

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

December 3, 2024

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

Lori Miller, 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 December 3, 2024](#).

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 requests to modify the agenda.

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

The TOC approved the October 1, 2024, meeting summary with no changes.

Associated Online Documents:

- [Final Agenda for December 3, 2024](#)
- [Final Meeting Notes for October 1, 2024](#)

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

Chelsea Qiu presented the Settlement Agreement Report for the second quarter of 2024, April–June 2024, which includes 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 and TSCB were calculated using provisional flow data and are preliminary. Monthly compliance results for the Refuge were presented for the second quarter of 2024, which is the third quarter of federal Water Year 2024.

The Refuge 14-station geometric mean TP compliance values for April and May 2024 were below the computed stage-based long-term levels (LTLs). Compliance could not be calculated for June 2024 because no samples were collected that month due to dry conditions. For the same reason, only 12 of the 14 stations were sampled in April 2024, and only 6 of the stations could be sampled

in May 2024. The preliminary monthly data outlook for July through October 2024 was also presented for the Refuge. The 36-month average TP geometric mean is 6.9 parts per billion (ppb), which is 2.1 ppb below the 36-month average LTL of 9.0 ppb.

SRS has a flow-based long-term limit that is inversely related to the 12-month total flow for each federal water year. Data collection and reporting has not been completed to formalize the federal water year 2024 compliance results for SRS; however, preliminary tracking results were presented for the 12-month periods ending in April, May, and June 2024. The provisional data show that TP flow-weighted mean concentrations (FWMC) for this quarter were higher than the flow-based long-term limit.

TSCB has a fixed long-term limit of 11 ppb. Data collection and reporting has not been completed to formalize the federal water year 2024 compliance results for TSCB; however, preliminary tracking results for the 12-month periods ending in April, May, and June 2024 were presented. The provisional data TP FWMC values for TSCB were 4.9 ppb during the quarter, which is less than half of the 11 ppb long-term limit.

Questions, Comments, and Discussion:

Donatto Surratt asked why WY2022 was described as dry (slide 14 of the presentation); Chelsea Qiu explained that rainfall was low that year even though SRS received a lot of flow, thanks to COP operation and the Tamiami Trail flow formula. Donatto Surratt also asked if any measures are being taken to prevent further vandalism like what occurred to the sensor at S-328. Julianne LaRock responded that SFWMD is in the process of having SCADA telemetry installed that is hardened to prevent the same kind of damage from happening. Lori Miller asked whether there is a documented margin of error with water quality monitoring; Julianne LaRock responded that there are margins of error with laboratory analysis and with flow and stage monitoring. Nenad Iricanin, SFWMD, noted that the SFWMD DBHYDRO database provides the analytical uncertainty for total phosphorus measurements. Julianne LaRock indicated the QA report includes some information about analytical uncertainty and that she would have historic information about flow measurements shared; links to this information are provided in the list below.

Associated Online Documents:

- [Settlement Agreement Quarterly Report, Second Quarter 2024 \(April–June\), presentation](#)
- [Settlement Agreement Report, Second Quarter 2024 \(April–June\)](#)
- [Quality Assessment Report for Water Quality Monitoring, April–June 2024 \(Second Quarter\)](#)
- [Quality Assessment Report for Water Quality Monitoring, April–June 2024 \(Second Quarter\): Water Quality Data](#)
- [Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge Total Phosphorus \(TP\) Compliance Status as of Second Quarter 2024](#)
- [Provisional Shark River Slough Second Quarter 2024 Total Phosphorus \(TP\) Data Report](#)
- [Taylor Slough and Coastal Basins Second Quarter 2024 Total Phosphorus \(TP\) Data Report](#)
- [Flow Data at SFWMD Structures Used in Settlement Agreement Report \(Presentation from May 13, 2013\)](#)
- [S-12-D Data Collection and Computation Overview \(Presentation from May 14, 2013\)](#)

3. S-333 Working Group Update – Jodie Hutchins, SFWMD

Jodie Hutchins presented an update on the S-333 working group's activities, beginning by recapping the three engineering and maintenance solution recommendations that were presented at the last TOC meeting: Task 1 is maintenance dredging for removal of canal sediments; Task 2 is installation of

low-sill weirs to their final elevation (still being determined); and Task 3 is the monitoring and assessment plan that will commence immediately after completion of Task 1 and will occur for up to five years to evaluate the effectiveness of these solutions and to identify any optimization opportunities.

Some highlights on progress since the last TOC meeting include selection of marine mattress as the type of weir, completion of the geotechnical investigation and final survey, which confirmed there are 48,000 cubic yards of sediments to be dredged — over four times the amount originally estimated in the 2022 sediment study. A dredged material management area (DMMA) close to the dredged area and owned by SFWMD has been selected. Adjustments to the permit applications and project schedule were made to account for the project redesign that was required due to the increase in sediment volume to be dredged. Permits are now expected to be issued/complete by March 2025. Project design and specifications are currently underway. Low-sill weir round 2 modeling is underway. The monitoring and assessment plan has been completed and fully vetted through the working group. The latest timeline and schedule was shared. See presentation file for further details.

Questions, Comments, and Discussion:

Bill Walker asked whether the DMMA would overlap the CEPP Blue Shanty Flow-way and whether the DMMA will have a levee to isolate the dredged material. Jodie Hutchins explained the CEPP boundary is east of the DMMA, and that the DMMA site is currently isolated and is bermed all the way around. Because of the site constraints, it will be dredged in phases, allowing time for settling, drying, and hauling in between each dredge. A rigorous monitoring program will be conducted in several locations in the DMMA and is required by the permit to be issued.

Dan Scheidt asked whether a 404 permit would be needed and noted that if EPA has a role in it. EPA can collaborate to help expedite, if necessary. Dan Crawford confirmed that SFWMD has submitted a request for a 404 permit and that he will check on whether EPA involvement is needed. USACE appreciates the transparency and active coordination and collaboration between the agencies.

Associated Online Documents:

- [S-333 Working Group Update](#)

4. Public Comment

Newton Cook, United Water Fowlers of Florida, asked about a Modwaters study, shared concern about the health of Lake Okeechobee, and expressed gratitude to USACE and SFWMD for recent efforts related to Lake Okeechobee.

Mr. Barkett expressed gratitude for the hard work to all of the agencies.

5. TOC Closing Business – Julianne LaRock, SFWMD

The next meeting date was confirmed for Tuesday, March 4, 2025. Subsequent quarterly meetings were confirmed for June 24, September 16, and December 9 (all are Tuesdays).

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