SOUTHWEST FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT
PUBLIC SUPPLY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
TUESDAY, AUGUST 11, 2026 – 1:00 PM
MINUTES

Committee Members

Bryan Schmalz – Bay Laurel Center Community Development District
Debra Burden – Citrus County Water Resources
Maggie Dorge – Citrus County Water Resources (alternate)
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
James Kramer – City of St. Petersburg Utilities (alternate)
Ryan Smith – City of Tampa Water Department
Thomas Kiger – City of Tarpon Springs 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)
Tony Cunningham – Marion County Utilities
Katie Gilmore – Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority
Stoney Pope – Sarasota County Utilities
Brian Fagan – Sarasota County Utilities (alternate)
Cathleen Jonas – Tampa Bay Water
Erin Hayes – Tampa Bay Water (alternate)
Trey Arnett – The Villages
Suzannah Folsom – Withlacoochee Regional Water Supply Authority

Interested Parties

Chris Claus, City of St. Petersburg
Conner Cheney, Pasco County Utilities
Holly Langston, City of Tarpon Springs

Governing Board Liaison

Robert Stern

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, August 11, 2026, via Microsoft Teams.

   Governing Board Liaison Robert Stern welcomed the committee.

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

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

   None.

3. **Approval of the May 5, 2026, Meeting Minutes**

   A motion was made to approve the draft minutes from the May 5, 2026 meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

4. **Public Comments**

   None.

5. **Hydrologic Conditions Update**

   Joey Fogel, Senior Data Analyst, provided an update on current hydrologic conditions. He reported that July marked the second month of the four-month wet season, but conditions were drier than normal. Monthly and 12-month rainfall totals were slightly below average, even with heavier rain late in the month. Warmer temperatures increased evaporation and vegetation water use, causing rainfall to be used quickly. The region is currently experiencing an El Niño pattern, which can influence summer rainfall.

   In July, the District received 7.1 inches of rainfall, reflecting a deficit of about 1.1 inches compared to the historic average of 8.2 inches. Rainfall varied significantly across the region, with the highest total near Yankeetown in Citrus and Levy counties at approximately 16 inches, and the lowest in Lake County at about 2.2 inches.

   The 12-month rainfall distribution from August 2025 to July 2026 averaged 37.4 inches, representing a 15.2-inch deficit compared to the historic average of 52.6 inches. The highest amount of rainfall was near The Villages at 51.5 inches and the lowest was in Hillsborough County near Tampa at 20.7 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 July 2026 reflected a 15.2-inch deficit, compared to 3.1-inch surplus during the same period ending in July 2025.

   Mr. Fogel 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. He also presented eight-week mean discharge trends for the Withlacoochee, Hillsborough, Alafia and Peace rivers, and then discussed recent public supply volumes for the Peace River Manasota Regional Water Supply Authority and the Tampa Bay area.

   Mr. Fogel concluded with a review of the near-term climate forecast which shows a 50 – 60% chance of above normal temperatures from August through October 2026, while rainfall for that same period carries equal chances of being above, near, or below normal. The extended forecast, shown as rolling three-month composites from September through April, begins with equal rainfall chances for September through November but gradually shifts toward increasing rainfall probabilities as El Niño is expected to strengthen through the winter. The August tropical storm origin map highlights typical formation areas for this month, and a current Atlantic disturbance has a 70% chance of developing within seven days, though several models suggest it may turn northward. Overall, conditions point toward a transition to wetter-than-normal weather later in the year as El Niño becomes more influential.

The Chair asked when the Phase III restrictions might be lifted. Ms. April Breton responded that no changes are planned at this time and nothing will be brought to the August Governing Board meeting. She noted that the restrictions remain in effect through October and that the District will continue monitoring conditions through the remainder of the summer. Ms. Breton also added that although rainfall has increased, supplies still need time to recover, and emphasized that when it is raining, irrigation is not necessary.

6. 2026 Minimum Flows and Levels Priority List and Schedule

Dr. Gabe Herrick, Chief Environmental Scientist, provided an annual update to the minimum flows and levels (MFLs) priority list and schedule. Minimum flows and minimum water levels define the limit at which additional water withdrawals would cause significant harm to water resources or ecological systems. Minimum flows apply to rivers, streams and springs, while minimum levels apply to lakes, wetlands and aquifers. These requirements are established in statute, and each year the District submits an updated priority list to the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) by November 15, covering the current year plus three future years. Water bodies are prioritized based on regional importance and existing or potential withdrawal impacts, and all first-magnitude springs and certain second-magnitude springs on conservation lands must have adopted MFLs.

The 2026 – 2029 priority lists include a mix of lakes, rivers, springs, estuaries and one reservation. Several items have been rescheduled to later years to allow additional time for data collection and analysis, including segments of the Withlacoochee River and the Crystal River/Kings Bay system. New additions for 2029 include Crews Lake, the Homosassa River system and the Rainbow River system. In total, 30 water bodies are scheduled through 2029, representing 14 lakes, four freshwater rivers, four estuaries, six springs, one aquifer and one reservation.

The District will present the priority list to the Governing Board as a Submit-and-File item at the August 25 meeting, followed by a consent agenda item at the October Governing Board. A public meeting will be held later this month, along with a joint teleconference with DEP's Office of Water Policy. A separate Central Florida Water Initiative meeting will also occur in August, coordinated with the St. Johns River and South Florida water management districts to ensure consistency across shared water bodies.

Following these meetings, the District will transmit the final priority list to DEP in November. As required by statute, the list will also be incorporated into the Consolidated Annual Report released early next year.

Ms. Alys Brockway asked why the Withlacoochee River MFL has taken so long to complete. Dr. Herrick explained that the river is a large and complex system, consisting of three separate MFL segments in the upper river as well as the lower river downstream. He noted that the extensive scope and complexity of the system are the primary reasons for the extended timeline.

7. Lake Wailes Minimum Lake Levels Reevaluation

Jason Patterson, Lead Scientific Modeler, presented the reevaluation of minimum levels for Lake Wailes, explaining the purpose of minimum flows and levels and the regulatory, ecological, and recreational considerations involved. He stated that a minimum level is the level of groundwater in an aquifer and the level of surface water at which further withdrawals would be significantly harmful to the water resources or ecology of the area. He described the process for establishing these levels, including data collection, model development, public input and eventual Board adoption. Lake Wailes is a 300-acre lake located along the Lake Wales Ridge and lies within the Southern Water Use Caution Area and the Central Florida Water Initiative region.

Mr. Patterson detailed the development of long-term historic percentiles using a water budget model incorporating lake stage, rainfall, aquifer data, evaporation, land use and soils. After removing pumping effects and extending the data set to a 60-year rainfall cycle, the long-term historic P50 value was determined to be 104.3 feet. Environmental standards were then applied, including the species richness standard and the wetland offset standard. Because Lake Wailes is characteristic of xeric conditions, the xeric offset was used, resulting in a proposed minimum lake level of 102.1 feet, with a high minimum lake level of 106.3 feet. This represented a change from previously established levels of 104.8 and 107.7 feet.

Screening tools were applied to ensure the proposed levels protected environmental values. The aquatic habitat zone screening showed no exceedance of the 15% reduction threshold, basin connectivity was not applicable, aesthetic screening confirmed the proposed level exceeded the historic P80 threshold, and dock-use screening found no impact to floating docks.

Mr. Patterson noted that no additional considerations were needed for that particular lake, and that the xeric offset standard remained appropriate throughout all evaluations.

In closing, Mr. Patterson stated that Lake Wailes is expected to meet the proposed levels over the next 20-year planning horizon and that no recovery or prevention strategy is required. He recommended moving forward with adoption.

8. **Water Restriction Enforcement Discussion**
   Committee members discussed their approaches to communication and the enforcement of water restrictions.

9. **Development of Agenda Topics**
   The Chair mentioned concerns with Manatee Counties budget due to amendment three.

10. **Announcements and Other Business**
    None.

11. **Adjournment**
    The meeting was adjourned at 3:01 p.m.