

Rivers Coalition

Meeting Minutes: July 24, 2025

Members via Zoom: Darrell Brand (Palm Cove Yacht Club), Gil Smart (VoteWater), Greg Braun (Guardians of Martin County), Bob Mathias-Valentina Miele (FOS), Rip Fisher (Sailfish Point Yacht Club), Caitlin Newcamp (Audubon), Dana Espinosa (Friends of the Everglades), Tiare Fridrich (Save the Manatee Club), Jim Wharton (Harbour Ridge Yacht Club).

Members in person: Mark Perry-Valentina Miele (Florida Oceanographic Society), Eve Samples-Mitchell Latzman-Amanda Purnell-Miki Blumenthal-Peter Upton-Sophia Lima (Friends of the Everglades), Charles Grande (Pres. Council of H.I.), Todd Thurlow (North River Shores Property Assn), Merritt Matheson (IRK), Todd Weissing (Lighthouse Point Assn.), Casey Kniffin (Florida Wildlife Federation), Kelli Doré-Finley Doré (River Kidz), Bradley Watson (Everglades Foundation), Jim Harter (Stuart Rod & Reel Club), Richard Hall (River Warriors), Paul Uttormark (Sandhill Cove), Walter Deemer (League of Women's Voters of MC), Angela Rantinella-Paul Laura-Mary Laura (HIPI), Trae Jennings (Ballantrae Angler's Club), Joe Gilio (LORI).

Non-members via Zoom: Libby Pigman-Tom Hurley (SFWMD), Tim Gysan (USACE), Risbet, Tom MacVicar, Luna Phillips, Phil Sliger, Paul Linton (Palm Beach County), Peter ?, Sandy Packer, Nicholas Linehan (St. Lucie County), Allen's phone, Jennifer Smith.

Non-members in person: Maj. Cory Bell-1Lt. Ethan Fraser-CDT Aaliyah Robinson-Jeff Prater (USACE), Drew Bartlett-Sherry McCorkle-Jill Margolius (SFWMD), John Maehl-Sarah Phillion-Amy Eason-Sarah Heard-Melissa Pulver (Martin County), Christopher Collins-Ben Hogarth-Campbell Rich (City of Stuart), Dave Derrenbacker, Jacqui Thurlow-Lippisch, H.M. Ridgely, Greg Gardner, Barbara Osborn, Bruce Osborn, René Lessard-Moreshead, Blake Faulkner, Erin Kellis, Laurie MacDougall, Susan Innis, Tim O'Hara (TCPalm), Thomas Reinert (FWC), Anne Cox, Beth Jurgaitis, Elizabeth Grande, Nick Gulotta, Linda Gideonse, Will Gideonse.

Mark Perry called the meeting to order at 11:02 am. There were 59 attendees in person, 22 attendees on ZOOM call.

Minutes taken by Miki Blumenthal, Administrative Assistant.

Business Matters:

Member roll call was taken. Mark Perry welcomed everyone and recognized the Rivers Coalition board members present.

Presentation: Are You Exposed? What Sea Level Rise Means for Martin County

Amy Eason, Martin County Environmental Resource Engineer, gave a presentation on the county's updated vulnerability assessment with regard to flooding, water quality, and sea level rise.

An extended Q&A session followed her presentation. The above presentations in its entirety can be seen at www.riverscoalition.org.

Government & Agency Reports:

Martin County: See main presentation.

City of Stuart: Ben Hogarth talked about the city's vulnerability assessment and also the adaptation plan that they hope to have in place by the end of this year.

SFWMD: Drew Bartlett, Executive Director of SFWMD, gave a presentation on "Everglades Restoration Working," focusing on results. *An extended Q&A session followed his presentation. The presentation in its entirety can be seen at www.riverscoalition.org.*

USACE: Maj. Bell gave updates on the C23/24 and STAs, as well as the C44. He talked about conditions necessary in order to conduct algae testing.

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Lake O Update: In Paul Gray's absence, Mark Perry talked about current lake levels and the slow rise contributing to recovery.

State and Federal Legislation: Eve Samples discussed the recent sugar protections/handouts, established with the recent passing of federal legislation, which are the largest handouts to the sugar industry in history.

Coalition Reports:

River Kidz: Casey Kniffin stated the River Kidz would be assisting the Indian Riverkeeper at the upcoming Treasure Coast Waterway Cleanup this weekend at the Jensen Beach Causeway. The River Kidz also have an opportunity to speak to the Florida Native Plants Society.

Speakers Bureau: Todd Weissing gave an update on the member renewal process, stating members would be contacted in the near future. Speakers can be requested at riverscoalition.org.

Water Quality Report: Mark Perry gave a water quality report and presented a slide show on the BMAP (Basin Management Action Plan) progress. *A Q&A session followed his presentation. The presentation in its entirety can be seen at www.riverscoalition.org.*

Seagrass Update: Todd Thurlow stated that Lake Okeechobee levels had met goals of the USACE lake recovery operations. He shared maps showing salinity levels. He reminded everyone of the address of his website for updates, photos, and live flow maps: eyeonlakeo.com.

Riverkeeper Update: No update given.

Member Comments and Announcements:

An audience member asked a question about toxic algae.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:50 p.m.