



South Florida Water Management District

GOVERNING BOARD MONTHLY MEETING AGENDA

March 5, 2026

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
 - March 2026 Employee of the Month: Kim Richer, Lead Scientist, Office of Water Quality
 - March 2026 Team of the Month: Trash to Treasure - Sale of District Property Team
4. Special Recognition
 - Recognize March as District Procurement Month
5. Agenda Revisions
6. Agenda Item Abstentions by Board Members
7. Big Cypress Basin Board Report - Charlette Roman, Chair
8. Consider Approval of the Minutes for the February 12, 2026 Meeting
9. Executive Director's Report - Drew Bartlett
10. General Public Comment

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

Consent Agenda

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

Agenda Item Background:

Shingle Creek Mitigation Project is located in southern Orange County adjacent to 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 a total of 2.46 acres, more or less, from willing sellers for a cumulative purchase price of \$80,000.

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. 2026-0301 Authorize the acquisition of land interests in two tracts totaling 2.46 acres, more or less, in the total amount of \$80,000 located in the Shingle Creek Project Area in Orange County, for which dedicated funds (Wetland Mitigation Fund) are budgeted.

[Resolution No. 2026-0301](#)

[Exhibit A](#)

16. Access Easement Exchange with FDOT, Broward County (Staff contact, Ray Palmer)

Agenda Item Background:

The District acquired two access easements in 1993 and 1994 that encumber property owned by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) immediately west of the Sunrise Boulevard terminus with the Sawgrass Expressway in Broward County. Both easements are located near the District's L-35A Canal right-of-way, and one connects to the right-of-way, but neither of the easements provide ideal access for District operations and maintenance. FDOT is proposing to widen the Sawgrass Expressway and plans to use land it owns and within which the District's two existing easements lie for construction of a stormwater pond. To accomplish its project, FDOT proposes to provide the District with a new relocated access easement in exchange for release of

the two existing easements. The relocated easement will be north of the two existing easements, provide direct access from the Sawgrass Expressway to the L-35A right-of-way, and be of sufficient width and design to better accommodate District vehicles and equipment than the existing easements. The District's Field Operations considers the proposed relocated access easement superior to its existing access and supports FDOT's request for the District to release the two existing access easements in exchange for the relocated access easement that provides direct access to the L-35A right-of-way.

Recommended Action:

Resolution No. 2026-0302 Approve release of access easement interests containing 0.75 acres, more or less, in exchange for acquisition of a relocated access easement interest, containing 0.21 acres, more or less, in connection with the District's L-35A right-of-way in Broward County.

[Resolution No. 2026-0302](#)

[Exhibit A](#)

17. Lake Cattle Trust, Cattle Grazing Lease, Okeechobee County (Staff contact, Ray Palmer)

Agenda Item Background:

Staff is seeking Governing Board authorization to issue a cattle grazing lease for lands located in Okeechobee County for an initial term of ten years or upon a notice of commencement of project construction, whichever occurs first. Due to the short timeframe between lease execution and the start of construction, and because the previous owner has successfully operated and maintained the property as a cattle grazing operation since the District's acquisition, staff recommends that this lease not be subject to a competitive bid process.

No rent will be required under this lease since the lessee, as the previous owner of these lands, granted the District a perpetual access easement across adjacent private property to access the site. The lease has a provision for termination by the District of 90 days after issuing a Notice to Proceed for a construction contract on this property.

The District acquired the properties in February 2026 as part of the Lower Kissimmee Basin Stormwater Treatment Area Project for the purpose of capturing clean water from priority areas of the Lake Okeechobee watershed prior to it flowing into Lake Okeechobee. The property is being leased for cattle grazing as part of the District's land management program and as a condition of the acquisition.

Recommended Action:

Resolution No. 2026-0303 Authorize entering into a ten-year cattle grazing lease with Lake Cattle Trust, on 1,432.30 acres, more or less, in Okeechobee County as more particularly described herein. (Contract No. 4600005322)

[Resolution No. 2026-0303](#)

[Exhibit A Map](#)

18. Lake Okeechobee Watershed Restoration Project - C-38S Aquifer Storage and Recovery Demonstration Treatment Facility - Membrane Equipment Pre-Selection and Pre-Purchase, Glades County (Staff contact, Lucine Dadrian, P.E.)

Agenda Item Background:

As part of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan - Lake Okeechobee Watershed Restoration Project (LOWRP) Aquifer Storage and Recovery program, the C-38S Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) Demonstration Treatment Facility - Membrane Equipment Pre-Selection and Pre-Purchase, located in Glades County, will provide treatment for 10 million gallons per day (MGD) of surface water from the C-38 Canal through the C-38S ASR Demonstration Facility. This facility will allow the demonstration cycle testing necessary to address the National Academy of Sciences, National Research Council (NRC, 2015) recommendations on the CERP ASR Pilot Studies. The membrane equipment pre-selection and pre-purchase is necessary to complete the Final Design of the Demonstration Treatment Facility.

The C-38S ASR facility will be expandable to accommodate 50 MGD once cycle testing is successfully completed. The Demonstration Facility will run separate membrane systems from separate pre-qualified suppliers to gain more understanding and conduct additional testing prior to selecting the type of membrane that will be used in the future expansion. The membranes have a long lead time so the Membrane Equipment Pre-Selection and Pre-Purchase will allow a shorter overall facility construction schedule.

On December 12, 2024, the Governing Board authorized District staff to enter into contracts with Veolia WTS Systems USA Inc., FilmTec Corporation and Aqua Aerobic Systems, Inc., subject to successful negotiations. Successful Negotiations were reached with FilmTec Corporation and Aqua Aerobic Systems, Inc. A Request for Updated Proposals was provided to the vendors on September 5, 2025, and received on October 1, 2025. Approval of the agenda item will provide authorization to enter into contracts with FilmTec Corporation and Aqua Aerobic Systems, Inc.

Recommended Action:

Resolution No. 2026-0304 Authorize entering into 6.5-year contracts with FilmTec Corporation and Aqua Aerobic Systems, Inc. for the Lake Okeechobee Watershed Restoration Project - C-38S Aquifer Storage and Recovery Demonstration Treatment Facility - Membrane Equipment Pre-Selection and Pre-Purchase, in an amount not-to-exceed \$15,759,597.07 for both contracts, for which dedicated funds (State General Revenue, Land Acquisition Trust Fund, and State Grant) are budgeted in Fiscal Year 2025-2026 and the remainder is subject to Governing Board approval of future years' budgets. (Contract Nos. 4600005136, 4600005137)

[Resolution No. 2026-0304](#)

[Backup Presentation](#)

- 19. Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed Bird Rookery Boardwalk Replacement, Collier County (Staff contact, Lucine Dadrian, P.E.)

Agenda Item Background:

As part of the Big Cypress Basin Bird Rookery Land Management Plan, the Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed (CREW) Bird Rookery Replacement Project, located in the Bird Rookery Swamp Management Area in Collier County, will fully replace the existing 1,400-foot boardwalk. The project scope includes replacement of the

foundation, substructure, boardwalk, posts and railings. The boardwalk leads to a 12-mile tram road trail that is frequently used by the public for outdoor recreational activities such as hiking, running, biking, nature photography, geocaching, and birding. The replacement of the boardwalk will ensure the public can continue enjoying their outdoor recreational activities where the maple-cypress swamp is home to alligators, otters, Florida panthers, bobcats, white-tailed deer and more.

On February 13, 2025, the Governing Board approved \$3,500,000 of authority to negotiate with Thomas Marine Construction, Inc. During design, the District opted to use Fiber Reinforced Polymer (FRP) materials for the new boardwalk to provide a durable, long-term infrastructure solution with an anticipated service life of up to 100 years. FRP offers significant advantages over traditional timber construction, including enhanced structural integrity, resistance to rot, corrosion, and environmental degradation, and substantially reduced maintenance requirements. This item increases the authority to \$4,000,000 to complete negotiations for the construction of the boardwalk utilizing FRP materials.

Recommended Action:

Resolution No. 2026-0305 Authorize an amendment to the Design/Build Contract with Thomas Marine Construction, Inc., for the Phase Two (Construction) Services of the CREW Bird Rookery Boardwalk Replacement Project, in an amount not to exceed \$4,000,000, for which \$2,000,000 in Big Cypress Basin Ad Valorem funds were budgeted in Fiscal Year 2024-2025, and \$2,000,000 are budgeted in Fiscal Year 2025-2026. (Contract No. 4600005163-A02)

[Resolution No. 2026-0305](#)

[Backup Presentation](#)

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

Agenda Item Background:

Vista Clara Owners, LLC (Applicant) is applying for a Standard Right of Way Occupancy Permit Number 17391-R (ROW Permit) to construct a private 17-slip marina in the G-08 (Hillsboro) Canal for Vista Clara, a planned residential apartment development located on the west side of the G-08 (Hillsboro) Canal, immediately northwest and upstream of South Dixie Highway, Broward County. The proposed marina will consist of a marginal dock, 3 floating docks accessed by ramps from the marginal dock, and 17 slips for vessel mooring. The proposed marina complies with all District criteria. No waivers are required.

The State of Florida is the owner of the submerged lands upon which the marina will be constructed. The Applicant has obtained a submerged lands lease from the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund. The lease authorizes the applicant to construct and operate a 17-slip marina. Maintenance of a valid lease is required as a condition of the ROW Permit.

The District authorizes marinas by issuing a Standard Right of Way Occupancy Permit, which is a permit type that must be approved by the District's Governing Board.

If approved, construction of the proposed marina will not adversely impact the District's

ability to perform routine or emergency operations, maintenance, or future construction activities. As condition of the ROW Permit, the Applicant will be responsible for maintenance and management of all facilities associated with the permit.

Recommended Action:

Approve issuance of Standard Right of Way Occupancy Permit Number 17391-R (Application No. 250512-52920).

[Backup Presentation](#)

21. Amendment to the Funding Agreement with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for Priority Review Permit Applications (Staff contact, Jennifer Reynolds)

Agenda Item Background:

The District is required to obtain permits for its restoration projects under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899, and Section 103 of the Marine Protection Research and Sanctuaries Act. The Jacksonville District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has limited resources for the evaluation of the District's Department of the Army permit applications, so District permit applications go to various USACE offices within the State of Florida resulting in lengthy permit processing timeframes and delays in obtaining permit decisions. The USACE and the District believe that having this dedicated, full-time USACE project manager has improved the efficiency of the permit review process and resulted in more timely permit decisions. District staff recommend a three-year (June 1, 2026 - May 31, 2029) extension to the current Funding Agreement to continue prioritizing the review of District projects. The USACE will continue to dedicate District funds to the USACE employee whose primary focus will be to manage District's permit applications based on District project schedules and priorities. The Jacksonville District's Regulatory Division will establish a separate account to track receipt and expenditure of the funds to ensure they are used for the intended purpose.

Section 214 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2000 (WRDA 2000, Public Law No. 106-541), as amended and codified at 33 U.S.C. 2352, authorizes the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to accept and expend funds to prioritize permit reviews. A Section 214 funding agreement draft has been prepared (Agreement No. 4600004728-A01).

Recommended Action:

Resolution No. 2026-0306 Authorize an amendment to the Funding Agreement with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for three additional years to provide priority project review of District's Department of the Army permit applications; in an amount not-to-exceed \$780,000, for a total revised amount not to exceed \$1,380,000, for which \$260,000 in dedicated funds (multiple state and federal sources) or Ad Valorem funds are budgeted in Fiscal Year 2025-2026 and the remainder is subject to Governing Board approval of future years' budgets. (Agreement No. 4600004728-A01)

[Resolution No. 2026-0306](#)

[Funding Agreement Modification](#)

22. Governing Board Concurrence on Emergency Final Order, No. 2026-026-DAO (Staff contact, Maricruz R. Fincher and Jennifer Smith)

Agenda Item Background:

In response to impacts of winter weather, droughts, and wildfire risks and Governor DeSantis' Executive Order No. 26-33, the District issued Emergency Final Order No. 2026-026-DAO. This Order enabled the District to perform public work and take prudent action to ensure the public's health, safety, and welfare in the wake of these extreme weather conditions. Staff requests the Governing Board's concurrence with the issuance of Emergency Final Order No. SFWMD 2026-026-DAO, in compliance with section 373.119(2) of the Florida Statutes.

Recommended Action:

Concur on Emergency Final Order, No. 2026-026-DAO

[2026-026-DAO Emergency Final Order](#)

23. Authorize Publication of Notice of Rule Development for Rules 40E-21.631 and 40E-21.671, 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, the District, in coordination with the Joint Administrative Procedures Committee, must review all of its existing rules by July 1, 2030. The District must include in its annual regulatory plan a schedule of the rules it will review each year during the review period.

To comply with these requirements, the District's 2025-2026 Regulatory Plan contains the yearly review schedule for 2025-2026, which includes, but is not limited to, the rules in Chapter 40E-21, F.A.C. For each rule under review, the District must decide to either make a technical change, a substantive change, no change, or repeal the rule. 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, District staff identified an error in the placement of figures in Rule 40E-21.671, F.A.C. Staff propose to move the figures listed in Rule 40E-21.671, F.A.C., to Rule 40E-21.631, F.A.C., where they are referenced in the text of the rule. Staff request approval to publish a Notice of Rule Development for Rules 40E-21.631 and 40E-21.671, F.A.C.

Recommended Action:

Resolution No. 2026-0307 Authorize the publication of a Notice of Rule Development for Rules 40E-21.631 and 40E-21.671, Florida Administrative Code.

[Resolution No. 2026-0307](#)

[DRAFT Notice of Rule Development 40E-21.631 and 40E-21.671](#)

24. Publish a Notice of Proposed Rule in the Florida Administrative Register and Adopt Amendments to Rule 40E-7.215 F.A.C. (Staff contact, Candida Heater)

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, the District, in coordination with the Joint Administrative Procedures Committee, must review all of its existing rules by July 1, 2030. The District must include in its annual regulatory plan a schedule of the rules it will review each year during the review period.

To comply with these requirements, the District's 2025-2026 Regulatory Plan contains the yearly review schedule for 2025-2026, which includes, but is not limited to, Rule 40E-7.215, F.A.C. ("Definitions").

Rule 40E-7.215, Florida Administrative Code, establishes definitions applicable to the District's contractor suspension and debarment process, including the requirement that contracting entities execute Form No. 1112, "Statement of No Suspension," to certify that they and their subcontractors or subconsultants are not suspended from doing business with the District.

The District proposes amending subsection 40E-7.215(6) to provide free public access to Form No. 1112 in accordance with current rulemaking standards through a hyperlink in the Florida Administrative Code.

On January 20, 2026, the District published a Notice of Rule Development for Rule 40E-7.215 in the Florida Administrative Register, and staff now seeks Governing Board authorization to publish a Notice of Proposed Rule and adopt the amendment, subject to no request for public hearing or substantive changes after public comment period.

Recommended Action:

Resolution No. 2026-0308 Authorize publishing a Notice of Proposed Rule in the Florida Administrative Register and adopting an amendment to Rule 40E-7.215, F.A.C.

[Resolution No. 2026-0308](#)

[Form No 1112 Statement of No Suspension](#)

[40E-7.215 Definitions](#)

25. Adoption of the 2025 Martin County Local Mitigation Strategy (Staff contact, Carolina Maran, Ph.D., P.E.)

Agenda Item Background:

Formal adoption of Martin County's 2025 Local Mitigation Strategy (LMS) update by the District's Governing Board is required to receive federal hazard mitigation grant program funding, administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), for the District's projects in Martin County. There is no cost for the District associated with the formal adoption of this plan.

The LMS was developed and revised by the Martin County Emergency Management Agency, in coordination with the Martin County LMS Committee and other subcommittees and governmental and non-governmental stakeholders having an interest in reducing the impact of disasters, and with input from the private sector and other members of the public. The purpose of the Martin County LMS is to mitigate natural, technological, and human-made hazards that pose risks to public health and safety, threaten economic stability, and impact the quality of the natural environment.

The Martin County LMS provides a rational, managed basis for considering and prioritizing mitigation options, and for developing and executing sound, cost-effective mitigation projects. The Martin County LMS provides a basis for justifying the solicitation and use of local, state, and federal funding sources to support hazard mitigation projects and initiatives. Martin County's 2025 LMS is available online at <https://www.martin.fl.us/Mitigation>.

Recommended Action:

Resolution No. 2026-0309 Adopt the 2025 Martin County Local Mitigation Strategy update for the purpose of hazard mitigation funding eligibility.

[Resolution No. 2026-0309](#)

Discussion Agenda

26. Caloosahatchee (C-43) Reservoir Operations and Maintenance with Approval of Embankment, Slope, and Grounds Maintenance Services (Staff contact, John P. Mitnik, P.E.)

Agenda Item Background:

As part of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan, the Caloosahatchee (C-43) Reservoir, located in Hendry County, will restore and improve freshwater deliveries to the natural system and provide water for other related needs of the system, if available. The Caloosahatchee (C-43) Reservoir provides 170,000 acre-feet of water storage to improve ecological conditions in the Caloosahatchee River and Estuary. The reservoir will capture excess water in the river originating from local run-off and Lake Okeechobee, reducing damaging discharges to the Caloosahatchee River and Estuary.

Maintenance activities of the reservoir, which is the second longest dam in America, are crucial for ensuring structural integrity, maintaining water quality, and minimizing flood risks effectively by protecting and preserving the infrastructure. Preventative maintenance and refurbishments are necessary for pump stations, water control structures, emergency spillways, embankments and seepage management features, perimeter and Townsend Canals, and access bridges and roadways to support continuous operations. Typical maintenance components include pump components, motors, trash rake system, gates and lifting mechanisms, control systems, concrete, mechanical and electrical features, and dam safety instrumentation.

Maintaining healthy turf on the components of the Caloosahatchee (C-43) Reservoir including the embankment, canal side slopes and other acreage supports the growth of vegetation appropriate for reservoir inspections, operations and maintenance activities. This activity prevents the development of woody and nuisance vegetation that can create seepage paths and undermine the structural integrity of the embankment and supports dam safety, timely operations, and formal inspections of the Reservoir and the District's water control facilities.

Recommended Action:

Resolution No. 2026-0310 Authorize the official ranking of firms and enter into a three-year contract with two one-year renewal options with Southwest Ag

Environmental, LLC dba Southwest Environmental Group, subject to successful negotiations, for Caloosahatchee (C-43) Reservoir embankment, slope, and grounds maintenance mowing services, Hendry County, in an amount not-to-exceed \$4,503,702.50 of which \$459,811.30 in dedicated funds (State Appropriations) and Ad Valorem funds are budgeted in Fiscal Year 2025-2026 and the remainder is subject to Governing Board approval of future years' budgets; if negotiations are unsuccessful with the top-ranked firm, the District may proceed with negotiations in ranked order until a contract is successfully negotiated. (Contract No. 4600005323)

[Resolution No. 2026-0310](#)

[RFP 6000001653 Ranking and Negotiations Authorization Posting Notice](#)

Technical Reports

27. Water and Ecological Conditions Report - John P. Mitnik, P.E., and Cassandra Armstrong, Ph.D.

Staff Reports

28. Monthly Financial Report - Candida Heater, Division Director - Administrative Services
 - Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Disposition of Fixed Assets
 29. General Public Comment
 30. Board Comment
 31. Adjourn
- Project Report

Agenda Item Background:

[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.