

# Florida Water Resources Monitoring Council

## Work Plan – 2024

January 2024

# Florida Water Resources Monitoring Council

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## *Mission*

*To protect, preserve, manage and restore Florida’s water resources by coordinating water resource monitoring among all levels of government, improving data quality and effectiveness, and sharing information widely.*

## *Introduction*

This work plan for the Florida Water Resources Monitoring Council outlines a strategy for improving the coordination among water quality monitoring and data management personnel to enhance the efficiency of data collection, analysis, and visualization. **The main efforts addressed in the work plan include ongoing efforts for maintaining the Water-Cat tool, continued support for developing minimum Quality Assurance (QA) standards, and lessons-sharing and expertise-building around eight potential training or collaboration seminars. Some sessions will be group-led discussions, while others will be traditional expert-delivered seminars on current issues related to Florida’s water quality monitoring. Also, an in-person meeting and field trip is being planned for spring 2024.**

## *Background*

The Florida Water Resources Monitoring Council (Council) is a coordinating body of multiple stakeholder organizations from many disciplines that participate in water resource monitoring and management. Specifically, the Council is interested in marine, fresh, surface, and ground water resources in Florida. Members represent federal, state, and local agencies and organizations who collect, manage, compile, and disseminate information about hydrological, chemical, physical, and biological properties associated with Florida’s waters. The current Council (restarted in 2011) has been broadened to inform, plan and ultimately coordinate Florida water resources monitoring efforts at the state, local, and federal levels. Council authority for statewide coordination and cooperation are described in Chapter 373.026(3), Florida Statutes.

The Council develops its projects and statewide structure with the expertise of its members, partners, and workgroups. New challenges and opportunities have arisen since the Council first convened and are being addressed by focusing on newly identified topics and challenges. The Council leverages efforts with concurrent and convergent projects of its members and partners, thereby conserving fiscal and human resources. The ultimate outcome is to improve the quality and efficiency of monitoring activities in Florida. This ensures that water resource managers have the best scientific data available to make comprehensive decisions regarding the protection and preservation of Florida’s water resources in the 21st century.

This Work Plan for 2024 lays out the Action Items for the coming year to help achieve the Council mission.

## *Action Items*

### Ongoing Action Items

#### Action Item O - 1: Maintain Water-CAT

##### A. Timeframe

- Ongoing

##### B. Outcome(s)

- Maintain the Water-CAT tool to provide valuable environmental monitoring information to stakeholders across Florida.

##### C. Tasks

TASK 1: Support long-term Water-CAT maintenance.

TASK 2: Council Members/ Representatives from members' agencies contribute to Water-CAT maintenance by providing updates of changes to their monitoring network to Water-CAT contractors.

TASK 3: Contribute to Water-CAT enhancement as needed via existing Workgroup process.

#### Action Item O - 2: Continued Support of DEP's development of Minimum QA Standards for Continuous Monitoring

##### A. Timeframe

- Ongoing

##### B. Outcome(s)

- Development of DEP Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for continuous monitoring, with the consideration of the "Best Practices Manual: Continuous Monitoring Water Quality Data" provided by the Council workgroup in 2022.

##### C. Tasks

To be determined – as needed for input/edits to support DEP's continuous monitoring SOP.

## Training and Collaboration Initiatives

### Training and Discussion Seminars

#### A. Timeframe and background

As needed in 2024:

Training topics will be determined based on group interest and speaker/facilitator availability. We have a goal of at least one training/discussion session per quarter. The following topics were discussed as potential areas of interest for a discussion or invited speaker.

**Drones for Water Quality Sampling** – This would be discussion on the potential use of drones for water quality collection while adhering to required QA requirements and meeting requirements for regulatory samples.

**Interactive Dashboards for Data Access** – This would be a lessons-sharing discussion from Water Council members about the use of GIS Dashboards to better communicate water quality monitoring project work, including project background, development, monitoring goals, and project maps integrated with data, allowing us to provide full transparency for monitoring projects to outside entities.

**HB 165: Safe Waterways Act** – the training info here for the Water Council would be about the transfer of monitoring responsibility and could also include lessons learned from recent DOH to DEP permitting responsibility for septic systems. This is not yet law (in committees): it would transfer bacteriological sampling of beach waters & public bathing places from DOH to DEP.

**HB 1379: Environmental Protection** – the training info here would be related to additional monitoring requirements in IRL basins. This is a broad law (effective 7/1/2023) about wastewater treatment, onsite sewage treatment and disposal systems (OSTDSs), sanitary sewer services, basin management action plans (BMAPs), the wastewater grant program, the Indian River Lagoon (IRL), and the acquisition of state lands.

**HB 1191: Use of Phosphogypsum** – the training info here would be related to potential water quality and new monitoring requirements if phosphogypsum becomes widely used for roadway aggregate. This law (effective 7/1/2023) “authorizes DOT to undertake demonstration projects using phosphogypsum in road construction aggregate material; requires DOT to conduct study on phosphogypsum as construction aggregate material; provides that phosphogypsum used under specified circumstances is not solid waste and is allowed use in state; authorizes placement of phosphogypsum in specified stack systems.”

**Biosolids Applications and Monitoring** – the training info here would be focused on monitoring requirements and nutrient impacts of biosolids application sites and general information on biosolids disposal. Section 403.0855, F.S. was recently modified to require all biosolid land application sites to be enrolled in a Florida Department of Agriculture and

Consumer Services Best Management Practices program and created a prohibition on the land application of biosolids on soils with a seasonal high water table within 6 inches of the soil surface or depth of biosolids placement. That was effective 7/1/2022. “HB 1405 – Biosolids” was effective 7/1/2023; this authorized DEP to establish a grant program for improved treatment (less nutrients in biosolids) and/or innovative uses of biosolids.

**National Atmospheric Deposition Program (NADP) – this training would be about the history, methods, and findings/trends observed by the NADP.** NADP “is a multi-partner atmospheric monitoring program that measures the concentrations and deposition of atmospheric constituents across North America. The USGS has been an NADP partner agency since 1981 and participates by providing funds for 82 National Trend Network (NTN) sites.”

**Climate Variability and Change and Water Quality** – seminar from Florida’s state climatologist: David Zierden. **The training would be about the state of Florida’s climate (trends and projections) and potential water quality implications related to recent or expected trends in rainfall or temperature.**

B. Outcome(s)

- All of the above eight topics for seminars or discussions are opportunities for lessons-learned sharing and training on areas of interest to the Water Council. The outcomes will be improved collaboration and learning on topics relevant to Florida’s water quality.

C. Tasks (ongoing basis, at least quarterly)

TASK 1: Identify discussion leaders and/or speakers on selected topics

TASK 2: Schedule date/time for webinars or discussion meeting

TASK 3: Meeting and follow-up with slides and/or video recording.

**Field trip – in-person meeting**

A. Timeframe and background

March or April 2024. Options suggested by the Council:

- Lake Seminole (Pinellas County) dredge management area site visit and tree planting
- Lake Apopka north shore trail: walking/driving tour and lake restoration presentation/discussion
- Others options: TBD – goal of centrally located site

B. Outcomes(s)



- Team-building, renewed collaboration/partnerships, additional opportunities for lessons-learned sharing

#### C. Tasks

TASK 1: Poll group for field trip preferences and additional suggestions

TASK 2: Schedule trip/venue/logistics; invites

TASK 3: Field trip and documentation/follow-up

### Summary

This work plan for 2024 outlines the proposed efforts of the Florida Water Resources Monitoring Council. In addition to the as-need task for support or input on Water-CAT maintenance and DEP SOPs for continuous monitoring, there are several Training Initiatives to bring about improved data literacy and cross-agency coordination. There is flexibility in the training topics to allow for as-needed meetings on topics of importance.

For more information and to stay up to date with the Water Council, visit the website:

<https://floridadep.gov/dear/watershed-monitoring-section/content/fwrmc>