



# FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF Environmental Protection

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## Blue-Green Algae Task Force Meeting Staff Minutes

**November 19, 2020**  
**8:30 a.m.**  
**Zoom Webinar**

General subject matter considered: The Blue-Green Algae Task Force met to discuss the Algal Bloom Risk Metric developed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE).

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

1. Chief Science Officer Dr. Tom Frazer gave opening remarks and facilitated the meeting, taking lead throughout its duration to discuss meeting topics and facilitate public comment.
2. Kristine Morris, Director of the Office of Environmental Accountability and Transparency, gave an update on the new features that are coming on the Protecting Florida Together website.
3. Dr. Frazer gave an update on the blue-green algae educational signage. The comments from the Task Force members were incorporated into the updated sign and DEP is working to install the signs at public access points to waters that may have experienced blue-green algal blooms or may lead to waters that have had blue-green algal blooms.
4. Colonel Andrew Kelly, USACE, introduced the Algal Bloom Risk Metric.

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](https://ProtectingFloridaTogether.gov/state-action/blue-green-algae-task-force).

- a. USACE is conducting a study to evaluate Lake Okeechobee operations, which will result in a new operation manual.
  - b. The algal bloom risk metric aligns with the Corps' objectives of managing risk to public health and safety, life and property and enhancing ecology in Lake Okeechobee, northern estuaries and across the South Florida ecosystem.
  - c. Timeline of completing the new operation manual presented.
5. Tim Gysan presented an overview of LOSOM.
- a. Overview of the plan formulation strategy.
  - b. Hydrological modeling overview for regions surrounding Lake Okeechobee.
  - c. How the algal bloom risk metric will be used was discussed.
  - d. LOSOM timeline presented.
6. Jim Riley presented the Algal Bloom Risk Metric itself, how it was derived, how the metric would be used in assessing alternative LOSOM plans, and the existing limitations of the metric.
7. Task Force Discussion on Metric included:
- a. How the output of the regression equations will translate into a risk assessment.
  - b. The coefficient of determination ( $r^2$ ) for the pelagic zone model.
  - c. The use of one data point for chlorophyll-*a* per year instead of all the available data.
  - d. Assumptions within the regression model.
  - e. Taking antecedent conditions into account.
  - f. Calibration of the regression model and its ability to hindcast.
  - g. Use of a lagged model to take into account the lake stage at the end of the dry season.
  - h. Use of climate variables as covariates in the regression model in addition to using the April/May lake stages as indicators.
8. Public comments were taken. Topics included:
- a. Concerns about the  $r^2$  values in the regression model.
  - b. Concerns about the lowering of the lake levels.
  - c. Cyanotoxin water quality criteria.
  - d. Appreciation for algal metrics being considered.
9. Dr. Frazer thanked everyone for the comments and reiterated the importance of public input and engagement.