



AGENDA MEMORANDUM

*Natural Resources
Department*

City Council Regular Meeting Date: April 21, 2026

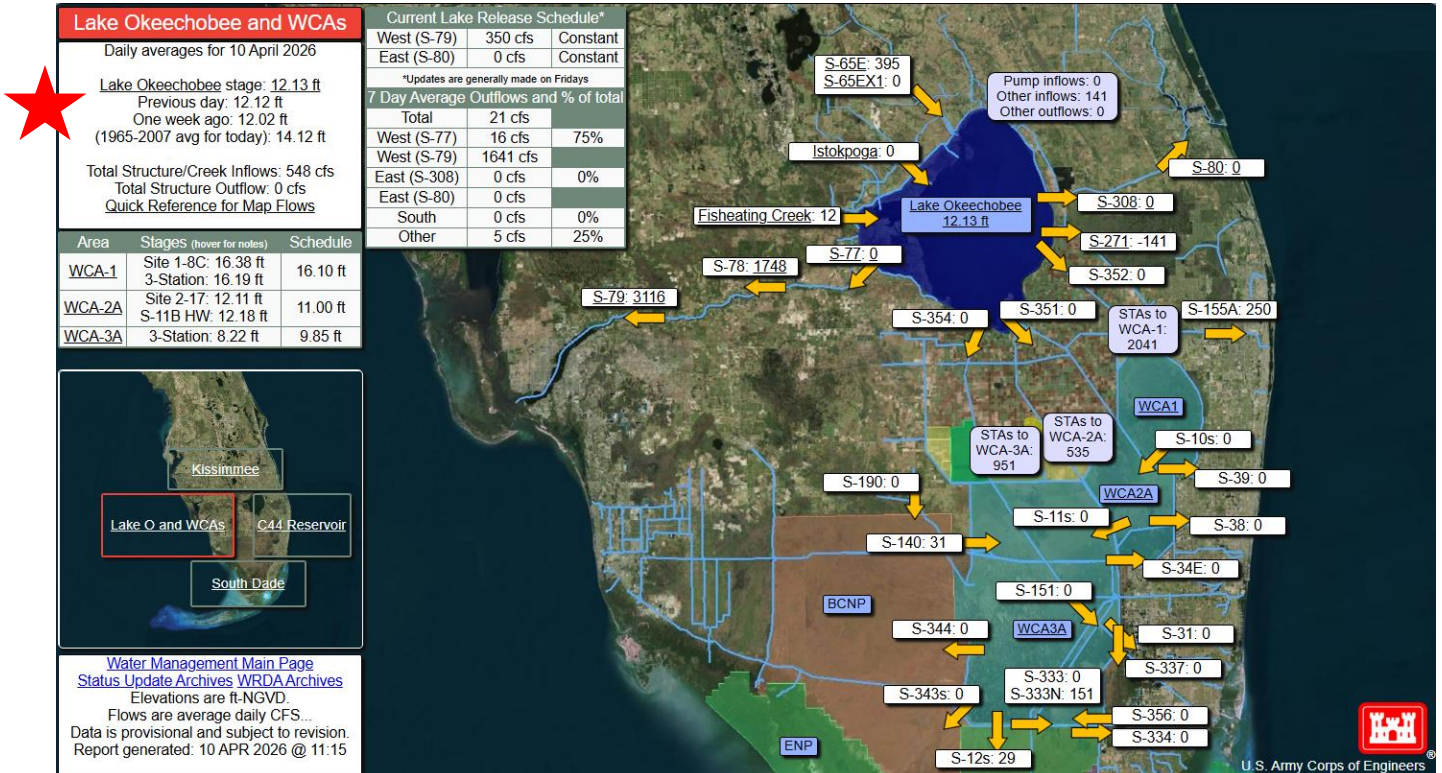
To: City Council
From: Holly Milbrandt, Natural Resources Director
Date: April 10, 2026

SUBJECT: Natural Resources Water Quality Updates

BACKGROUND:

CALOOSAHATCHEE RIVER & ESTUARY CONDITIONS REPORT

 **Note weekly stage increase**



Click to view: [April 7, 2026 Caloosahatchee Conditions Report](#)

CURRENT RAINFALL AND CLIMATE OUTLOOK

SFWMD rainfall for March 2026 was above normal at 3.00" (123% of normal). Rainfall was highly variable across the District, with southernmost Florida receiving well above normal rainfall (3-6 inches total). For April 2026 to date, rainfall is above normal at 2.40" (296%), with the highest rainfall totals occurring in a band across the northern estuaries and Lake Okeechobee.

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

For the 2025/2026 dry season to date (October 11, 2025-April 9, 2026), the SFWMD has received 9.53" of rain (66% of normal). Rainfall varied some across the District, with the western EAA and Water Conservation Area 3 being the driest (48-51% of normal).

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

The NOAA Climate Prediction Center one-month Probability Outlook for April 2026 indicates a 30/40% chance of below normal rainfall for central Florida and equal chances of above normal, below normal, and normal rainfall for south Florida.

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

NOAA ENSO Report (updated on 4/6/2026):

- La Niña is present.
- Equatorial sea surface temperatures (SSTs) are near-to-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

ALGAE BLOOMS

Red Tide: FWC Update for April 10, 2026

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

Over the past week, the red tide organism, *Karenia brevis*, was observed at background concentrations in seven samples from Northwest Florida. *K.brevis* was not observed in Southwest Florida.

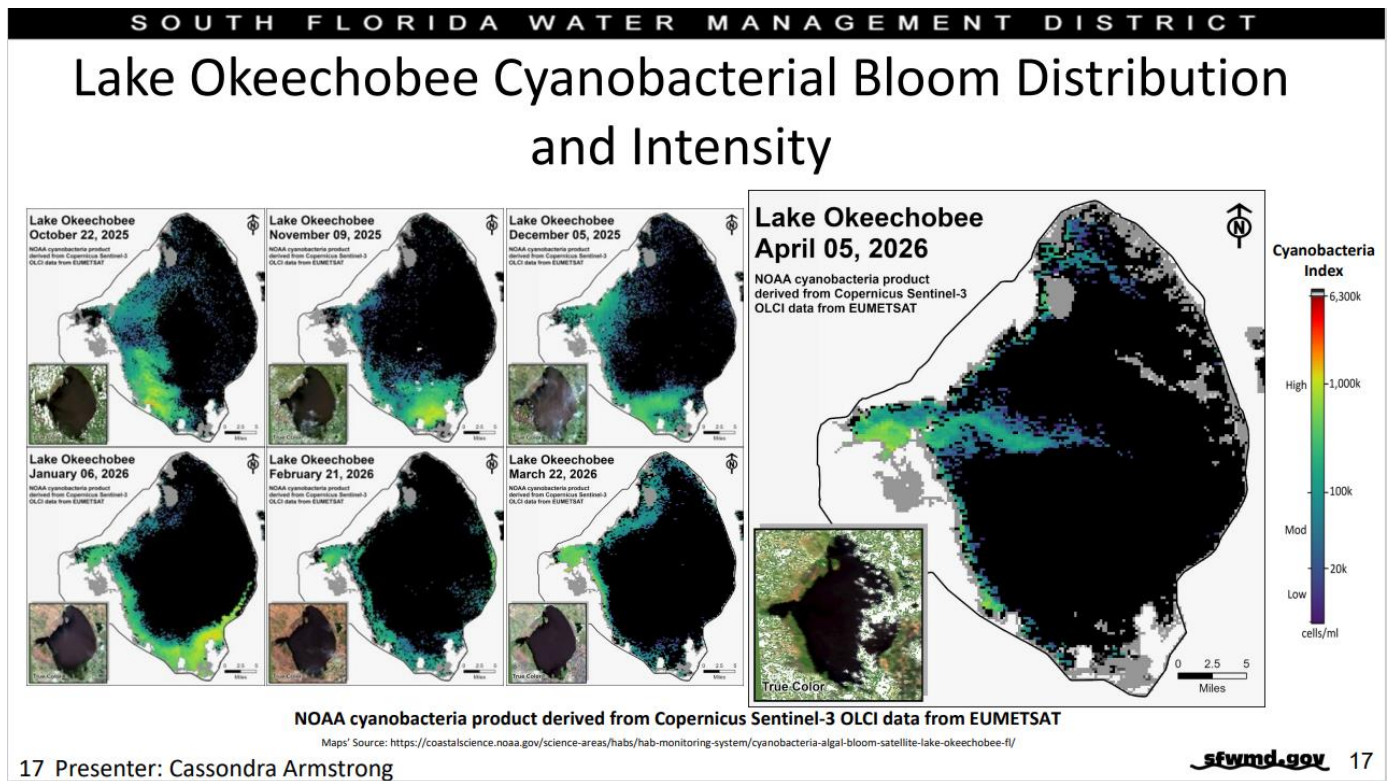
Fish kills & respiratory irritation suspected of being related to red tide were not reported.



Sanibel is and shall remain a barrier island sanctuary

Blue-Green Algae: ProtectingFloridaTogether.gov

Blue green algae cautions are in effect for Lake Okeechobee at S354 as of 4/1/2026, and L005, and Polesout in Lake Okeechobee as of 4/7/2026.



Red Drift Algae: Recent winds have resulted in new, locally heavy red drift algae deposits on Sanibel beaches.



West Bowman's Beach—April 8, 2026



Clam Bayou/Silver Key—March 30, 2026

Trichodesmium: No reports

Sargassum: No reports

Sanibel is and shall remain a barrier island sanctuary

PAST MEETING HIGHLIGHTS & UPDATES

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

April 2, 2026

West Palm Beach, FL

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

- Current Environmental Conditions & Seasonal Outlook
 - SFWMD confirmed that recent survey have found no freshwater seagrass (*Vallisneria*) at the Ft Myers site in the Caloosahatchee as a result of prolonged high salinity conditions in the upper estuary.

Blue-Green Algae Task Force Advances in Science-Based Decision Making

April 8, 2026

West Palm Beach, FL

<https://www.protectingfloridatogether.gov/state-action/blue-green-algae-task-force>

SFWMD Governing Board Meeting

April 9, 2026

West Palm Beach, FL

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

- Executive Director's Report
 - Recent rainfall has allowed the SFWMD test new water management infrastructure
 - Initial pumping of water into the C-43 Reservoir—during the 3-year operational testing phase the reservoir will be filled incrementally to ensure the reservoir is functioning properly at each water level before reaching its “full” level of 15-25 feet.
 - <https://www.facebook.com/SFWMD/videos/%EF%B8%8F-as-rain-continues-to-fall-over-south-florida-the-caloosahatchee-c-43-reservoir/966908299074252/?mibextid=wwXlfr&rdid=jFRBqTbtUUCrz812>
 - Authorized entering into an amended agreement with Mudge Ranch LLC, for the Mudge Ranch Water Management Area Project, to extend the term by ten years. The approximately 300-acre project retains direct rainfall and excess runoff in order to reduce discharges and moderate flows from the West Caloosahatchee Basin. The ancillary nutrient retention benefits from the project are approximately 265 pounds of phosphorous and 2,116 pounds of nitrogen annually.
- Update on Water Supply Conditions and Resolution Proclaiming April 2026 as Water Conservation Month

CHNEP Technical Advisory Committee

April 9, 2026

Port Charlotte, FL

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

- Nutrients & Red Tide State of the Science Symposium Highlights — Betty Staugler, NOAA HAB Liaison Florida Sea Grant

Sanibel is and shall remain a barrier island sanctuary

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

SFWMD Progress Update on the Northern Everglades and Estuaries Protection Program (NEEPP)

April 16, 2026

9:00 AM

West Palm Beach, FL

<https://sfwmd.gov/event/progress-update-northern-everglades-and-estuaries-protection-program>

CHNEP Management Committee

May 8, 2026

9:00 AM

Port Charlotte, FL

<https://www.chnep.org/management-committee>

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission Meeting

May 13-14, 2026

Time TBD

Fort Myers, FL

<https://myfwc.com/about/commission/commission-meetings/>

SFWMD Governing Board Meeting

May 14, 2026

9:00 AM

West Palm Beach, FL

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

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

RECOMMENDED ACTION: N/A