



South Florida Water Management District

GOVERNING BOARD MONTHLY MEETING AGENDA

December 11, 2025

9:00 AM

District Headquarters, B-1 Auditorium
3301 Gun Club Road
West Palm Beach, FL 33406

FINAL

1. Call to Order - Chauncey Goss, Chairman, Governing Board
2. Pledge of Allegiance
3. Employee Recognitions
 - December 2025 Employee of the Month: Nicole Niemeyer, Lead Project Manager
 - December 2025 Team of the Month: Environmental Resource Permits (ERP) Water Quality Standards Training Team
 - 25-Year Service Award: Vince Matera, Land Management Assistant Senior, St. Cloud Field Station
 - 35-Year Service Award: Richard James, Principal Scientist
 - 35-Year Service Award: Peter Farrell, Heavy Equipment Operator
4. Agenda Revisions
5. Agenda Item Abstentions by Board Members
6. Consider Approval of the Minutes for the November 13, 2025 Meeting
7. Executive Director's Report - Drew Bartlett
8. General Public Comment
9. Board Comment

10. Move Consent Agenda Items to Discussion Agenda
11. Public Comment on Consent Agenda Items
12. Board Vote on Consent Agenda

Consent Agenda

13. Land Acquisition, Shingle Creek Project, Orange County (Staff contact, Ray Palmer)

Agenda Item Background:

The Shingle Creek Mitigation Project is located in southern Orange County, adjacent to the Shingle Creek corridor, and is generally considered to be the headwaters for the Everglades. The District has been acquiring land from willing sellers to preserve and protect this important resource. Staff is seeking Governing Board approval to acquire five parcels, for a total of 6.24 acres, more or less, from willing sellers for a cumulative purchase price of \$205,000.

The proposed acquisitions of privately-owned land within the Shingle Creek Project area support the District's environmental mission and strategic priorities. The acquisitions will continue to consolidate District ownership for improved resource protection, enhance land management efficiency, and advance long-term conservation objectives. As more parcels are acquired to fill in the scattered ownership pattern, the District strengthens its ability to manage these environmentally sensitive lands.

Recommended Action:

Resolution No. 2025-1201 Authorize the acquisition of land interests in five tracts totaling 6.24 acres, more or less, in the total amount of \$205,000 located in the Shingle Creek Project Area in Orange County, for which dedicated funds (Wetland Mitigation Fund) are budgeted.

[Resolution No. 2025-1201](#)

[Exhibit A](#)

14. Exchange Agreement with Florida Power & Light Company (FPL): Lease Agreement in St. Lucie County, and Access and Utility Easement in Miami-Dade County (Staff contact, Ray Palmer)

Agenda Item Background:

Miami-Dade County:

The District operates and maintains the L-31E Flow Way in Miami-Dade County, and the S-705 pump station located within the L-31E. FPL owns approximately 0.082 acres in Miami-Dade County that is adjacent to the L-31E and the S-705 pump station. The District uses the S-705 to cross the L-31E with large equipment used to perform maintenance activities on the S-21A flood control structure located east of the S-705. The District also needs to install and access an electric pull box to supply power to the S-705 pump station. In order to make the turn onto the S-705, the large equipment needs to utilize the 0.082-acre portion of land owned by FPL. The pull box will also be installed in this area.

St. Lucie County:

The District owns approximately 1.05 acres in St. Lucie County located within the District's C-23 Canal right-of-way lands. FPL has requested to utilize the District's property to access its adjacent lands. To accomplish these goals, the District and FPL will enter into a Non-Exclusive Access Road Lease Agreement with respect to the 1.05 acres owned by the District in St. Lucie County for a ten-year term subject to termination for convenience in exchange for the District's acquisition from FPL of a Perpetual Access Road and Utility Easement with respect to the 0.082 acres, owned by FPL adjacent to the District's L-31E right-of-way and S-705 pump station in Miami-Dade County.

For purposes of this exchange, the District and FPL deem the Lease Agreement and the Perpetual Access Road and Utility Easement to be equivalent in value.

Recommended Action:

Resolution No. 2025-1202 Authorize entering into a ten-year non-exclusive access road lease with Florida Power & Light Company, that provides access over 1.05 acres, more or less, within District lands in St. Lucie County in exchange for acquisition from Florida Power & Light Company of a perpetual access road and utility easement containing 0.082 acres, more or less, for the Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands Project, L-31E Flow Way Component in Miami-Dade County. (Contract No. 4600005259)

[Resolution No. 2025-1202](#)

[Exhibit A-1](#)

[Exhibit A-2](#)

[Exhibit B](#)

15. Slope Mowing Contract for Clewiston Field Station Area of Responsibility, Palm Beach, Hendry, and Broward Counties (Staff contact, Rich Virgil, P.E.)

Agenda Item Background:

Maintenance of District lands is required to ensure that vegetation is controlled at the appropriate height to provide for optimal performance and operational efficiency of the District's flood control system. This is a proposed contract for slope mowing of approximately 355 acres of various District lands and canal and levee rights of way in the Clewiston Field Station area of responsibility in Palm Beach, Hendry, and Broward Counties.

Recommended Action:

Resolution No. 2025-1203 Authorize entering into a 3-year contract with two 1-year renewal options with Ground Level, Inc., the lowest responsive and responsible bidder, for slope mowing services of various District lands and canal and levee rights of way in Palm Beach, Hendry, and Broward Counties, in an amount not-to-exceed \$365,117.50, of which \$136,500 in Ad Valorem funds is budgeted in Fiscal Year 2025-2026 and the remainder is subject to Governing Board approval of future years' budgets. (Contract No. 4600005287)

[Resolution No. 2025-1203](#)

[Backup Presentation](#)

16. Mowing and Trimming Services Contract for Fort Lauderdale Field Station Area of Responsibility, Broward County (Staff contact, Rich Virgil, P.E.)

Agenda Item Background:

Maintenance of District lands and rights of way is required to ensure that vegetation is controlled at the appropriate height to provide for optimal performance and operational efficiency of the District's flood control system. This is a proposed contract for the annual mowing and trimming of approximately 4,584 acres of various District lands and canal and levee rights of way in the Fort Lauderdale Field Station area of responsibility in Broward County.

Recommended Action:

Resolution No. 2025-1204 Authorize entering into a 3-year contract with two 1-year renewal options with Ground Level, Inc., the lowest responsive and responsible bidder, for mowing and trimming services of various canal and levee rights of way in the Fort Lauderdale Field Station area of responsibility in Broward County, in an amount not-to-exceed \$497,937, of which \$99,587.40 in Ad Valorem funds is budgeted in Fiscal Year 2025-2026 and the remainder is subject to Governing Board approval of future years' budgets. (Contract No. 4600005284)

[Resolution No. 2025-1204](#)
[Backup Presentation](#)

17. Request for Right-of-Way Occupancy Permit (Staff contact, Rich Virgil, P.E.)

Agenda Item Background:

Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida (Applicant) requests a Standard Right-of-Way Occupancy Permit Number 17478-R (ROW Permit) to allow a portion of 65 parking spaces and related improvements in the south right of way of the L-29 Canal approximately 0.25 miles west of Shark Valley Loop Road. The proposed parking is associated with a retail/restaurant/gas station development that is currently under construction. A waiver of District criteria is required because the portions of the proposed parking spaces that encroach into the right-of-way are prohibited in the right-of-way.

Applicant has demonstrated that the requested waiver should be granted under the principles of fairness. The District has authorized similar waivers for recreational and commercial facilities of the Applicant within the District's L-29 right-of-way. The District recognizes and respects the Applicant's cultural and historical use of lands that lie adjacent to and within the L-29 Canal right-of-way. Accordingly, the District has granted waivers to criteria for more than 50 years to allow buildings, parking, and other commercial activities in the District's right-of-way when such uses do not conflict with performance of the District's mission. Approval of the subject application is consistent with those historic approvals.

The application is currently under review by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. No work may commence within the right-of-way until the required Section 408 authorization is granted. Granting the waiver will not adversely impact the District's ability to perform routine or emergency operations, maintenance, or future construction activities.

Recommended Action:

Approve the issuance of Standard Right-of-Way Occupancy Permit 17478-R and the accompanying order granting the related waiver petition, authorizing parking within the L-29 Canal right-of-way (Application No. 240703-44602), contingent upon receipt of Section 408 authorization.

[Backup Presentation](#)

18. Florida Department of Transportation - Florida's Turnpike Enterprise, Compensatory Mitigation Plan and Partial Release of Conservation Easement (Staff contact, Jill Creech, P.E.)

Agenda Item Background:

The Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT), Florida's Turnpike Enterprise (FTE) is proposing to widen the Sawgrass Expressway from the junction of Interstate I-75 (SR 93)/Interstate 595 (SR 682) to north of West Commercial Boulevard, in Broward County, Florida (Project).

The Project requires FTE to modify existing stormwater swales and ponds, including expanding one existing pond into a portion of an adjacent 33.16-acre recorded conservation easement that was granted to the District, in accordance with Surface Water Management Permit No. 06-00016-S. The Project will impact approximately 1.4 acres of the conservation easement.

FTE will offset the impacts to the conservation easement by purchasing freshwater herbaceous mitigation credits from the Bluefield Ranch Mitigation Bank. Additionally, FTE will preserve a 1.4-acre parcel, located within a 90-acre undeveloped, FTE owned parcel, north of the Homestead Extension of Florida's Turnpike, by granting the District a conservation easement over it. This parcel is located within the same drainage basin as the impact site and impacted conservation easement.

Staff have determined that this compensatory mitigation plan is sufficient to fully offset the approximately 1.4 acres of conservation easement impacts associated with the Project.

Recommended Action:

Resolution No. 2025-1205 Approve the Florida Department of Transportation - Florida's Turnpike Enterprise compensatory mitigation plan to widen the Sawgrass Expressway from the junction of Interstate I-75 (SR 93)/Interstate 595 (SR 682) to north of West Commercial Boulevard and approve the partial release of 1.40 acres of a conservation easement.

[Resolution No. 2025-1205](#)

[Exhibit A](#)

[Exhibit B](#)

[Exhibit C](#)

[Partial Release Form](#)

19. Request to Release 5.372 acres of a Recorded Conservation Easement for Environmental Resource Permit No. 48-00894-S. (Staff contact, Jill Creech, P.E.)

Agenda Item Background:

Shri Ram, Inc., requests to release 5.372 acres of a recorded conservation easement, located in Orange County for the construction of a project known as Lake Hurst at Universal Boulevard, which includes a hotel, parking lot, and stormwater management system.

On June 13, 1996, the District issued Environmental Resource Permit No. 48-00894-S, Application No. 950601-2 (Permit) for the construction and operation of a stormwater management system for a project called Republic Drive Plaza. The Permit required the preservation of a 5.372-acre on-site mitigation area to offset a portion of the project's overall wetland impacts. On January 28, 2002, the Permit was modified to release the permittee from the maintenance obligations for the on-site mitigation area in exchange for the purchase of 0.8 State Uniform Mitigation Assessment Method freshwater forested mitigation credits from the Florida Mitigation Bank. The conservation easement was not released at that time. Shri Ram, Inc., the current permittee of the Permit, now seeks to release the conservation easement over the on-site mitigation area.

Recommended Action:

Resolution No. 2025-1206 Approve the release of a recorded conservation easement for a project known as Lake Hurst at Universal Boulevard.

[Resolution No. 2025-1206](#)

[Exhibit A](#)

[Exhibit B](#)

[Release of Conservation Easement Form](#)

20. Ecological and Environmental Scientific and Technology Support Services: Technical Support Contracts (Staff contact, Jennifer Reynolds)

Agenda Item Background:

In order to support District mission areas, including, ecosystem restoration, flood control, water supply, and water quality improvement, the District maintains a series of technical support contracts. On April 11, 2024, the Governing Board approved entering into contracts with six firms for Ecological and Environmental Scientific and Technology Support Services: Technical Support: Stantec Consulting Services, Inc., DB Environmental Laboratories, Inc., Environmental Science Associates Corporation, WSP USA, Inc., South Florida Engineering and Consulting LLC, and Applied Ecology Inc. These contractors have supported District studies, projects, and work activities across the District's mission areas in a timely, efficient, and effective manner. These contracts have been successfully used to execute 30 pending and executed work orders totaling \$14,300,000 (Exhibit A).

These work orders have supported stormwater treatment area management strategies studies, modeling, hydrology and vegetation monitoring, Central Everglades Planning Project and Northern Everglades and Estuaries Protection Program monitoring, wildlife management, fauna monitoring including snail kites and pythons, water quality sampling, and quality assurance support for Executive Orders 19-12 and 23-06 across 10 District sections. To continue expediting projects, the total not-to-exceed amount needs to be increased, resulting in a new total threshold of \$30 Million. Due to the successful acceleration of project delivery and the unanticipated higher demand for

these contracts, additional capacity is required to ensure these firms can continue supporting the District's key initiatives.

Recommended Action:

Resolution No. 2025-1207 Amend the existing contracts with the firms listed below to provide Ecological and Environmental Scientific and Technology Support Services. The amendment will increase the not-to-exceed amount from \$15,000,000 to \$30,000,000 for the six contracts, for which the Fiscal Year 2025-2026 budget includes approved Ad Valorem and dedicated funds and the remainder is subject to Governing Board approval of future years' budgets.

Contract No.	Vendor Name
4600004945	Stantec Consulting Services, Inc.
4600004946	DB Environmental Laboratories, Inc.
4600004947	Environmental Science Associates Corporation
4600004948	WSP USA, Inc.
4600004949	South Florida Engineering and Consulting LLC
4600004950	Applied Ecology Inc.

[Resolution No. 2025-1207](#)
[Exhibit A](#)

21. Authorize Publication of Notices of Rule Development for Rules 40E-7.215, 40E-7.511, 40E-7.539, and 40E-21.691, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.) (Staff contact, Maricruz R. Fincher)

Agenda Item Background:

During the 2025 legislative session, the Florida Legislature passed Senate Bill 108 (SB 108), which created section 120.5435, Florida Statutes (F.S.), and amended section 120.74, F.S. As part of the new requirements under SB 108, each agency, in coordination with the Joint Administrative Procedures Committee (JAPC), must review all of its existing rules by July 1, 2030. Beginning October 1, 2025, each agency must include in its annual regulatory plan a schedule of the rules it will review each year during the five-year rule review period.

To comply with these requirements, the District's 2025-2026 Regulatory Plan includes the yearly review schedule for 2025-2026, which consists of all rules in Chapters 40E-7 (Miscellaneous Provisions), 40E-21 (Water Shortage Plan), and 40E-22 (Regional Water Shortage Plans), F.A.C., for a total of 69 rules.

For each rule under review, the District must decide to either make a technical change, a substantive change, no change, or repeal. If the District determines that a substantive change is required, a notice of rule development must be published in the Florida Administrative Register by April 1.

As a result of the review, Rules 40E-7.215, 40E-7.511, 40E-7.539, and 40E-21.691, F.A.C., require substantive changes to ensure congruity with statutory authority. Therefore, staff requests approval to publish Notices of Rule Development for Rules

40E-7.215, 40E-7.511, 40E-7.539, and 40E-21.691, F.A.C.

Recommended Action:

Resolution No. 2025-1208 Authorize the publication of Notices of Rule Development for Rules 40E-7.215, 40E-7.511, 40E-7.539, and 40E-21.691, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.).

[Resolution No. 2025-1208](#)

[2025-2026 SFWMD Regulatory Plan](#)

[40E-21 DRAFT Notice of Rule Development](#)

[40E-7 DRAFT Notice of Rule Development](#)

[40E-7 Land Mgmt DRAFT Notice of Rule Development](#)

22. Revisions to Sec. 140-85. Administration of Leases on District Land (Staff contact, Ray Palmer)

Agenda Item Background:

In February 2017, the District Governing Board adopted the current policy regarding Administration of Leases on District Land, which can be found in Sections 140-85 of the District's Policies and Procedures Code. A revision to this District Policy is being proposed in order to reduce District costs and staff time and to simplify the language and leasing terms, considering District goals and objectives while clearly communicating expectations to lease tenants.

The proposed policy revisions focus the Cattle Grazing Lease Policy and reduces the District's costs and staff time by using a rent calculation based on gross calf sales, which is a standard in the industry. A Uniform Lease Rate will be used for lease rent calculations applying local average market price of 500 to 600-pound steers and heifers using the most recent 12-month averages reported by United States Department of Agriculture for the Okeechobee and Arcadia Livestock Auctions.

For compliant tenants, beginning in year 6, the rent will be the Uniform Lease Rate calculation based on 20% of gross calf sales, effective at the next annual payment due date. In addition, compliant tenants can be issued a credit up to 40% of the annual lease amount towards land maintenance that is preapproved by the District providing incentive to Lessees to improve land stewardship, encourage proactive maintenance by lessees, and reduce District management costs. These policy revisions will align the District with norms in the cattle grazing leasing industry and will save time and money in administering these leases.

Recommended Action:

Resolution No. 2025-1209 Authorize modification of the Leasing Policy contained in Section 140-85 of the District's Policies Code.

[Resolution No. 2025-1209](#)

[Exhibit A](#)

23. Changes to the Administrative Policies (Staff contact, Candida Heater)

Agenda Item Background:

The District Governing Board adopts policies for the administration and operations of the agency. This agenda item provides an administrative revision to the previously

adopted Governing Board policies to support efficient and effective agency operations. A full listing of all adopted Board policies is available at https://library.municode.com/fl/south_florida_water_management_district.

Due to unforeseen circumstances, a vendor is engaged to perform diagnostic or inspection services on critical pumping systems at a cost below the competitive procurement threshold. Upon diagnosis, the vendor may determine that additional repairs are required to return the system to full operability, resulting in total costs exceeding the competitive threshold.

Requiring competitive procurement at that stage would necessitate halting the ongoing work, reassembling, or leaving the system inoperable, and delaying necessary repairs. Such actions could compromise essential water management operations and increase the risk of equipment damage or operational failure.

Therefore, it is in the District's best interest to allow the initial vendor to complete the identified repairs to ensure continuity of operations, efficiency, and protection of critical infrastructure.

Recommended Action:

Resolution No. 2025-1210 Approve an administrative change to District Policies.

[Resolution No. 2025-1210](#)

[Attachment A](#)

24. Strategic Plan 2026-2031 (Staff contact, Jennifer Smith)

Agenda Item Background:

This agenda item presents the District's 2026-2031 Strategic Plan and requests Governing Board approval in accordance with Section 373.036, Florida Statutes. The Strategic Plan reflects ongoing direction from the Governing Board and outlines updated agency priorities, objectives, and policy guidance.

Each year between October and December, staff reviews and updates the Strategic Plan to establish high-level priorities that guide development of the preliminary budget. Following Board approval, the plan will be incorporated into the Preliminary Fiscal Year 2026-2027 District Budget, which will be submitted to the Governor and Legislature on January 15, 2026.

As part of this year's update, public comments were gathered and reviewed. Importantly, the 2026-2031 Strategic Plan includes enhanced Strategic Priorities, Success Indicators, and Strategic Project recommendations that directly support the major July 2025 announcement by Governor Ron DeSantis. This landmark agreement between the State of Florida and the U.S. Department of the Army advances a renewed, accelerated commitment to restoring America's Everglades. The updated plan highlights the District's role in delivering on this accelerated restoration effort and aligning District initiatives with the strengthened federal-state partnership.

The Strategic Plan reaffirms the District's mission: "To safeguard and restore South Florida's water resources and ecosystems, protect our communities from flooding, and meet the region's water needs while connecting with the public and stakeholders." It

also underscores the District's responsibility for the management and resiliency of South Florida's primary water management infrastructure, which provides essential flood control and water supply for over 9 million residents and tens of millions of annual visitors.

Recommended Action:

Resolution No. 2025-1211 Adopt the updated 5-Year Strategic Plan of the District for the purpose of establishing Board Guidance, strategic priorities, goals, projects and success indicators.

[Resolution No. 2025-1211](#)

[Draft Final Strategic Plan 2026-2031](#)

25. Proposed Audit Plan for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 and Long-Term Audit Plan for Fiscal Years 2027-2031 (Staff contact, Tim Beirnes)

Agenda Item Background:

State statute, Chapter 20.055(i), requires the agency inspector general submit annual and long-term audit plans to the agency head (Governing Board) for approval.

Recommended Action:

Resolution No. 2025-1212 Approve the Audit Plan for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 and Long-Term Audit Plan for Fiscal Years 2027-2031.

[Resolution No. 2025-1212](#)

[Backup Presentation](#)

[Proposed Audit Plan](#)

Technical Reports

26. Water and Ecological Conditions Report - John P. Mitnik, P.E., and Cassondra Armstrong, Ph.D.

Staff Reports

27. Monthly Financial Report - Candida Heater, Division Director - Administrative Services

Discussion Agenda

28. Celebration: 25th Anniversary of the Signing of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) (Staff contact, Drew Bartlett)

Agenda Item Background:

America's most ambitious ecosystem restoration plan, the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) was signed into law in 2000. Generations of scientists, engineers, stakeholders and leaders have worked to protect this one-of-a-kind ecosystem and advance Everglades projects. CERP is implemented by a federal-state partnership to restore, protect, and preserve the region's water resources by addressing the quantity, quality, timing and distribution of water in the Greater Everglades Ecosystem.

New data demonstrates the success of restoration projects across our region - proving recent investments and momentum are working. Major CERP projects including the Caloosahatchee (C-43) Reservoir, the St. Lucie (C-44) Reservoir, Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands and the Picayune Strand Restoration Project are coming online and the EAA Reservoir Project is now expected to be complete five years early.

Sustained commitment to restoration was also demonstrated by Congress in 2024 by authorizing major CERP components included in the Western Everglades Restoration Plan and Lake Okeechobee Component A Reservoir. In fact, over the last six years more water is moving through the Everglades improving salinity levels in Florida Bay and harmful estuary discharges from Lake Okeechobee are down dramatically. The unprecedented funding and momentum are making a real difference to protect Florida's precious natural resources, support our economy and restore America's Everglades.

29. Board Comment

30. Adjourn

Project Reports

Agenda Item Background:

[CERP Report](#)
[NEEPP Report](#)

Public Comment Procedure

The South Florida Water Management District Governing Board encourages the public to provide comment and input to the Governing Board. Public comment is accepted at the two dedicated General Public Comment periods at the beginning and the end of the meeting. Public comment is also accepted on the Consent Agenda and each Discussion Agenda item.