

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

**July 30, 2024**  
**8:45 AM –1:00 PM**

This meeting will be held virtually via GoToWebinar. To register and join:  
<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1351930250737333599>; Webinar ID: 976-705-371

**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:**

- Engage in WQPP administrative business, including a triannual review of the WQPP Steering Committee Bylaws, membership updates, and discussion on the proposed creation of a new WQPP Communications Subcommittee.
- Understand the overarching research and response effort associated with the abnormal fish behavior and sawfish mortality event.
- Discuss updates on the planning and implementation of the new \$100M FKWQIP authorization.
- Share planning updates for the EPA-funded Florida Keys Tidal Connection Project.
- Understand recent regional water quality efforts, including activities within the Florida Coral Reef Coordination Team and Florida Coral Reef Resilience Program.
- Provide an open forum for information sharing and discussion.

**Meeting Materials:**

- March 7, 2024 WQPP Steering Committee Meeting Notes
- WQPP Bylaws
- Florida Keys Water Quality Act (Public Law 106-554)

**Agenda**

- 8:45 AM**      **WQPP Log-In and Technology Check**  
(15 min) GoToWebinar sound check with Steering Committee members and presenters.
- 9:00 AM**      **I. Welcome and Opening Remarks**
- Call to Order and Opening Remarks, *Kim Shugar, DEP/ Dr. Wade Lehmann, EPA*
  - Steering Committee Roll Call and Housekeeping
  - Review and Adopt Agenda
    - *Steering Committee Vote*
  - Approve Minutes from March 7, 2024
    - *Steering Committee Vote*
- 9:20 AM**      **II. WQPP Administrative Updates: Bylaws and Membership, Karen Bohnsack, FKNMS**  
(10 min) The WQPP Bylaws were last reviewed and adopted in November 2021, and are due to be reviewed, amended, and/or reapproved every 3 years. The Bylaws will be reviewed, with members invited to suggest updates. WQPP membership updates will also be discussed
- *Steering Committee Q&A and Discussion (10 min)*
    - *Potential Steering Committee Action Item*

- 9:50 AM**      **III. Communications Subcommittee, Genevieve Schave, DEP**  
(10 min) Discuss the proposed objectives, membership, and operating structure for a new WQPP Communications Subcommittee.
- *Steering Committee Q&A/Discussion* (10 min)
    - *Potential Steering Committee Action Item*
- 10:10 AM**      **IV. Update on Abnormal Fish Behavior/Sawfish Mortality Response**  
FWRI and DEP will provide a brief update of research and response efforts associated with the ongoing sawfish mortality and “spinning” fish event that was first observed in late 2023 in the Lower Keys.
- **Overview of the Research Investigation** (15 min), *FWRI*
  - **Water Quality Monitoring Efforts** (5 min), *Dr. Nicholas Parr, DEP*
  - *Steering Committee Q&A/Discussion* (15 min)
- 10:45 AM**      **Break** (20 minutes)
- 11:05 AM**      **V. Water Quality Improvement Program, Dimael López, USACE**  
(10 min) Follow-up discussion on the Florida Keys Water Quality Improvement Program (FKWQIP), including the process and next steps for implementing newly authorized funding.
- *Steering Committee Q&A/Discussion* (20 min)
- 11:35 AM**      **VI. Florida Keys Tidal Connection Project, Dr. Nicholas Parr, DEP**  
(10 min) Overview of the objectives and planning associated with a new EPA funded tidal connection project in Marathon.
- *Steering Committee Q&A/Discussion* (5 minutes)
- 11:50 AM**      **VII. Florida Coral Reef Coordination Team, Dr. Wesley Brooks, State of Florida / Dr. Erik Stabenau, NPS**  
(10 min) Introduction to the Florida Coral Reef Coordination Team, which has been established under the umbrella of the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force.
- *Steering Committee Q&A/Discussion* (5 minutes)
- 12:05 PM**      **VIII. Florida Coral Reef Resilience Program and Water Quality Subteam, Maurizio Martinelli, Florida Sea Grant / Kylie Morgan, DEP**  
(10 min) Introduction to the newly rebranded Florida Coral Reef Resilience Program and its efforts related to water quality.
- *Steering Committee Q&A/Discussion* (5 minutes)
- 12:20 PM**      **IX. Public Comment** (15 minutes)
- 12:35 PM**      **X. Steering Committee Member Updates**  
(20 min) Members of the Steering Committee provide updates on recent activities or emerging topics of relevance to the Water Quality Protection Program.
- 12:55 PM**      **XI. Wrap-Up and Review Action Items**
- 1:00 PM**      **Adjourn**