LOXAHATCHEE RIVER MANAGEMENT COORDINATING COUNCIL

Monday, July 13, 2026, 2:00 pm

The River Center

805 US-1 N

Jupiter, FL 33477

I. Call to Order

Meeting gaveled in at 2:00 pm by Chairman Ricketts.

Mr. Ricketts introduced Ms. Joannie Toro from the South Florida Water Management District, who will be assisting the Council. Mr. Ricketts also introduced two guests: Emily Lanthier, a recent biology graduate from Indian River Community College, and Kaley McElligot, a current civil engineering student at Florida Atlantic University and summer intern with Jonathan T. Ricketts, Inc.

II. Roll Call

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service	
Andrew Eastwick	Absent
Florida Department of Environmental Protection	
Jon Moore	Present
Florida Department of Transportation	
Ann Broadwell	Present
U.S. Department of Interior	
Peter DeWitt (Alternate)	Absent
Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission	
Tom Reinert	Present
Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services	
Brynne Talas	Absent
South Florida Water Management District	
Cassondra Armstrong	Present

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Treasure Coast Regional Planning Council	
Thomas Lanahan	Present
Martin County	
Michael Yustin (Alt)	Present
Town of Jupiter	
Ron Delaney	Absent
Village of Tequesta	
Jennifer Todd (Alt)	Present
Palm Beach County	
Deborah Drum (Alt)	Present
Jupiter Inlet District	
Tom Howard	Present
Loxahatchee River Environmental Control District	
Albrey Arrington	Present
South Indian River Water Control District	
Chad Kennedy	Present
Northern Palm Beach County Improvement District	
Jonathan Ricketts	Present
Florida Farm Bureau	
Jake Fojtik	Absent
City of Palm Beach Gardens	
John Kemp	Present

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Local River User Group - Palm Beach Pack & Paddle Club	
Inke Sunila	Present
Landowner Representative	
Pat Magrogan	Present
Martin County Environmental & Conservation Groups	
Dick Roberts	Present

A quorum was established

III. Approval of March 30, 2026, Meeting Minutes

Mr. Ricketts requested approval of the March 30th meeting minutes. Mr. T. Howard requested clarification be added to one comment. Ms. Drum moved to adopt as amended; Mr. Moore seconded. Motion approved.

IV. Public Comment

Ms. DD Halpern requested that the webpage be more user-friendly with timely updates and posting of the agenda.

V. Project Updates

A. Loxahatchee River Watershed Restoration Project Update, Michael Tompkins, SFWMD

Mr. Tompkins provided an update on efforts to restore and maintain freshwater flows to the northwest fork of the Loxahatchee. Restoration benefits: target flows met 91% of the time in the dry season (30-day avg 69 cfs) and 98% of the time in the wet season (120 cfs for 120 days) and improve ecological connectivity for 78,000 acres. There are three flow-way projects in various stages of design and implementation. Flow-way 1 – Indian Trails Improvement District (ITID) M canal and Grassy Waters flows, S-100 pump station; agreements and stakeholder engagement ongoing; next steps: modeling and design. Flow-way 2 – C-18W impoundment and ASR wells to capture flows from ITID M0 canal and Corbett WMA; in design, with agreements and stakeholder engagement ongoing; next steps: final design, pending funding, agreements

with FPL. Flow-way 3 – Gulfstream East and Kitching Creek projects; preliminary work is underway (cultural and environmental surveys); the western half of the project is on hold. Funding for further stages of all flow-ways was not yet allocated due to re-prioritization.
Mr. Roberts mentioned he has had monitoring stations in Cypress Creek since 1983. Last monitored in 2019. Ms. Marion Hedgpeth recommended maintaining salinity monitoring at Kitching Creek – only place cypress seedlings are surviving.
Mr. Yustin asked for future presentations to include slides emphasizing positive project benefits.
Mr. Moore asked for clarity on changes since a previous similar presentation.
Mr. Tompkins clarified the only change was structure outfall.
Dr. Arrington noted the Pepper Farm project (west of I-95) was “good news”.
Mr. Tompkins agreed and discussed the partnership with Ducks Unlimited for site restoration and plantings.
Mr. T. Howard suggested the Council support legislative funding specific to these projects.
Ms. Drum volunteered to draft something the Council could provide to the local delegation(s).
Mr. Lanahan initiated a discussion on the potential impacts of the property tax reforms being implemented statewide.

B. MFL Update, Shimelis Setegn, (10 mins) SFWMD
   Mr. Setegn provided an overview of water protection measures including MFLs, water reservations, and Restricted Allocation Areas (RAAs), with case study examples. Priority Water Body List is set annually. The Loxahatchee re-evaluation is based on current MFL and the loss of the salinity metric, new data, recent watershed restoration actions, and updated Sea Level Rise modeling. Other tools including Water Reservations—can be adopted for both surface and ground waters to protect water for fish and wildlife. RAAs—areas from which new or increased water allocations are restricted.
   Dr. Armstrong noted that the SFWMD had begun discussions with individual agencies and groups about the upcoming revisions to the Loxahatchee MFL.
   Ms. Drum requested public meetings so all parties can understand the positions of others.

Dr. Arrington initiated a discussion on the loss of the salinity metric (The Florida Joint Administrative Procedures Committee – JAPC – has determined that MFLs must only determine minimum "flows" and "levels" of water; salinity cannot be a metric).
Mr. Kennedy suggested a resolution supporting continued work toward revising the existing MFL, but that it only proceeds until known (and unknown) data gaps are identified and filled. Until such a time, the current MFL should remain. Mr. Kennedy further noted there are no consequences for SFWMD not meeting MFL as long as they have identified a Recovery Strategy, which is the CERP project. Any resolution to this effect would need to be presented to the SFWMD Governing Board. (This will be covered in the resolution Ms. Drum is crafting).

C. Salinity Monitoring History (5 minutes) Dick Roberts
Mr. Roberts provided handouts on the history of salinity monitoring in the Loxahatchee and proposed a resolution in support of continued salinity research and monitoring.
Dr. Arrington noted the importance of the work presented by Mr. Roberts and Ms. Hedgepeth, but felt the bigger picture of the MFL and data gaps also needed to be addressed. By consensus, the group agreed to incorporate this support and concepts into the resolution already being drafted by Ms. Drum.

VI. Watershed Status Updates

A. MFL Status and Water Quality Update, LRECD (5-10 min) Dr. Arrington showed G-161 Supplemental Flows; no supplemental flows from April 2025 until early 2026. In the calendar year 2026 to date, the Lox only received supplemental flows in January and February. Supplemental flows can be achieved through G-161. Dr. Arrington suggested asking the SFWMD to use G-161 to help meet flows.
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B. Natural Area/Conservation Lands Update, Makenzie Langley, (10 mins) FWC
Due to time constraints, this presentation was deferred to the September meeting.

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VII. Member Issues (brief, verbal status update)

Ms. Broadwell provided an update on SR-7 and the letter that Chairman Ricketts authored to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in support. Army Corps permit is out for public comment.

Mr. Yustin reported that Martin County has purchased a 315-acre parcel in the Pal-Mar area for conservation.

Mr. T. Howard provided an update on the proposed ebb shoal channel; JID is conducting a salinity study on how such a channel (at any depth) would affect salinity and how quickly it might fill in. The public is rather vocal on adding a channel, and JID will evaluate the environmental and economic impacts of any potential design.

Ms. Magrogan noted that seagrasses are doing quite well in the north bay area; people are seeing lots of fish, notably seahorses and bonefish.

Mr. Moore inquired about the status of the "River Ambassador". Dr. Armstrong noted that the federal partners in that initiative have largely disappeared.

Mr. Lanahan noted that the 50th anniversary of the TCRPC is coming up at their August 21st council meeting. Event details: **Date:** August 21, 2026, **Time:** 9:30 a.m., **Location:** Wolf High-Technology Center - Chastain Campus of Indian River State College - 2400 S.E. Salerno Road Stuart, FL 34997. All are invited.

Mr. Ricketts provided a letter he sent to Ms. Jennifer Reynolds (SFWMD) detailing the Council's need for administrative support.

Ms. Drum noted that, in the County's estimation, property tax restructuring could result in a significant decrease in revenue to the county, SFWMD, and municipalities in Palm Beach County.

A group discussion on timing for providing a letter/resolution to the SFWMD Governing Board regarding the revisions to the Loxahatchee MFL led to rescheduling the September meeting date from September 28 to September 14. Dr. Arrington will confirm the availability of the River Center.

VIII. Adjourn

Mr. Lanahan moved for adjournment; Mr. Kennedy seconded. Meeting adjourned at 5:03 pm.

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Next Meeting: Monday, September 14, 2026, at The River Center