

**Biscayne Bay Commission
Minutes
April 8, 2022
9 a.m.**

Florida International University Biscayne Bay Campus and GoTo Webinar

General subject matter considered: The Biscayne Bay Commission met to review and discuss plans to address water quality impairments and discussed priority projects and financial resources that could address these plans.

Attendee Name	Title	Status
Noah Valenstein	Chair	Present
Adam Blalock	Vice-Chair	Present
Jean Monestime	Commission Member	Absent
Rebeca Sosa	Commission Member	Absent
Danielle Cohen Higgins	Commission Member	Present
Tim Meerbott	Commission Member	Present
Charlie Martinez	Commission Member	Present (Virtual)
Dr. Thomas Reinert	Commission Member	Present
T. Spencer Crowley III	Commission Member	Present

Welcome and Introduction

Jon Moore from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection’s (DEP) Southeast District welcomes the room and asks all to stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance. Jon informs the audience that the meeting is being recorded, a copy of the agenda is available for in-person and virtual attendees, and that public comments are due by April 15, 2022, and can be emailed to BBComission@FloridaDEP.gov. Jon thanks Florida International University (FIU) for hosting and the Friends of Biscayne Bay (FOBB), the citizen support organization for the Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserves, for providing refreshments.

Commission Chair Noah Valenstein also thanks FIU and FOBB and recognizes the work of all staff involved in making possible the Biscayne Bay Commission meetings.

Commission Procedural Items

Chair Valenstein takes roll call and requests a motion to approve minutes from the commission meeting on Jan. 4, 2022. Commission Member Tim Meerbott makes this motion, and Commission Member Danielle Cohen Higgins seconds; all are in favor.

Chair Valenstein acknowledges the robust conversations from the previous meeting and the desire for more discussion on water quality. Chair Valenstein reviews the agenda for the day, including the hold of all discussion until after the public comment, and acknowledges Member Cohen Higgins’ request to have the Florida Department of Transportation (present at a future meeting).

Water Quality Impairments in Biscayne Bay

Gregory DeAngelo, Director of DEP’s Division of Environmental Assessment and Restoration, gives an overview of water quality impairments in Biscayne Bay. This includes an update on upcoming

assessments of the bay, nutrient loading estimates and preliminary land use information on where nutrient sources are coming from.

Following the presentation, commission members discuss the following:

- Specific sources of loading that made up the transportation section of heat map and pie chart (confirmed to be roads, highways, utility easements, etc.).
- Phosphorous impairments and the process of measuring nutrients after their uptake by organisms.
- Reasonable Assurance Plan (RAP) and Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) as methods to address impaired water bodies.
- Parameters of models used to create heat map of the bay.

Overview of the Tampa Bay Estuary Program

Ed Sherwood, Executive Director of the Tampa Bay Estuary Program, provides a history of the Tampa Bay Estuary Program. This includes the process of developing the program, an overview of their RAP and the adaptive management approach utilized.

Following the presentation, commission members discuss the following:

- The critical importance of engaging the community for broad support and buy-in to the Tampa Bay Estuary Program.
- Projects implemented in the Tampa Bay Estuary Program, how they were prioritized, and the number of projects related to stormwater and sanitary sewer influences.

Overview of Potential Reasonable Assurance Plan for Miami-Dade County

Pamela Sweeney, Chief Water Scientist of the Miami Dade County (MDC) Department of Regulatory and Economic Resources, and MDC Chief Bay Officer Irela Bague give an overview of the potential RAP for Miami-Dade County. This includes an update on the development of the RAP and actions taken to date.

Following the presentation, commission members discuss the following:

- The stages involved with the Miami-Dade County RAP and whether those stages should be collective or if it will be a phased approach.
- The possibility of alerting community municipalities, lobbyists and stakeholders that the RAP is in process.
- Importance of remaining focused on the implementation of a RAP in Miami-Dade County.
- Geographic scope of the RAP - first phase would begin on the Little River (C-7) and Biscayne (C-8) Canals and then extend to South Biscayne Bay in a subsequent phase.
- TMDL geographic boundaries and water body identification specifications.
- Funding opportunities associated with the RAP.

Public Comments

Public comments are opened and led by Jon Moore. Each commenter is limited to three minutes.

- In-person commenters: Kelly Rollston, David Dobler and Laura Reynolds.
- Virtual commenters: Lindsey Precht and Christopher Brunk.

Public comment period includes the following topics:

- Support for the RAP and encouragement in moving toward the next steps.
- Possible improvement of cleaning process and designs for stormwater pollution capture.
- Possible consideration of marine debris as an impairment in continued planning.
- Suggestion of a RAP map with a timeline so that municipalities in future phases can be included in the process.
- Green infrastructure initiatives and living shorelines.
- Sewage impact in the South Bay and what will be done about it.

Commission Discussion on RAP

Chair Valenstein leads discussion on RAP that includes supporting MDC in moving forward with an initial RAP for the Little River and Biscayne Canals, followed by additional RAP phases to expand throughout the Bay, and continuing to address additional concerns associated with Biscayne Bay in the meantime.

Commission Discussion on Homework and Report

Jamie Monty, Southeast Regional Administrator of DEP's Office of Resilience and Coastal Protection, leads a discussion on the commission's homework and semi-annual report. She reviews the top five priority projects and associated financial resources provided by the member agencies represented. Chair Valenstein requests a motion to allow staff to put together an initial draft of the semi-annual report, send to the commission for its review, incorporate edits as appropriate and submit on behalf of the commission. Member Crowley makes the motion, and Commission Vice-Chair Blalock seconds; all are in favor.

Closing Remarks and Adjourn

Chair Valenstein makes closing remarks and reminds commission members to look at funding resources along with assigned homework. Chair Valenstein motions to adjourn and all are in favor.