



AGENDA MEMORANDUM

*Natural Resources
Department*

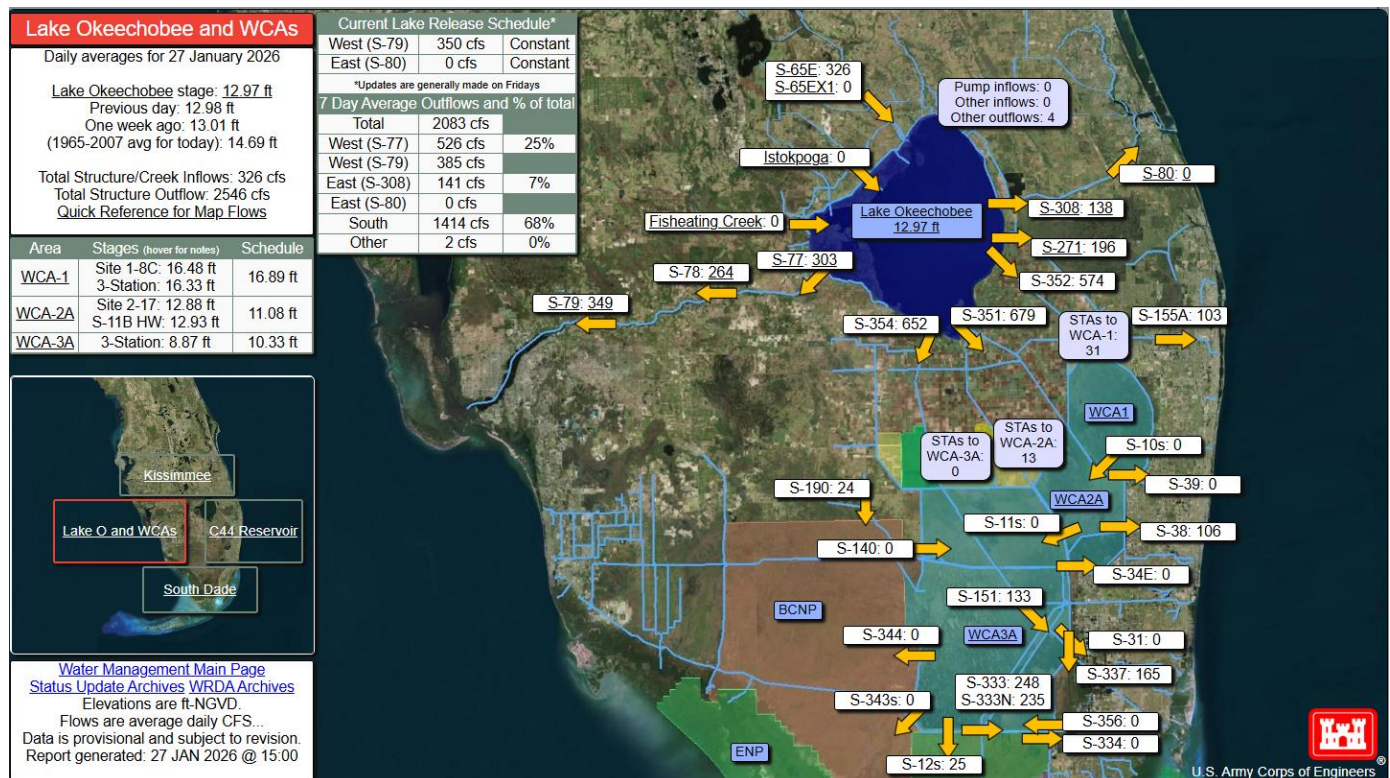
City Council Regular Meeting Date: February 3, 2026

To: City Council
From: Holly Milbrandt, Natural Resources Director
Date: January 27, 2026

SUBJECT: Natural Resources Water Quality Updates

BACKGROUND:

CALOOSA HATCHEE RIVER & ESTUARY CONDITIONS REPORT



Click to view: [January 20, 2026 Caloosahatchee Conditions Report](#)

CURRENT RAINFALL AND CLIMATE OUTLOOK

SFWMD rainfall for January 2026 was below normal at 0.65" (35% of normal). The SW Coast recorded more rainfall (1.13"; 56% of normal) than all other regions except for Miami-Dade and Broward (with 1.43" and 1.4" respectively).

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

For the 2025/2026 dry season to date (October 11, 2025-January 26, 2026), the SFWMD has received 3.27" of rain (37% of normal). Rainfall varied some across the District, with the Upper Kissimmee and regions along the east coast and the FL Keys being slightly wetter (45-56% of normal).

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

The NOAA Climate Prediction Center one-month Probability Outlook for February 2026 indicates a 40-50% chance of below normal rainfall for most of peninsular Florida and a 33-40% chance of below normal rainfall for the southernmost tip.

https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/predictions/long_range/lead14/

The three-month outlook for Feb-Mar-Apr 2026 indicates a 33-40% chance of below normal rainfall for south Florida. The 3-month outlook for Mar-Apr-May 2026 continues to show equal chances of above normal, below normal, and normal rainfall; while the Apr-May-Jun 2026 outlook shows a 33-40% chance of above normal rainfall. Although longer-term forecasts are subject to greater uncertainty, this suggests a possible early end to the dry season that should be monitored closely.

https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/predictions/long_range/lead01/off01_prpc.gif

NOAA ENSO Report (updated on 1/26/2026):

- La Niña is present.
- Equatorial sea surface temperatures (SSTs) are below average across the east-central and eastern Pacific Ocean.
- There is a 75% chance of a transition to ENSO-neutral during January-March 2026. ENSO-neutral is likely through at least Northern Hemisphere late spring 2026.

https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/analysis_monitoring/lanina/enso_evolution-status-fcsts-web.pdf

Sanibel is and shall remain a barrier island sanctuary

ALGAE BLOOMS

Red Tide: FWC Update for January 23, 2026
<https://myfwc.com/research/redtide/statewide/>

Over the past week, the red tide organism, *Karenia brevis*, was observed in background to low concentrations in 16 samples from Northwest Florida. Bloom concentrations (>100,000 cells/liter) were not observed.

Red tide was not reported in samples from In Southwest Florida over the past week.

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



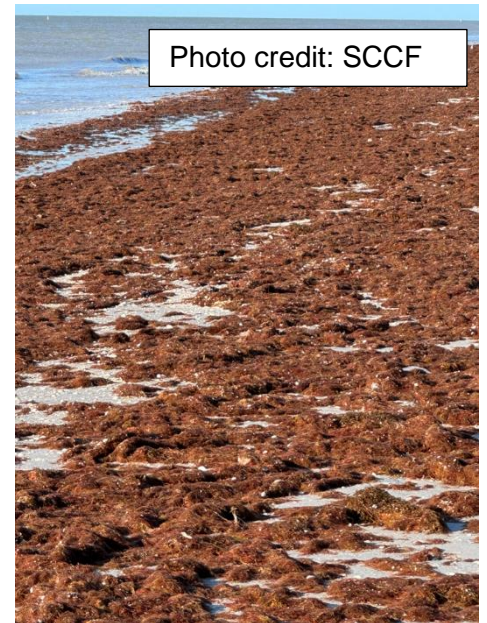
Blue-Green Algae: ProtectingFloridaTogether.gov

On 1/20/2026, the Florida Department of Health in Lee County (DOH-Lee) issued a health alert for the presence of harmful blue-green algae toxins in Caloosahatchee River-Sebastian Canal. The alert is in response to a water sample taken on January 20, 2026.

Red Drift Algae: Since early October, periodic deposits of red drift algae have been reported on Sanibel's beaches in association with winds and cold fronts. The location of deposits is unpredictable, and they can range from light to heavy and be short-lived or persist for days/weeks. Beach patrol reports from Officer Royka noted algae deposits on most dates in January.

Trichodesmium: No reports

Sargassum: No reports



PAST MEETING HIGHLIGHTS & UPDATES

CHNEP Management Committee Meeting

January 9, 2026

Port Charlotte, FL

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

- Presentation: Red Tide and Lake Okeechobee Management— Lenny Landau, P.E.
 - A recent published scientific journal article co-authored by the presenter Lenny Landau, CHNEP staff, and others demonstrated that the loading (pollutant concentration and volume of water) from the Caloosahatchee into the Gulf is the highest of area rivers and has been found to have contributed to longer, more severe red tide events.

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Integrated Delivery Schedule (IDS) Public Engagement Workshop

January 23, 2026

SFWMD, West Palm Beach, FL

<https://www.evergladesrestoration.gov/workshops/jan-23-2026-ids-workshop>

- Draft 2026 IDS
 - https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5d5179e7e42ca1000117872f/t/69723d1522485a7422587a19/1769094421958/DRAFT_IDS_2026.pdf

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

41st Annual Everglades Coalition Conference

Everglades Strong: All In for Restoration

January 28-30, 2026

Naples, FL

<https://www.evergladescoalition.org/conference>

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission

February 4 & 5, 2026

8:30 AM

Tallahassee, FL

<https://myfwc.com/about/commission/commission-meetings/february-2026/>

SFWMD Governing Board Meeting

February 12, 2026

9:00 AM

West Palm Beach, FL

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

C&SF Water Management: Local Engagement and Collaboration - Seasonal Assessment Point – Mid-Dry Season

February 23, 2026

9:30 AM-1:30 PM

Virtual

As part of the Lake Okeechobee System Operations Manual (LOSOM) implementation and to continue the model of seasonal assessments in the Combined Operations Plan (COP), the Central and Southern Florida (C&SF) system operating agencies, will be hosting a Seasonal Assessment Point on Tuesday Feb 24th, 2025. The Seasonal Assessment Point will cover both the northern and southern regions of the C&SF system with the intent to identify the desired outcomes for the remainder of the 2025/26 dry season. A part of the workshop will be focused on a review of the system-wide conditions over the past several seasons (a look back) and climate projections (a look forward). The workshop discussion will help assess operational goals and strategies for the dry season across the south Florida system – which in turn will set the trajectory that can be reviewed at each subsequent monthly meeting for the north and south regions. Each stakeholder will have an opportunity to provide data, assessments, and desired outcomes/goals for the dry season – which can be provided in writing or verbally during the meeting.

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Harmful Algal Bloom Task Force

TBD, February 2026

St. Petersburg, FL

<https://myfwc.com/research/redtide/taskforce/meeting/>

FUNDING SOURCE: N/A

RECOMMENDED ACTION: N/A

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