



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF Environmental Protection

Marjory Stoneman Douglas Building
3900 Commonwealth Boulevard
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Ron DeSantis
Governor

Jeanette Nuñez
Lt. Governor

Noah Valenstein
Secretary

Blue-Green Algae Task Force Meeting Staff Minutes

June 12, 2019
10:00 AM

Marjory Stoneman Douglas Building, Tallahassee, FL

General subject matter considered: The Blue-Green Algae Task Force inaugural meeting to introduce members, set the goals of the Task Force, and to provide the Task Force an overview of the various issues they will be discussing at subsequent meetings.

Attendee Name	Title	Status
Dr. Thomas Frazer	Facilitator	Present
Dr. Evelyn Gaiser	Member	Present
Dr. Wendy Graham	Member	Present
Dr. Michael Parsons	Member	Present
Dr. Valerie Paul	Member	Present
Dr. James Sullivan	Member	Present

1. Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Secretary Noah Valenstein gave opening remarks reinforcing the dedication and urgency of water quality improvement and carrying out the Governor's executive order. He thanked the task force for answering this call to public service.
2. Chief Science Officer Dr. Tom Frazer facilitated the meeting.
3. Michael Weiss, DEP's Office of General Counsel, gave an overview of Florida Sunshine Laws.
4. Dr. Frazer laid out the charge of the Task Force as an advisory body to support DEP's existing regulatory structure and implementation of projects. They will provide guidance and specific science-based recommendations with the ultimate goal of improving and restoring Florida's waterbodies through reduction of human causes of blue-green algae blooms. The Task Force will help communicate and engage with the public, stakeholders and policy-makers to identify science-based actions and solutions.

Meeting minutes are not intended to act as a transcript of the meeting. To watch a recording of the meeting, or to see the recommendations of the Blue-Green Algae Task Force, please visit ProtectingFloridaTogether.gov/state-action/blue-green-algae-task-force.

5. DEP Division of Environmental Assessment and Restoration Director Tom Frick provided a presentation on algal bloom monitoring and response.
6. DEP Deputy Secretary for Regulatory Programs John Truitt provided a presentation on the existing regulatory structure and responsibilities of water quality within his divisions.
7. FDACS's Program Planning Coordinator of the Office of Agricultural Water Policy Bonnie Wolff Pelaez provided a presentation on the establishment and role of agricultural best management practices (BMPs).
8. Director Tom Frick gave an overview of the Clean Water Act (CWA) and Florida's implementation of the CWA. This included an overview of the Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP) Program. He also provided a high-level overview of the reductions needed in the Lake Okeechobee, St. Lucie River and Estuary, and Caloosahatchee Estuary BMAPs.
9. Deputy Secretary John Truitt provided an overview of the process of rulemaking specifically for the biosolids rule in Chapter 62-640, F.A.C.
10. Task Force questions and comments focused on wastewater, stormwater, and biosolids including a discussion of the following:
 - a. How septic tanks fall under load allocation instead of wastewater load allocation in Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) and how DEP aggregates the nutrient load for TMDL purposes.
 - b. How septic systems are addressed in BMAPs, specifically Springs BMAPs.
 - c. Clarification on Biosolids Class AA, A, and B regulations.
 - d. How groundwater is taken into consideration in wastewater permits.
11. Task Force additionally had questions and comments focused on water quality monitoring for projects within BMAPs, including the following:
 - a. How legacy loads are going to be the challenge to address.
 - b. Looking at projects in a sub basin – sampling on a different spatial scale.
 - c. How to determine effectiveness of projects
 - d. Questioning does a project do what you expect it to do and does that project have the effect on the receiving water body you expect it to?
12. The Task Force discussed other criteria for DEP to look at when looking at how to prioritize projects, including land use; agriculture considerations (e.g., BMPs, other potential projects); projects that already have a monitoring plan incorporated; how extreme events affect these management plans; projects that address legacy loads; projects that expressly address both nitrogen and phosphorus; and potentially addressing certain species of nitrogen or phosphorus.
13. The Task Force had questions and comments focused on DEP's verification of FDACS' BMPs, including how DEP evaluates how well BMPs are working.
14. Public comments were taken. Topics included:

- a. Land acquisition;
- b. Biomass removal as a nutrient removal strategy;
- c. Agricultural BMPs by themselves will not achieve the TMDL;
- d. Transfer of septic tanks from DOH to DEP;
- e. Lake Okeechobee Watershed Restoration Plan;
- f. Urging the Task Force to be clear and specific on their recommendations;
- g. Loss of wetland function throughout Florida;
- h. Urging the Task Force to focus on algae blooms throughout Florida, not just South Florida.
- i. Stormwater rule updates;
- j. Reclaimed water;
- k. Innovative technology;

15. Dr. Frazer thanked everyone for the comments and reiterated the importance of public input and engagement.

16. Task Force members gave closing remarks.