



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

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New Volunteers Join SFWMD Water Resources Advisory Commission *Diverse group of stakeholders advises policy makers on key water issues*

West Palm Beach, FL – Adding to a diverse group of public voices from across South and Central Florida, 12 new volunteers have been appointed to the South Florida Water Management District’s (SFWMD) Water Resources Advisory Commission, known as WRAC. Representing organizations ranging from Audubon of Florida to the Florida Association of Counties, the new members participated in their first meeting earlier this month in Jensen Beach and will meet on September 5 in West Palm Beach.

WRAC was established more than a decade ago to enhance stakeholder and public input to the SFWMD Governing Board on a wide range of water resource topics. Each of the nine Governing Board members makes two appointments representing sectors that include business, agriculture, the environment, local government and water utilities. To ensure balanced representation across these sectors, the SFWMD Board chairman makes additional “balancing” appointments, which were unanimously ratified by the full Board at its August meeting. Federal government and tribal representatives also serve on WRAC.

WRAC FACTS

- Established in March 2001
- Consists of 42 members; [click here for a full list](#)
- More than 150 meetings to date
- Sub Committees: Recreation, Water Supply Plans

([Click here for meetings, agendas, minutes and videos.](#))

“Public participation is one of the hallmarks of our approach in managing and protecting South Florida’s water resources,” said Timothy Sargent, SFWMD Governing Board member and WRAC Chairman. “WRAC provides a vital forum for civic involvement and helps the Board address complex issues that touch the lives of 7.7 million residents and the environment.”

With discussion topics ranging from Everglades restoration and health of the estuaries to regional water supplies and recreation on public lands, WRAC members provide ideas, insights and recommendations that are incorporated into the Governing Board’s monthly public meeting discussions. Special WRAC issues workshops on topics such as the Central Everglades Planning Project and water supply plans are held as needed.

WRAC is also an advisory body to the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force. This federally sponsored taskforce was established by Congress in 1996 to bring together top policy makers working on restoring the Everglades ecosystem.

SFWMD Governing Board members serve as WRAC leaders. Timothy Sargent currently serves as WRAC chairman; Kevin Powers is vice-chairman. The commission meets once a month and holds special meetings as necessary.

New Members

Environmental Sector:

1. Erin Deady, Erin L. Deady, P.A.
2. Jane Graham, Audubon of Florida
3. Nancy Payton, Florida Wildlife Federation
4. Jenny Conner Nelms, The Nature Conservancy

Business Sector:

5. Josh Kellam, The ESG Companies
6. Lance Bennett, Poulos and Bennett, LLC

Local Government Sector:

7. Deena Reppen, Florida Association of Counties
8. Karson Turner, Chairman, Hendry County Commission

Agriculture Sector:

9. Tom Jones, Barron Collier Partnership

Utility/Water Supply Sector:

10. Brian Wheeler, Toho Water Authority
11. Pam Keyes, Lee County Utilities

Public Interest Sector:

12. Adam Gelber, Atkins North America

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About the South Florida Water Management District

The South Florida Water Management District is a regional, governmental agency that oversees the water resources in the southern half of the state – 16 counties from Orlando to the Keys. It is the oldest and largest of the state's five water management districts. The agency mission is to manage and protect water resources of the region by balancing and improving water quality, flood control, natural systems and water supply. A key initiative is cleanup and restoration of the Everglades.