

FLORIDA KEYS NATIONAL MARINE SANCTUARY
Water Quality Protection Program Steering Committee Meeting

March 9, 2023
9:00 AM – 4:45 PM

Marathon City Hall, 9805 Overseas Highway, Marathon, FL 33050

The meeting will also be available in real time for listening only via GoToWebinar:
<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7823453370565708382>; Webinar ID: 975-095-411

Meeting Purpose: Convene the Water Quality Protection Program (WQPP) Steering Committee to review the status of Florida Keys water quality projects and complementary efforts, and discuss timely issues and future actions related to water quality priorities.

Objectives:

- Learn about the status and results of ongoing monitoring and research projects implemented by the Water Quality Protection Program and partners.
- Explore potential opportunities for water quality improvements associated with roadway projects and coastal resilience efforts.
- Discuss next steps for implementing a comprehensive evaluation of FKNMS water quality monitoring programs.
- Understand the status of EPA South Florida Geographic Initiative funding, including priorities funded in 2022 and Management Committee-recommended priority topics for 2023 funding.
- Provide an open forum for information sharing and discussion on complementary efforts and emerging topics of relevance to the Water Quality Protection Program.

Meeting Materials:

1. Minutes from August 11, 2022 WQPP Steering Committee meeting
2. Publication: Status and Trajectories of Soft-Bottom Benthic Communities of the South Florida Seascape Revealed by 25 Years of Seagrass and Water Quality Monitoring
3. Bonefish Pharmaceutical Contaminants Study
4. Interim Report: Quantifying the Impact of Shallow Wastewater Injection in the Florida Keys.
5. Draft TAC Recommendations on the WQPP Roadways and Water Quality Resolution
6. Draft list of Management Committee priority topics recommended for 2023 EPA funding
7. Draft City of Key West Water Quality Improvement Priorities

Agenda

9:00 AM

I. Welcome and Opening Remarks

- Call to Order and Opening Remarks, *Wade Lehmann, EPA/ Kim Shugar, DEP*
- Steering Committee Member Introductions
- Housekeeping
- Review and Adopt Agenda
 - *Steering Committee Vote*
- Approve Minutes from August 11, 2022
 - *Steering Committee Vote*

- 9:20 AM** **II. Monitoring Program Updates**
Overview of the status and trajectories of soft-bottom benthic communities of the South Florida seascape revealed by 25 Years of seagrass and water quality monitoring.
- **Water Quality Monitoring Program** (25 min), *Dr. Henry Briceño, FIU*
 - *Steering Committee Q&A/Discussion* (10 min)
 - **Seagrass Monitoring Program** (25 min), *Dr. Jim Fourqurean, FIU*
 - *Steering Committee Q&A/Discussion* (10 min)
- 10:30 AM** **Break** (15 minutes)
- 10:45 AM** **III. Florida Bay Status Update**, *Tylan Dean, NPS*
(20 min) Overview of the algal bloom and current conditions within Florida Bay.
- *Steering Committee Q&A/Discussion* (10 min)
- 11:15 AM** **IV. Bonefish Pharmaceutical Contaminants Study**, *Dr. Jennifer Rehage, FIU / Nicholas Castillo, PhD Candidate, FIU*
(45 min) Presentation on results and future investigations of a study to determine the occurrence of pharmaceutical contaminants in bonefish in South Florida.
- *Steering Committee Q&A/Discussion* (15 min)
- 12:15 PM** **Lunch** (75 minutes)
- 1:30 PM** **V. Florida Keys Roadway Improvements and Coastal Resilience Efforts**
- **Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) Five-Year Work Program**, *Michael Lucero, FDOT*
 - (15 min) Overview of the FDOT Five-Year Work Program process, including timeline, project selection criteria, and implementation.
 - *Steering Committee Q&A* (5 min)
 - **[TBD] Florida Keys Coastal Storm Risk Management Project**, *TBD, USACE*
 - (15 min) Overview of the \$2.6B coastal storm and sea-level rise infrastructure resiliency project in the Florida Keys, and initial appropriation for U.S. 1 stabilization projects.
 - *Steering Committee Q&A* (5 min)
 - **Monroe County Road Elevation Project Update**, *Rhonda Haag, Monroe County*
 - (5 min) Update on application and funding status for Florida Keys roadway elevation projects.
 - *Steering Committee Q&A* (5 min)
- 2:20 PM** **VI. Technical Advisory Committee Report Out**, *Dr. Nick Parr, DEP*
(5 min) Outcomes of the meeting convened at the Steering Committee's request to review and discuss the concept of a resolution pertaining to roadways and water quality improvements.
- *Steering Committee Q&A/Discussion* (10 min)
 - *Potential Steering Committee Action Item*

- 2:35 PM VII. Steering Committee Discussion: Next Steps for Initiating a FKNMS Water Quality Monitoring Program Evaluation, Shelly Krueger, Florida Sea Grant**
(5 min) Introduction to potential strategies and next steps for initiating an evaluation of FKNMS water quality monitoring programs.
- *Steering Committee Q&A/Discussion (25 minutes)*
- 3:05 PM Break (15 minutes)**
- 3:20 PM VIII. EPA South Florida Geographic Initiative Funding and Priority Topics**
- **FY22 Projects, Steve Blackburn, EPA**
 - (10 min) Update of the special study topics that received EPA South Florida Geographic Initiative funds in 2022.
 - **FY23 Priority Topics for Consideration, Karen Bohnsack, FKNMS**
 - (5 min) Overview of draft priority topics recommended by the Management Committee for 2023 funding.
 - *Steering Committee Feedback and Discussion (15 min)*
 - *Potential Steering Committee Action Item*
- 3:50 PM IX. City of Key West Water Quality Improvement Plan**
(5 min) Update on the City of Key West's water quality improvement planning efforts and priorities.
- *Steering Committee Q&A and Discussion (5 min)*
 - *Potential Steering Committee Action Item*
- 4:00 PM X. Biscayne Bay Commission Update, Mollie Sinnott, DEP**
(5 min) Update on complementary efforts ongoing in Biscayne Bay. More information is available at <https://protectingfloridatogether.gov/BiscayneBayCommission>
- *Steering Committee Q&A (5 min)*
- 4:10 PM XI. Public Comment (15 minutes)**
- 4:25 PM XII. Steering Committee Member Updates**
(15 min) Members of the Steering Committee provide updates on recent activities or emerging topics of relevance to the Water Quality Protection Program.
- 4:40 PM Wrap-Up and Review Action Items**
- 4:45 PM Adjourn**