
Dan Umberger – Pinellas County Utilities (alternate)
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 (alternate)
Suzannah Folsom – Withlacoochee Regional Water Supply Authority

Interested Parties

Sheri Huelster

Board Administrative Support

Virginia Singer
Barbara Matrone

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, May 5, 2026, via Microsoft Teams.

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

2. Additions and Deletions to the Agenda

None.

3. Approval of November 4, 2025 & February 20, 2026, Meeting Minutes

A motion was made to approve the draft minutes from the November 4, 2025 meeting and the February 20, 2026 tour. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Public Comments

None.

5. Hydrologic Conditions Update

Tamera McBride, Hydrologic Data Manager, provided an update on current hydrologic conditions. She noted that May marks the final month of the eight-month dry season (October through May). For the month of March, rainfall was below average. The District received 2.5 inches of rainfall, reflecting a 0.7-inch deficit compared to the historical average of 3.2 inches. Rainfall totals across the District ranged from a high of 9.58 inches to a low of 0.5 inches.

The 12-month rainfall distribution from April 2025 to March 2026 averaged 39.8 inches, representing a 12.8-inch deficit compared to the historic average of 52.6 inches. A graph illustrating the 12-month rainfall departure from average showed multiple periods of surplus or deficit rainfall since 1998. The 12-month period ending in March 2026 reflected a 12.8-inch deficit, compared to a 1.6-inch surplus during the same period ending March 2025. Provisional rainfall data for April indicate that the District has received an average of 1.7 inches of rainfall, which is a 0.9-inch deficit compared to the historical average of 2.6 inches.

Ms. McBride then reviewed recent groundwater levels across the northern, central and southern counties, as well as surface water levels in the Northern Lakes, Tampa Bay Lakes, Polk Upland Lakes and Lake Wales Ridge Lakes regions. She also showed another set of graphs and discussed the eight-week mean discharge of the Withlacoochee, Hillsborough, Alafia and Peace rivers. She also discussed public supply volumes for the Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority and the Tampa Bay area.

Ms. McBride concluded with a review of the near-term climate forecast, including seasonal outlooks for temperature and precipitation for the period of May through July 2026. According to the Climate Prediction Center, there is a 40 to 50 % chance of above-average temperatures and precipitation across the District during this three-month period. For May, the National Weather Service is predicting drier conditions, with rainfall expected to increase in June. The extended climate forecasts for June through August indicate equal chances of above- and below-normal precipitation, with drier conditions anticipated from July through October. For the period of October through January, forecasts indicate a likelihood of above-average precipitation.

6. Water Shortage Orders

Krista Smith, Staff Hydrologist, provided an update on current water shortage orders. She referenced the authority under Section 373.246(3), Florida Statutes which provides that, in accordance with the water shortage plan, the Governing Board may impose such restrictions as may be necessary to protect the water resources of the area from serious harm and to restore them to their previous condition. The plan requires the District to assign a water shortage phase based upon consideration of the following factors: drought indicators and drought condition levels, current regional lake levels, public supply storage status, precipitation outlook, and availability of alternative water supply.

Ms. Smith summarized the four water shortage phases:

Phase I – the moderate alert to prepare for possible worsening conditions.

Phase II – the severe water shortage where prudent actions to assure only reasonable water uses are occurring.

Phase III – the extreme water shortage to minimize nonessential water use.

Phase IV – the critical water shortage is a temporary suspension of nonessential water use.

She then discussed Districtwide conditions for the northern, central and southern regions as of May 4, 2026, along with public supply storage levels for Tampa Bay Water's C.W. Bill Young Reservoir.

She reported that the modified Phase III has been in effect since April 3, 2026. Users should continue to test irrigation systems for leaks and inefficiencies. Cleaning and maintenance of irrigation systems are allowed on the restricted day with an attendant on site in the area being tested. Irrigation systems may routinely be operated for such purposes no more than once per week, and the total run time for each zone shall not exceed 10 minutes during the test.

Ms. Smith concluded her presentation with an overview of recommended actions for users during a water shortage and noted that the District will contact permittees as necessary to ensure that the required actions of the water shortage order are being implemented.

A committee member asked whether there was an example of a concise status report available for reference. Ms. April Breton responded that no examples had been submitted to date; however, she read the applicable rule language to provide additional clarification.

Mr. David Glicksberg asked whether the modified element of the Phase III Water Shortage Order pertained only to the allowable irrigation hours for lawn and landscape watering. Ms. Smith confirmed that it did.

Chair Wolanin asked how residents with older irrigation systems that can only operate once per week, but do not align with the assigned watering schedule for their address, should proceed and whether that would be allowable under the state requirements. Ms. Smith responded that, in those situations, a variance request may be submitted.

7. 2025 Regional Water Supply Plan: Utility and Community Outreach

Cassidy Hampton, Environmental Project Manager, presented an overview of utility and community outreach efforts following approval of the 2025 Regional Water Supply Plan (RWSP). She explained that regional water supply planning is required by Section 373.709, Florida Statutes and is included in the District's Strategic Plan. The RWSP evaluates projected water demands and identifies potential water sources needed to meet future demands while sustaining water resources and related natural systems.

Ms. Hampton noted that the District updates the RWSP every five years for all four planning regions, which include all or portions of 16 counties and 81 municipalities. The 2025 RWSP covers the period from 2025 through 2045 and includes five key components, which are resource protection criteria, water demand estimates and projections, an evaluation of potential water sources, water supply and resource development projects, and funding mechanisms for those projects.

She further explained that, pursuant to Florida Statutes, the District is conducting outreach regarding the approved RWSP. Entities with project options identified in the RWSP must be notified within six months of plan approval. Additionally, all local governments are required to update their 10-Year Water Supply Facilities Work Plans (Work Plans) within 18 months of RWSP approval, and these Work Plans must identify alternative and traditional water supply projects, conservation and reuse activities needed to meet projected future demands.

Ms. Hampton stated that the District utilizes a proactive, multi-disciplinary outreach approach involving coordination with District staff from the Water Supply, Planning, Communications, GIS, and Government Affairs sections to develop and disseminate community planning pages. These pages consolidate RWSP information to assist local governments in developing their Work Plans. She noted that the community planning pages

are anticipated to be completed this summer, after which local government planning and utility staff will be notified. District staff will also be available to provide technical assistance as needed. Once completed, any necessary updates will need to be incorporated as amendments to local government Comprehensive Plans and submitted to the Department of Commerce, who will share them with District staff for review.

Ms. Hampton concluded by discussing the demand and supply analysis to be included in the community planning pages and the next steps related to outreach for the 2025 RWSP. She stated that the District will issue notices of RWSP approval to entities with project options identified in the plan, with notifications anticipated to be mailed in the coming weeks. She further explained that the District will finalize and publish community planning pages, followed by outreach to local governments. These resources are expected to be available this summer to allow sufficient time for local governments to complete updates to their Work Plans. Ms. Hampton noted that the updated plans must ultimately be incorporated as amendments to local government Comprehensive Plans by June 2027.

8. Recommended Minimum Flows for Upper Peace River

Dr. Lei Yang, Chief Professional Engineer, provided a presentation on the recommended minimum flows for the upper Peace River. Dr. Yang began by reviewing the statutory framework for minimum flows and levels (MFLs), explaining that MFLs identify the point at which additional withdrawals would cause significant harm to water resources. The District applies a 15% habitat-change standard, supported by scientific literature and multiple peer reviews, and evaluates ten environmental resource values when establishing MFLs.

Dr. Yang provided background on the upper Peace River, describing long-term flow declines driven by groundwater withdrawals, land-use changes, and extensive karst features between Bartow and Fort Meade. Existing minimum low flows were adopted in 2006 at the Bartow, Fort Meade and Zolfo Springs gauges along with the Southern Water Use Caution Area recovery strategy. She also noted that the Lake Hancock restoration project has helped maintain minimum low flows in most years since 2015 which was a major component of the recovery strategy.

Dr. Yang then outlined the methodology used to develop the recommended minimum flows. The approach included developing a baseline flow record using the Peace River Integrated Model, dividing the flow regime into hydrologic blocks, and applying habitat-based analyses, including wetted perimeter, fish passage, instream habitat modeling and floodplain inundation to determine protective thresholds. The 15% habitat-change criterion was applied to identify allowable flow reductions for each block. She then summarized the recommended minimum flows for the full flow regime at the Bartow, Fort Meade and Zolfo Springs index gauges. Low-flow conditions would allow no withdrawals, while medium- and high-flow blocks include defined minimum flows and allowable percentage reductions based on ecological sensitivity. The recommended minimum flows were evaluated against all environmental resource values and found to provide adequate protection.

She reported that the recommended minimum flows are currently being met and are projected to continue being met over the next 20 years.

Dr. Yang concluded with an overview of the tentative schedule. The draft report was submitted to the Governing Board in December 2025, and scientific peer review began the same month, and is expected to be completed in May 2026. A public workshop is scheduled for June 2026, and pending Governing Board approval in August, rulemaking is expected to continue into fall 2026.

Mr. Glicksberg asked why the minimum flow in Block 1 is higher at the Bartow gauge than downstream at the Fort Meade gauge. Dr. Yang explained that this is primarily due to the significant sinkhole system between Bartow and Fort Meade, which causes substantial

streamflow losses; therefore, higher upstream flow is needed to maintain the minimum flow downstream.

9. Development of Agenda Topics

Ms. Debra Burden requested an update on enforcement activities to gain insight into actions being taken by other utilities and current enforcement trends. Ms. Robyn Felix asked whether the committee would prefer a round-table discussion format to allow committee members to share information and experiences. Ms. Breton added that staff could also provide information regarding violations and citations.

Chair Wolanin suggested distributing a poll to committee members to help identify current enforcement trends. She also encouraged committee members to begin considering ideas for future field trips. Ms. Burden suggested visiting water systems that have implemented successful repair efforts, as well as systems facing ongoing challenges, and mentioned the possibility of a boat tour.

10. Announcements and Other Business

Chair Wolanin announced that the American Water Works Association would be hosting its third annual kayak fundraiser event on Saturday, May 16 and mentioned that additional information and registration details were available on the organization's website.

11. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:26 p.m.