

Biscayne Bay Commission Minutes
April 2, 2025, at 9 a.m. EDT
Florida International University — Biscayne Bay Campus and GoToWebinar

General subject matter overview: The Biscayne Bay Commission meets to review and discuss plans to address water quality impairments, as well as the priority projects and financial resources that could address these plans.

Attendee Name	Title	Status
Noah Valenstein	Chair	Present
Adam Blalock	Vice Chair	Present
Danielle Cohen Higgins	Commission Member	Present
Kevin Cabrera	Commission Member	Not Present
Micky Steinberg	Commission Member	Present
Tim Meerbott	Commission Member	Not Present
Scott Wagner	Commission Member	Not Present
Dr. Thomas Reinert	Commission Member	Present
Spencer Crowley III	Commission Member	Present

Welcome and Introduction

Mollie Cordo from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection’s (DEP) Office of Resilience and Coastal Protection welcomes the room and asks all to stand and recite the Pledge of Allegiance. She 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 9, 2025. Public comments may be emailed to BBCommission@FloridaDEP.gov. Mollie Cordo thanks Florida International University for hosting.

Commission Procedural Items

Chair Valenstein takes roll call.

Water and Sewer Department

Amanda Kinnick, interim director of Miami-Dade County’s Water and Sewer Department, provides a presentation on the county’s efforts to comply with the Ocean Outfall Legislation, including work at the Central District Wastewater Treatment Plant, 2024 sanitary sewer overflows and other initiatives such as the consent decree projects and Connect 2 Protect.

The commissioners discuss the complexities of managing wastewater in Miami and need for additional funding to support the Water and Sewer Department.

Environmentally Endangered Lands Program

Janet Gil, director of Miami-Dade County's Environmentally Endangered Lands Program, presents a general program overview, including recently acquired lands, proposed acquisitions and upcoming events.

The commission discusses federal and state funding opportunities, how the Environmentally Endangered Lands Program prioritizes new projects and opportunities for state acquisition of public lands.

Stormwater and Canal Management

Matahel Ansar and Richard Virgil from the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) provide updates on the SFWMD's water control structures, marine debris control efforts and management practices around South Florida and Biscayne Bay.

The commission discusses direct stormwater outfalls into canals and opportunities for SFWMD collaboration with Miami-Dade County, as well as temperatures and salinities of Biscayne Bay over the past year.

Biscayne Bay Water Quality Improvement Grant Program

Mollie Cordo, representing the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, gives a presentation on the Biscayne Bay Water Quality Improvement Grant Program, highlighting the new [Fiscal Year 2024-25 award recipients](#) and how their projects will benefit the bay.

Commissioner Blalock encourages organizations to continue applying for this and other grant opportunities administered through DEP.

Public Comments

Public comments are opened and led by Mollie Cordo. Each commenter is limited to three minutes. There is a short break, and then public comment is opened.

- In-person commenter: Gregory Rigano
 - Discusses concerns for the city of Miami's drinking water due to recently published research papers from Florida International University.
- In-person commenter: Laura Reynolds
 - Requests that the commission receive a presentation from Friends of Biscayne Bay's Biscayne Bay Reef Observation, Interpretation and Prediction System; discusses acquiring additional land to improve water quality; and a newly published seagrass research paper from Florida International University.
- In-person commenter: Nicholas Muzia
 - Offers general support for the Biscayne Bay Commission.
- In-person commenter: Dave Doebler
 - Discusses new methods to enhance asset management in the Biscayne Bay Aquatic Preserve; requests increased local funding for the county's Environmentally Endangered

Lands Program and additional funding for the Indian River Lagoon; and supports nutrient source point reduction from golf courses and nutrient reduction projects by the SFWMD.

Commission Discussion

Commissioner Crowley announces the grant cycle for Florida Inland Navigation District has closed.

Closing Remarks and Adjournment

Chair Valenstein makes closing remarks. Mollie Cordo reminds everyone that public comments are due by Wednesday, April 9, 2025. The meeting is adjourned.