

# Rivers Coalition

Meeting Minutes: January 22, 2026

---

**Members via Zoom:** Kelli Doré (River Kidz), Tiare Fridrich (Save the Manatee Club), Tiffany Kincaid (Keep Martin Beautiful), Paul Laura (HIPI), sabella Gukeisen (Everglades Foundation), Dana Espinosa (Friends of the Everglades), Eula Clarke (City of Stuart), Carol Ann Leonard (MC Democratic Environmental Caucus), Paul Gray (Audubon Florida).

**Members in person:** Mark Perry-Valentina Miele (Florida Oceanographic Society), Mitchell Latzmann (Friends of the Everglades), Darrell Brand (Palm Cove Yacht Club), Gil Smart (VoteWater), Todd Thurlow (North River Shores Property Assn), Merritt Matheson-Jim Moir (IRK), Ed Killer (Florida Sportsman), Casey Darling Kniffin (Florida Wildlife Federation), Allen Herskowitz (Sailfish Point POA), Diane Goldberg (St. Lucie Audubon Society), Walter Deemer (League of Women Voters of MC), Greg Braun (Guardians of Martin County), Joe Gilio (LORI), Lyn Aal-Magee (Audubon of MC), Tom Bausch-Tom Tomlinson (MC Conservation Alliance), Harvey Nation (Rio Civic Club), (ORCA), Jim Wharton (Harbour Ridge Yacht Club), Paul Uttormark (Sandhill Cove).

**Non-members via Zoom:** Charles Murphy, Kevin H., Stacy Ranieri (Firefly Group), Susan Innis, Anna Wachnicka, Sheryl ?, P. Higgin, Ernie Barnett, Anne Cox, Paul Linton (Palm Beach County).

**Non-members in person:** Miki Blumenthal, Col. Brandon Bowman-Maj. Cory Bell-Julie Treichel (USACE), Hannah Angelo-Walker (Captains for Clean Water), Jim Packer, Amy Eason-Sarah Pillion (Martin County), Campbell Rich-Christopher Collins-Ruth Holmes (City of Stuart), Tim O'Hara (TCPalm), Becky Bruner, Jacqui Thurlow-Lippisch, Joan Bausch, Susan Babek, Carl Stewart, Kaija Mayfield, Susan Hemmes (Jupiter Island Garden Club), Barbara Osborn, Nick Muzia, Kara Muzia, Blake Faulkner, Beth Kacvinsky, Gred DeJohn, James Martin, Laurie MacDougall, Ara Winship, Genevieve Osborn, Renée Lessard-Moreshead, Gail Goldy, Nick Giulotta.

Mark Perry called the meeting to order at 11:00 am. There were 50 attendees in person, 19 attendees on ZOOM call.

Minutes taken by Miki Blumenthal, Administrative Assistant.

## **Business Matters:**

Member roll call was taken. Mark Perry welcomed everyone and recognized Rivers Coalition board members and general members present. Hannah Angelo-Walker, former River Kidz member, introduced herself as the East Coast representative for Captains for Clean Water.

## **Presentation: From the Lagoon to the Lake: A USACE Update on Restoration Efforts**

Col. Brandon Bowman, USACE Commander, Jacksonville District, discussed the status of various Indian River Lagoon-South projects, along with updates on the Lake Okeechobee Recovery Operations After-Action Report and the upcoming future LOSOM 2.0 operating schedule.

*An extended Q&A session followed the presentations. The above presentations in its entirety can be seen at [www.riverscoalition.org](http://www.riverscoalition.org).*

## **Government & Agency Reports:**

**Martin County:** Amy Eason, Martin County's Environmental Resource Engineer, gave a Martin County update, including the news that the county is on track to meet its BMAP nutrient reduction targets by the 2028 deadline.

# Rivers Coalition

Meeting Minutes: January 22, 2026

---

**City of Stuart:** Ruth Holmes, City of Stuart Environmental Attorney, stated the City of Stuart is considered to be 100% compliant with the BMAP goals, and is directing focus to muck removal.

**SFWMD:** No representative present, as their Governing Board meeting is today.

Diane Goldberg, a Rivers Coalition member, briefly addressed the group about the importance of prioritizing flood-prone areas when planning septic-to-sewer improvements and encouraged greater attention to this issue by the South Florida Water Management District.

**USACE:** See main presentation.

**Lake O Update:** Paul Gray (via Zoom) gave an update on Lake Okeechobee levels and discussed the SFWMD inhibiting flows to the Caloosahatchee.

Todd Thurlow, Rivers Coalition board member, introduced a new feature on his website that provides detailed live and historical data on Lake Okeechobee going back to 1912. The chart is titled “The Big O Chart” and is full of detailed features, including a number cruncher feature. Todd’s website is [eyeonlakeo.com](http://eyeonlakeo.com).

**State and Federal Legislation:** Gil Smart stated the Florida Legislature began session last week and will continue until March 13th. The theme this year appears to be “Session of Sprawl on Steroids,” with countless pro-development bills. Check out the Legislative Accountability section on Friends of the Everglades’ website at [everglades.org](http://everglades.org) for updates.

## Coalition Reports:

**River Kidz:** Casey Kniffin stated the River Kidz will be participating in Waterways Day at the Florida Oceanographic Coastal Center from 10-2 on Saturday, January 24th. She also reminded the group that the deadline for kids to enter the Wavemaker Challenge is January 28th.

**Speakers Bureau:** Ed Killer, Rivers Coalition board member, announced that he would be representing the Rivers Coalition’s Speakers Bureau now that Todd Weissing has resigned from the board. He thanked Todd for his service and reminded the group of the importance of becoming and staying informed even in the absence of Lake O discharges.

**Water Quality Report:** Mark Perry updated the group on water quality, stating that this is the 28th year of the FOS’s Citizen Science water quality monitoring program.

The Florida Oceanographic’s lecture series has begun and will occur every Tuesday evening at 6:30 pm at the Blake Library.

**Seagrass Update:** See Lake O update.

**Riverkeeper Update:** Jim Moir stated that though the seagrass is better than last year in our area of the lagoon, other areas are in danger, referring to the increased affluent from the Space Center.

## Member Comments and Announcements:

Greg Braun with Guardians of Martin County gave an update on the Chancey Bay Ranch project in western Martin County. There will be a public hearing in the Martin County Commission Chambers on February 24th.

Harvey Nation of the Rio Civic Club expressed his appreciation for Todd Weissing's presentation to his group at their annual meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:34 p.m.