

Notes from the Quarterly Meeting of the Everglades Technical Oversight Committee (TOC)

March 4, 2025

South Florida Water Management District
3301 Gun Club Road, West Palm Beach, FL 33406

TOC Representatives:

Julianne LaRock, TOC Chair, SFWMD
John Barkett, Special Master
Daniel Crawford, USACE

Rolf Olson, LNWR
Edward Smith, FDEP
Donatto Surratt, ENP

Note: This meeting was conducted in person, online, and by phone, and was recorded by a court reporter. Copies of the transcript are available for purchase. Please contact Florida Court Reporting (561-689-0999) for more information. Handouts and presentations are available on the TOC website (<https://www.sfwmd.gov/our-work/toc>) and a recording of the meeting is available online at [SFWMDTV YouTube Channel – TOC Meeting March 4, 2025](#).

Note: Definitions of agency acronyms are provided at the end of the notes.

1. TOC Opening Business – Julianne LaRock, SFWMD

1A. Welcome, Announcements, and Identification of Participants

Julianne LaRock called the meeting to order and provided instructions for participating during the meeting discussions.

1B. Agenda Modifications and Documents Available on the TOC Webpage

There were no formal requests to modify the agenda, however, later in the meeting Mr. Barkett requested an S-333 Working Group update, which was provided, and Julianne LaRock announced publication of the South Florida Environmental Report. These are included in this summary as item 3, “Additional Items”.

1C. Approval of Meeting Summary for October 1, 2024

The TOC approved the December 3, 2024, meeting summary with no changes.

Associated Online Documents:

- [Final Agenda for March 4, 2025](#)
- [Final Meeting Notes for December 3, 2024](#)

2. Settlement Agreement Report, Third Quarter 2024 – Chelsea Qiu, SFWMD

Chelsea Qiu presented the Settlement Agreement Report for the third quarter of 2024, July–September 2024, including results of surface water total phosphorus (TP) monitoring in the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge), Shark River Slough (SRS), and Taylor Slough and Coastal Basins (TSCB). Each area has a unique TP compliance regime. Results for SRS were calculated using provisional flow data and are preliminary. Monthly compliance results for the Refuge were presented for the third quarter of 2024, which is the fourth quarter of federal Water Year 2024.

The Refuge 14-station geometric mean TP compliance values for July, August, and September 2024 were below the computed stage-based long-term levels (LTLs). The preliminary monthly data outlook for October 2024 through January 2025 was also presented for the Refuge. The 36-month average TP geometric mean (6.8 parts per billion [ppb]) remained below the 36-month average LTL (8.9 ppb).

SRS has a flow-based long-term limit that is inversely related to the 12-month total flow for each federal water year. However, the long-term limit has remained at 7.6 ppb following the implementation of COP operation due to associated increased flow. Preliminary tracking results were presented for the 12-month periods ending in July, August, and September 2024. Provisional data show that TP flow-weighted mean concentrations (FWMC) for this quarter were higher than the flow-based long-term limit. Final SRS results for federal water year 2024 compliance will be presented at the next meeting.

TSCB has a fixed long-term limit of 11 ppb. Tracking results for the 12-month periods ending in July, August, and September 2024 were presented. TSCB TP FWMC values for these periods were less than the long-term limit. TSCB compliance results for federal water year 2024 are final.

Questions, Comments, and Discussion:

Donatto Surratt commented on the characterization of meeting the 7.6 ppb FWM long-term limit for water going into SRS, noting that in WY2018, compliance was achieved despite a large flow volume, showing that the long-term limit appears to be achievable under certain conditions. Donatto indicated that SRS is not the only area with a varying limit, noting that the Refuge also took advantage of hydrologic conditions to establish a metric that would vary with changes in environment. In closing, Donatto remarked that the fixed limit for TSCB is fairly high and, given the improvements in water quality since the limit was established, he would never expect to see it exceeded.

Associated Online Documents:

- [Settlement Agreement Quarterly Report, Third Quarter 2024 \(July–September\), presentation](#)
- [Settlement Agreement Report, Third Quarter 2024 \(July–September\)](#)
- [Quality Assessment Report for Water Quality Monitoring, July–September 2024 \(Third Quarter\)](#)
- [Quality Assessment Report for Water Quality Monitoring, July–September 2024 \(Third Quarter\): Water Quality Data](#)
- [Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge Total Phosphorus \(TP\) Compliance Status as of Third Quarter 2024](#)
- [Provisional Shark River Slough Third Quarter 2024 Total Phosphorus \(TP\) Data Report](#)
- [Taylor Slough and Coastal Basins Third Quarter 2024 Total Phosphorus \(TP\) Data Report](#)

3. Additional Items

S-333 Working Group Update – Jodie Hutchins, SFWMD

The S-333 working group continues to meet monthly, and last met on February 27. FDEP issued a notice of intent for the permit on February 25, triggering a 21-day public comment period, so the permit should be issued in March. USACE Section 408 approval is nearing completion, with Section 404 permitting to follow with appropriate agency coordination. Issuance of the Section 404 permit is dependent on approval of the Section 408 permit.

Regarding design and status of solicitation, the design is complete, and SFWMD is preparing for solicitation. The project will go to the May meeting of the SFWMD Governing Board for approval, with construction expected to begin in August. This is reflected in the current project schedule that was shared in December.

Initial modeling for Task 2 low-sill weirs is complete; however, sensitivity modeling scenarios were requested of the modeling team. This will not delay the schedule as far as the design is concerned for Task 2.

Special Master Barkett commented that he is satisfied with the progress of the S-333 Working Group and that he wants the projects to be done right and for the public to be kept informed on progress.

South Florida Environmental Report (SFER) – Julianne LaRock, SFWMD

Julianne LaRock announced the online publication of the 2025 South Florida Environmental Report (SFER) on March 1 and the upcoming SFER Open House event on March 12 and 13. Julianne also displayed the SFER Highlights document and focused on figures on page 4 that show improvements to hydration in the Everglades and to salinity in Florida Bay.

Associated Online Documents:

- [South Florida Environmental Report](#)
- [SFER Highlights](#)

4. Public Comment

Newton Cook, United Water Fowlers - Florida – Expressed concerns about the water quality of Lake Okeechobee and its inflows and outflows and emphasized the importance of upstream efforts to ensure cleaner inflows to the Water Conservation Areas and Everglades National Park.

5. TOC Closing Business – Julianne LaRock, SFWMD

The next quarterly TOC meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, June 24, 2025, followed by subsequent meetings on September 16 and December 9.

6. Adjourn – Julianne LaRock, SFWMD

Julianne LaRock adjourned the meeting.

Agency acronym definitions:

DOI – Department of Interior

DOJ -U.S. Department of Justice

ENP – Everglades National Park

FDEP – Florida Department of Environmental Protection

FWC – Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

LNWR – Arthur M. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge

NPS – National Park Service

SFWMD – South Florida Water Management District

USACE – United States Army Corps of Engineers

USEPA – United States Environmental Protection Agency