



# AGENDA MEMORANDUM

*Natural Resources  
Department*

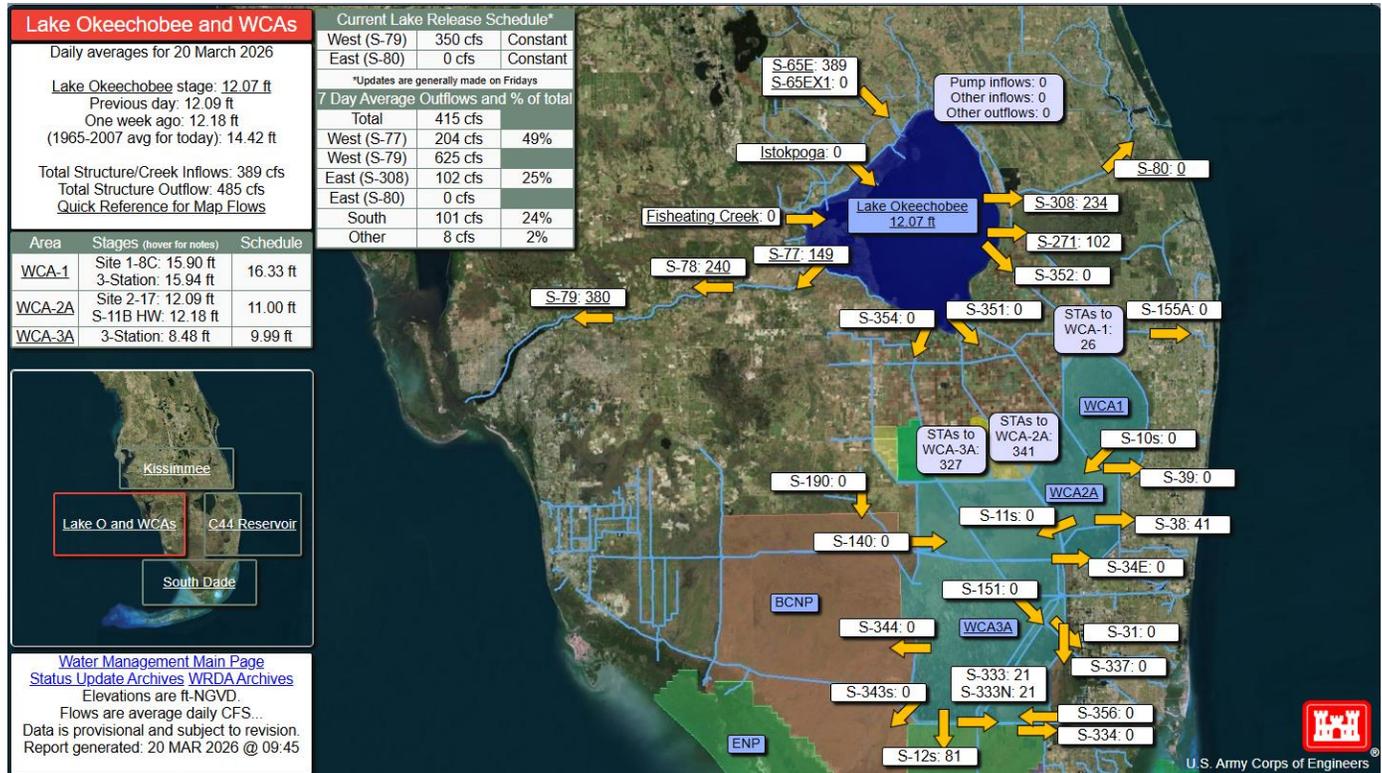
City Council Regular Meeting Date: March 31, 2026

**To:** City Council  
**From:** Holly Milbrandt, Natural Resources Director  
**Date:** March 20, 2026

**SUBJECT:** Natural Resources Water Quality Updates

**BACKGROUND:**

## CALOOSA HATCHEE RIVER & ESTUARY CONDITIONS REPORT



Click to view: [March 17, 2026 Caloosahatchee Conditions Report](#)

## CURRENT RAINFALL AND CLIMATE OUTLOOK

SFWMD rainfall for March 2026 to date is above normal at 1.91" (135% of normal). Rainfall was highly variable across the District, with Miami-Dade, Everglades National Park, and the Florida Keys regions receiving well above normal rainfall (3-5 inches total) and Lake Okeechobee and the upper east coast receiving below normal rainfall (~85%).

<https://www.sfwmd.gov/weather-radar/rainboard>

For the 2025/2026 dry season to date (October 11, 2025-March 18, 2026), the SFWMD has received 6.04" of rain (48% of normal). Rainfall varied some across the District, with the Upper Kissimmee and regions along the lower east coast, Everglades National Park, and the FL Keys being slightly wetter (58-72% of normal).

<https://www.sfwmd.gov/weather-radar/rainboard>

The NOAA Climate Prediction Center one-month Probability Outlook for April 2026 indicates a 40-50% chance of below normal rainfall for central Florida and a 33-40% chance of below normal rainfall for south Florida.

[https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/predictions/long\\_range/lead14/](https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/predictions/long_range/lead14/)

The three-month outlook for Apr-May-Jun 2026 indicates equal chances of above normal, below normal, and normal rainfall for south Florida with a 33-40% chance of above normal rainfall for central and north Florida.

[https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/predictions/long\\_range/lead01/off01\\_prpcp.gif](https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/predictions/long_range/lead01/off01_prpcp.gif)

NOAA ENSO Report (updated on 3/12/2026):

- La Niña is present.
- Equatorial sea surface temperatures (SSTs) are below average in the east-central Pacific Ocean.
- A transition from La Niña to ENSO-neutral is expected in the next month, with ENSO-neutral favored through May-July 2026 (55% chance). In June-August 2026, El Niño is likely to emerge (62% chance) and persist through at least the end of 2026.
- [https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/analysis\\_monitoring/lanina/enso\\_evolution-status-fcsts-web.pdf](https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/analysis_monitoring/lanina/enso_evolution-status-fcsts-web.pdf)

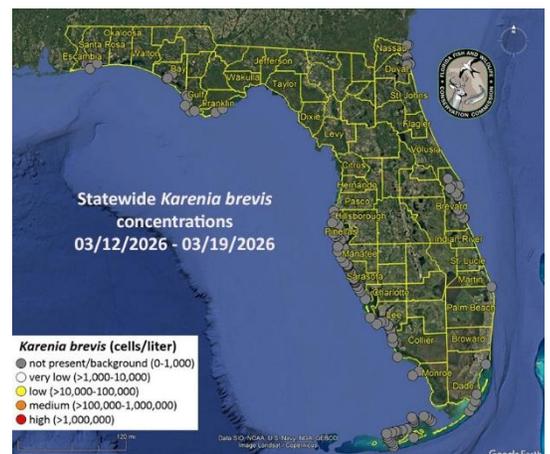
## ALGAE BLOOMS

**Red Tide:** FWC Update for March 20, 2026

<https://myfwc.com/research/redtide/statewide/>

The red tide organism, *Karenia brevis*, was not observed in samples collected statewide over the past week. .

Fish kills & respiratory irritation suspected to be related to red tide were not reported.



*Sanibel is and shall remain a barrier island sanctuary*

**Blue-Green Algae:** [ProtectingFloridaTogether.gov](https://www.protectingflorida.com)

A blue green algae caution is in effect for the C43 Canal - S79 Lock (upstream) as of 3/12/2026, for the Caloosahatchee River-Sebastian Canal as of 3/9/2026, and for the S354 in Lake Okeechobee as of 3/11/2026.

**Red Drift Algae:** From October 2025-February 2026, periodic deposits of red drift algae were reported on Sanibel's beaches in association with winds and cold fronts. For March to date, deposits appear to be diminishing in frequency and abundance.

**Trichodesmium:** No reports

**Sargassum:** No reports

**PAST MEETING HIGHLIGHTS & UPDATES**

**SFWMD 2026 Open House for South Florida Environmental Report**

March 4 & 5, 2026

West Palm Beach, FL

Draft Report: <https://www.sfwmd.gov/science-data/scientific-publications-sfer>

**SFWMD Governing Board Meeting**

March 5, 2026

9:00 AM

West Palm Beach, FL

<https://www.sfwmd.gov/news-events/meetings>

- Executive Director's Report
  - Budget still uncertain as budget conferences have yet to take place during this legislative session; Senate proposed budget includes full funding for CERP in line with Governor's proposed budget
  - SFWMD granted an extension for the Southland Rock Mine project to submit their full proposal to the District; due date is June 27, 2026
  - Numerous water shortage designations are in place; SFWMD does not anticipate designating additional shortages but any further restrictions would focus on landscape irrigation as the most significant tool of water conservation.
- Authorized contracts 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
- Authorized 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
- Authorized the negotiation of a 3-year contract for the Caloosahatchee (C-43) Reservoir embankment, slope, and grounds maintenance mowing services in an amount not-to exceed \$4,503,702.50
- Major Corey Bell, USACE: "Build Infrastructure, Not Paperwork" transformation initiative for the Army's Civil Works program
  - <https://www.saj.usace.army.mil/Media/News-Releases/Article/4419933/updated-assistant-secretary-of-the-army-for-civil-works-announces-build-infrac/>

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## **UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS**

### **South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force Working Group/Science Coordination Group**

April 2, 2026

Time TBD

West Palm Beach, FL

<https://www.evergladesrestoration.gov/science-coordination-group/apr02-2026-scg>

### **SFWMD Governing Board Meeting**

April 9, 2026

9:00 AM

West Palm Beach, FL

<https://www.sfwmd.gov/news-events/meetings>

### **CHNEP Technical Advisory Committee**

April 9, 2026

9:30 AM

Port Charlotte, FL

<https://www.chnep.org/technical-advisory-committee>

**FUNDING SOURCE:** N/A

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** N/A