

Division of Environmental Assessment and Restoration



Executive Summary

The **Division of Environmental Assessment and Restoration** (DEAR) is responsible for monitoring and assessing Florida's surface water and groundwater quality; identifying, verifying, and prioritizing pollution problems; developing strategies to resolve pollution problems; and partnering with local stakeholders to implement comprehensive restoration strategies. The department's laboratory is housed in DEAR and is integral to fulfilling the division's responsibilities and supporting other department programs and objectives. In summary, DEAR:

- Develops and adopts Florida's surface water quality standards;
- Monitors and reports on surface water and groundwater quality;
- Assesses rivers, lakes, estuaries, and springs to identify pollution problems;
- Adopts scientific water quality restoration targets, known as Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs);
- Develops and implements Basin Management Action Plans (BMAPs) in concert with local stakeholders to achieve water quality restoration targets;
- Promotes stakeholder-driven reasonable assurance plans and other straight-to-implementation approaches;
- Provides the department and other resource agencies with the highest quality laboratory services available;
- Manages water quality data repositories and related geospatial data for storage and use by the department, other agencies, and the public; and
- Provides technical support to the department and the public regarding appropriate methods for water quality analysis and data quality assurance (QA).

The following programs work in concert to meet DEAR's responsibilities for assessment and restoration of Florida's water resources:

- Water Quality Monitoring;
- Water Quality Evaluation and TMDLs;
- Water Quality Restoration;
- Water Quality Standards;
- Watershed Services; and
- Chemistry, Biology, and Scientific Support Programs.

DEAR is budgeted at \$73.7 million in the state fiscal year (FY) 2022-23 General Appropriations Act, which reflects a continued significant increase in fixed capital outlay (FCO) TMDL funding. As a result, the division's FY 2022-23 budget is supported by trust funds (99.99 %) and general revenue (0.003 %). The budget funds 199 full-time equivalent (FTE) and 49 other personnel services (OPS) positions.

DEAR has established 28 milestone-based goals along with 16 performance-related targets for its programs to accomplish during FY 2022-23. All of the division's goals support one or more of the department's strategic goals and objectives, and all are critical to water quality restoration. The division holds itself accountable to:

- Update Florida's water quality standards to better protect human health and aquatic life;
- Complete or draft comprehensive water quality assessments for Florida's basins as part of its continuous assessment cycle;
- Report annually to the Florida Legislature and biennially to EPA on the status of Florida's water quality.
- Draft and propose water quality restoration targets as part of TMDLs or TMDL alternatives;
- Adopt and advance BMAPs to protect and restore impaired waters, and to implement special Legislative protections for South Florida waters and Outstanding Florida Springs;
- Add and refine cutting-edge laboratory techniques to analyze pollutants, assess environmental conditions, and identify pollutant sources, all while continuing to minimize costs and provide optimal support to department programs; and
- Successfully implement the division's comprehensive water quality database – offering training and support to data providers, enabling public access to water quality data, and planning for inclusion of continuous monitoring (CM) data.

DEAR has established an array of performance metrics to measure the progress of water quality restoration across Florida. These metrics include monitoring statewide water quality status and trends as well as the outcomes of DEAR's water quality assessment process. The division also tracks the adoption of site-specific TMDLs or TMDL alternatives to set restoration targets for those impaired waters that do not meet standards. Other metrics illustrate the expanding coverage of BMAPs and the water quality improvements associated with their implementation. Finally, the division measures the timeliness and quality of laboratory services critical to the department and our external clients.

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Mission, Vision, and Values

The fundamental **mission** of the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is to protect, conserve, and manage the state's natural resources and enforce its environmental laws. The department's **vision** is to advance Florida's position as a world leader in protecting natural resources while growing the state's economy.

In pursuing its mission and vision, the department adheres to the following **values**:

- **Leadership.** Serve as an example of how to protect natural resources and economic vitality while adhering to the integrity of our shared vision.
- **Integrity.** Operate ethically, honorably, and respectfully.
- **Accountability.** Accept personal ownership for our actions and responsibilities.
- **Communication.** Operate transparently, sharing information frequently and honestly.
- **Innovation.** Seek innovative ways to improve operations and scientific achievements.
- **Service.** Serve Florida, its environment, the public, stakeholders, and each other.

DEP's executive leadership team has established five **strategic goals** to achieve the department's vision:

- **Coastal Resiliency.** Florida has the most advanced coastal resiliency program in the nation — our communities are prepared for sea-level rise; we have the most advanced coral management system; and our beaches flourish, protect local communities, and allow the public to experience the most iconic beaches in the world.
- **Everglades Restoration.** Florida has the largest and most successful restoration program on the planet to restore America's Everglades and its estuaries.
- **Prized Properties.** Florida is a national leader for conservation stewardship through strategic acquisitions and recreational networks.
- **Water Sustainability.** Florida has the most advanced water protection program in the nation. Quality — Florida is the best at preventing pollution from entering waters; Florida has the best tools to restore impacted waterways. Quantity — Florida has the best tools to ensure future water supply needs to sustain our communities and ecosystems.
- **OneDEP.** The department ensures solutions, resources, and ideas are shared to advance its mission to protect, conserve, and manage Florida's natural resources.

Water and natural resources are the foundation of Florida's communities, economy, and way of life. The department is committed to **achieve more, now** — to work together with all to protect, conserve, and restore Florida's waters. The division fully supports this effort and has established priorities, goals, and targets to achieve **cleaner water, faster**.

Client Services

The **Division of Environmental Assessment and Restoration** is charged with protecting, maintaining, and improving the quality of state waters for domestic, agricultural, industrial, recreational, and other beneficial uses, such as providing high-quality supplies of potable water and an environment conducive to the propagation of fish and wildlife.

In executing its responsibilities, DEAR serves three primary clients:

The Public. The public expects DEAR to use every resource at its disposal to safeguard the state's water resources. The public is entitled to responsiveness, respect, professional treatment, and reliable information. Services provided include:

- Easily accessible information on issues important to the public such as [algal bloom status updates](#); [reporting of new algal blooms](#); [impaired waters, TMDLs, and BMAPs](#); [springs restoration](#); watershed management ([Basin411](#)); and [water quality standards](#);
- Water quality data through the department's interactive water quality data portal and the division's [Watershed Information Network \(WIN\) data repository](#);
- [Interactive report cards](#) for the status and trend monitoring networks, which characterize the overall quality of Florida's waters;
- Periodic review and revision of the state's water quality standards as part of the Clean Water Act's triennial review process;
- Technical assistance to stakeholders on the development and implementation of site-specific alternative criteria (SSAC);
- Laboratory services, including information on sampling and analytical methods, laboratory analyses, QA protocols, data management strategies, and laboratory certification processes (all of which are available on the [DEP Laboratory's website](#), along with a directory of certified laboratories.)

Basin Stakeholders. DEAR has a responsibility to serve those affected by its decisions and actions, which are made and performed to protect and restore regional basins and watersheds. Stakeholders include local governments, businesses, industrial and agricultural interests, and local residents. Each individual basin has unique water quality problems that affect varied and often competing stakeholder interests. The demands for responsiveness, professional treatment, reliable information, responsible science, sound public policy, and a level playing field must be managed according to the unique circumstances that exist from basin to basin. Services provided include:

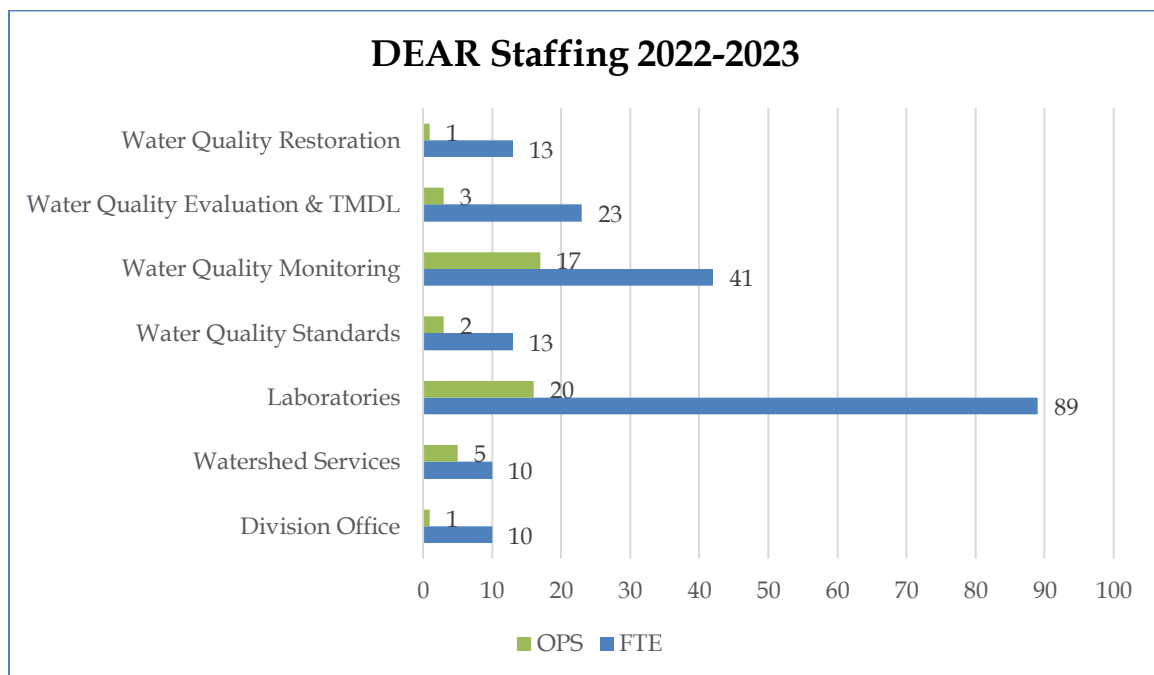
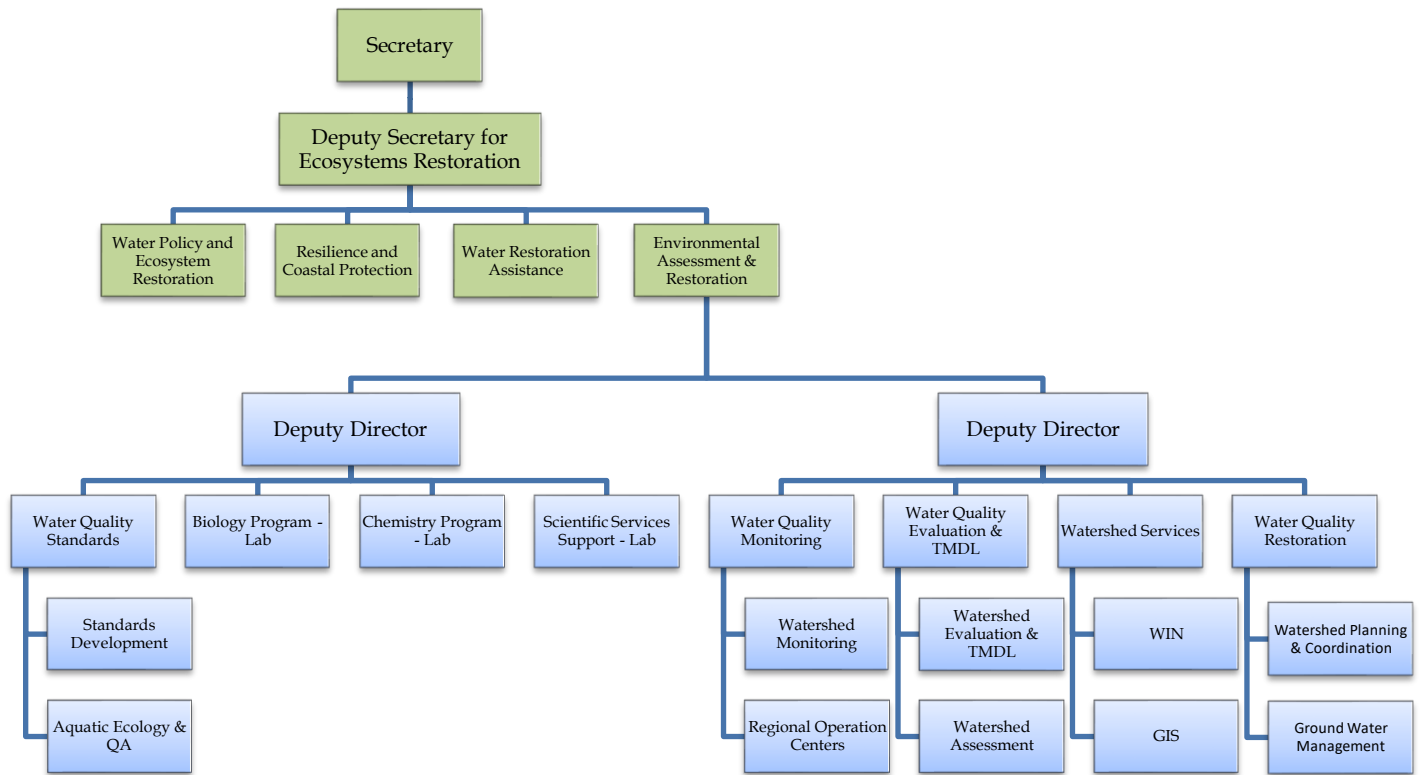
- Water quality data through [WIN](#) Reports & Extracts, the Storage and Retrieval (STORET) database application, and the STORET Public Access ([SPA](#)) website;
- Information on [impaired waters](#), including the assessment process, current and historical lists of impairment decisions, strategic monitoring plans, and data used in the assessment and listing processes;

- Draft and final [TMDL](#) documents and other related information detailing water quality restoration targets for impaired waterbodies;
- Review of water quality-based effluent limitations (WQBELs) and mixing zones for entities discharging wastewater to state surface waters;
- Review submitted alternative resource plans and provide technical assistance to stakeholders on the development of these plans;
- [Restoration](#) plans, notices, and documents, including an [annual statewide report](#) detailing the projects, actions, schedules, and costs associated with restoring impaired waterbodies;
- Technical assistance regarding [data QA](#) – including training on environmental sampling and data evaluation, maintenance of field [standard operating procedures](#) (SOPs), and approval of [alternative and modified methods](#) – so that data collected by basin stakeholders can be used by the department; and
- In coordination with the Division of Water Restoration Assistance, information on [financial assistance](#) for local governments and others to build water quality restoration projects and to implement management strategies in priority watersheds.

Public Officials. Whether in response to the Governor or Cabinet, members of the Florida Legislature, other state agencies, local governments, the U.S. Congress, or the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), DEAR must respond promptly and professionally with reliable information and wise public policy recommendations based on high-quality science. Services provided include:

- Water quality data through [WIN](#) and [SPA](#);
- Laboratory services, including information on sampling and analytical methods, laboratory analyses, QA protocols, data management strategies, and laboratory certification processes;
- Water quality reports, including the biennial "[Integrated Water Quality Assessment for Florida](#)"; and
- Periodic reports to the Governor and Legislature on the status of activities the division undertakes to protect Florida's waters, including an annual statewide report detailing the projects, actions, schedules, and costs associated with restoring impaired waterbodies.

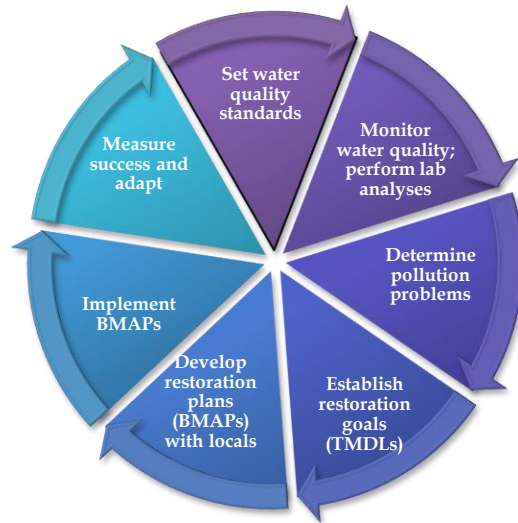
Organizational Structure



Based on the 2022-23 General Appropriations Act, DEAR has 199 FTE and a budget that supports 49 OPS positions.

Program Descriptions

The watershed management cycle illustrates how DEAR's programs work together through a continuous, adaptive process of evaluation and management of Florida's water resources – building an increasingly sophisticated understanding of surface water and groundwater resources. It also illustrates how this understanding leads to meaningful actions focused on protecting and restoring the state's waters.



Water Quality Standards Program

- Develops, adopts, and updates Florida's water quality standards (i.e., criteria, classifications, antidegradation policy, and moderating provisions);
- Evaluates petitions for reclassifications, designation of Outstanding Florida Waters (OFW), and SSAC;
- Trains staff and outside parties on environmental sampling methods and provides technical support on the design of biological studies to petitioners for reclassification, OFW designation, and SSAC;
- Coordinates the department's bioassessment program through developing methods, providing training, and writing implementation guidance;
- Provides technical support for the review of Level I and II WQBELs;
- Conducts water quality and bioassessment studies to support water quality criteria development; and
- Manages the department's QA program, which includes assisting other programs with the implementation of the department's QA directive, reviewing alternative method requests, conducting audits, and coordinating the department's quality management plan.

Water Quality Monitoring Program

- Monitors and collects water quality and bioassessment data for the determination of statewide surface and groundwater quality through status and trend networks, basin-wide assessments for restoration efforts, and site-specific monitoring for the determination of impairment;
- Responds to algal blooms, wastewater spills, and other events affecting water quality and public health, which require accurate sampling data and scientific evaluation;

- Provides annual statewide assessments of surface and groundwater quality by utilizing data collected from the Status and Trend Networks;
- Coordinates with state and local agencies, municipalities, counties, and water management districts to improve efficiency of monitoring and with the collection of water quality data; and
- Collaborates with watershed partners to establish and maintain a monitoring coordination group (the [Florida Water Resources Monitoring Council](#)).

Water Quality Evaluation and TMDL Program

- Assesses water quality to determine those waters that are impaired (i.e., do not meet water quality standards) and those waters requiring additional data or further evaluation, including pollutant source tracking;
- Develops annual Strategic Monitoring Plans to assist in assessing the health of surface waters by conducting hydrological and biological watershed-based monitoring activities;
- Prioritizes development of TMDLs (water quality restoration targets);
- Develops a schedule and workplan for TMDL development;
- Evaluates and models pollutant inputs to impaired waterbodies from all sources;
- Develops and adopts by rule TMDL targets for impaired waterbodies, and establishes nutrient TMDLs as site-specific interpretations of the narrative nutrient criteria; and
- Coordinates with and provide technical expertise to stakeholders to support the development of reasonable assurance plans and other pollution control mechanisms in lieu of TMDLs and BMAPs.

Water Quality Restoration Program

- Develops, adopts, and implements BMAPs (water quality restoration plans) for surface waters including freshwater springs;
- Conducts regular reviews of BMAP implementation progress; adaptively manages and updates BMAP requirements;
- Annually reports on all adopted BMAPs via the Statewide Annual Report (STAR),
- Supports local water quality initiatives through collaboration and technical assistance; and
- Assists the Division of Water Restoration Assistance with reviewing and prioritizing water quality restoration projects.

Watershed Services Program

- Secures and manages non-regulatory water quality data for the state through [WIN](#) and [SPA](#) ;
- Transmits ambient water quality data from WIN and the Statewide Biological Database (SBIO) to the U.S. EPA Water Quality Exchange (WQX) data repository;
- Manages the analysis, design, construction, and implementation of the planned phases of WIN;
- Manages, edits, analyzes, and depicts geospatial data for use by DEAR, other divisions, and other agencies;

- Serves as Florida's steward of the U.S. Geological Survey ([USGS](#)) [National Hydrography Dataset \(NHD\)](#), updating the Florida portion of the geospatial dataset which provides hydrography data for surface waters across the country for purposes of mapping, modeling, and assessment processes and applications;
- Manages, edits and updates the Land Use Land Cover (LULC) layers for the areas of the Northwest Florida Water Management District and Suwanee River Water Management District;
- Coordinates the division's data management initiatives; and
- Manages the searchable database of Florida monitoring activities ([Water-CAT](#)).

DEP Laboratory

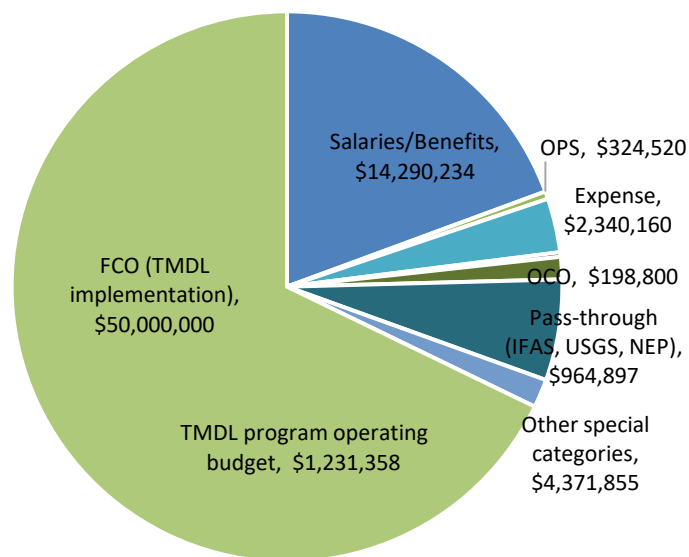
- Performs chemical and biological analyses for the department, water management districts (WMDs), and other state and federal agencies, including the U.S. Department of Homeland Security;
- Develops and validates analytical methods to support regulatory and resource management decisions and policy development;
- Performs scientific study design, technical document development and review, and statistical and narrative interpretation of environmental data;
- Performs field sampling for various department initiatives;
- In conjunction with the water quality monitoring program, provides accurate data analysis and scientific assessment of algal blooms, wastewater spills, and other events affecting water quality and public health; and
- Implements actions associated with the national Environmental Response Laboratory Network.

Budget Overview FY 2022-23

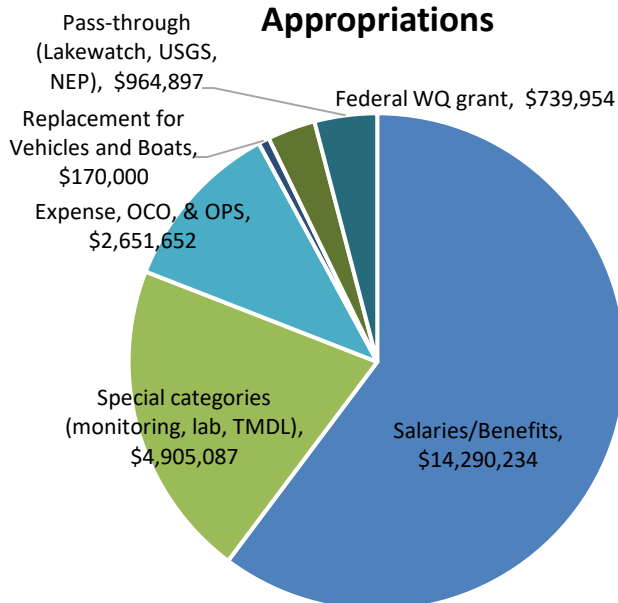
DEAR's operating budget varies from year to year. The operating budget for FY 2022-23 is similar to the last fiscal year. DEAR's total budget for 2022-23 includes Fixed Capital Outlay TMDL funding, appropriated from Land Acquisition Trust Fund. Approximately half the division's total budget comes from Land Acquisition Trust Fund for FY 2022-23.

- The total budget for DEAR is \$73.7 million.
- Salaries and benefits represent 19% of DEAR's total budget and 60% of the operating budget.
- DEAR's operating budget includes nearly \$1 million directly transferred to other entities.
- DEAR's operating budget also includes \$5 million in special category funds, much of which underwrites laboratory services to other divisions and outside entities.
- DEAR manages \$156 million in grant funding to restore impaired waters by monitoring and assessing water quality, setting scientific water quality restoration goals, and guiding the implementation of the projects and actions set forth in adopted Basin Management Action Plans.
- The budget comprises 68% FCO and 32% operating funds.
- 99.99% of DEAR's total budget comes from Trust Funds and 0.003% from General Revenue.

DEAR 2022-2023 Total Budget



DEAR 2022-2023 Operating Budget Appropriations



Division Objectives, Measures, and Key Performance Indicators

Division Objective – What is to be achieved or measured by this division goal?

Division Measure – What are the specific actions to be done to achieve the objective?

Key performance indicator (KPI) – What is the metric or indicator used to evaluate the success of the measure?

Target – What is the performance target for the KPI, and how frequently is progress measured against it – annually (A), quarterly (Q), or quarterly year-to-date (Q, YTD)?

Goal Number	Division Objective	Division Measure	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Target	Due Date
Division					
DEAR1	Complete milestones from the division's business plan to further its mission of assessment and restoration	Business plan milestones met	Percent of milestones met	90% (Q, YTD)	Quarterly measure
DEAR2	Initiate the Event Response Reporting Project	Pending approval of the IT Project with OTIS, develop project scope, charter and solicitation with OTIS.	Timely completion	Milestone	6/30/2023
DEAR3	Manage the Event Response Reporting Project	Manage the project according to established project/contract milestones.	Timely completion	Milestone	6/30/2023
DEAR4	Training and Leadership Development	Evaluate and expand the division training plan to include training that maintains core competencies across programs, professional development opportunities for top performers, implements training program for staff and investing in leadership training for your personnel with the most potential as future leaders.	Timely completion	Milestone	4/30/2023

Goal Number	Division Objective	Division Measure	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Target	Due Date
DEAR5	Succession Planning	Develop a succession plan that addresses key leadership, key program expertise, and key operational positions with the division and develop recommended actions for each that can be implemented to support continuity and institutional knowledge of critical division functions. Such actions may include employee mentoring and cross training, developing documentation of critical program knowledge (e.g. via process and procedure mapping, program specific guidance, etc.), and other steps that should also be implemented throughout the review period to ensure that DEAR has the resources to maintain critical business functions, procedures, and competency when unexpected and inevitable staffing changes such as promotions or retirements may occur.	Timely completion	Milestone	4/30/2023
DEP Laboratory					
LABS1	Maintain 95% of sample analyses completed timely	Complete sample analyses per SOP	Percent of sample analyses completed timely	95% (Q)	Quarterly measure
LABS2	Maintain 95% of event reports completed timely	Prepare event reports per SOP	Percent of event reports transmitted	95% (Q)	Quarterly measure

Goal Number	Division Objective	Division Measure	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Target	Due Date
LABS3	Minimize the costs associated with providing laboratory services to department programs	Conduct business analysis to determine which laboratory services are best procured from the private sector and which are best retained in-house; consider both the cost and the level of service needed to support program objectives; establish overflow services with private sector laboratories optimized for those analyses where there are cost savings to the department and where the level of service is appropriate to serve program objectives; document costs saved by establishing overflow services	Timely completion	Milestone	6/30/2023
LABS4	Expand services as necessary to provide optimal support to department programs	Expand and optimize in-house analytical capabilities and procure additional services through overflow contracts where that option is more cost-effective; document number of new or enhanced analyses available to customers	Timely completion	Milestone	6/30/2023
LABS5-1	Achieve an excellent level of performance on the annual customer satisfaction survey	Perform lab duties at an excellent level of service; send lab customers an annual satisfaction survey rating lab performance as excellent, good, or poor; achieve excellent or good ratings	Percent excellent or good ratings on customer survey	97% (A)	Annual measure

Goal Number	Division Objective	Division Measure	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Target	Due Date
LABS5-2	Achieve an excellent level of performance on the annual customer satisfaction survey	Respond to requests for additional support by named customer satisfaction survey respondents	Timely completion	Milestone	6/30/2023
Water Quality Monitoring Program					
WQMP1	Implement the status and trend monitoring networks	Monitor, assess, and report on the water quality of water resources, meeting milestones outlined in the monitoring design document	Percent of monitoring completed	95% (Q)	Quarterly measure
WQMP2	Submit biennial Integrated Water Quality Assessment for Florida report	Coordinate with division programs to receive draft input from programs by 10/30/2023	Timely completion	Milestone	10/30/2023
WQMP3	Maintain bioassessment proficiencies appropriate for each regional operations center (ROC) through training, passing audits for certification, and online testing	Promote continuous education and training opportunities, with remedial action when needed	At least 2 employees per ROC who are trained and maintain proficiency for each of the bioassessment methods.	100% (A)	Annual measure

Goal Number	Division Objective	Division Measure	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Target	Due Date
WQMP4	Maintain proficiency and train employees in water quality sampling techniques through participation in the Water Quality Sampling Apprenticeship Program	Promote continuous education and training opportunities, with remedial action when needed	Percentage of employees with 6 or more months of experience who have been trained	100% (A)	Annual measure
Water Quality Evaluation and TMDL Program					
WQETP1	Implement Statewide Biennial Assessment	Develop statewide draft assessment lists and have draft lists ready for internal review	Timely completion	Milestone	6/15/2023
WQETP2	Plan and develop the strategic monitoring plans and track annual progress	Identify waterbodies to monitor to support impaired waters assessments and collect data necessary to meet data sufficiency requirements specified in the Impaired Waters Rule	Percent of monitoring completed (for the calendar year 2022)	Water quality samples: 80% completion; Bioassessment samples: 50% completion (A)	Annual measure
WQETP3	Deliver data to EPA to meet CWA requirements	Maintain data management processes to upload impaired waters assessment information for the 2022 Biennial Assessment to the EPA ATTAINS system	Timely completion	Milestone	4/1/2023
WQETP4	Develop TMDLs, write TMDL not needed documents, set restoration targets, or provide support for alternative restoration plans	Present Notice of Proposed Rule packages to Secretary; consistent with implementing the current 2-year TMDL workplan or provide a briefing on the final status of TMDL alternatives; or document TMDLs not needed.	Timely Completion	Milestone	6/30/2023

Goal Number	Division Objective	Division Measure	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Target	Due Date
WQETP5	Develop Consolidated bacteria TMDLs	Complete Consolidated Bacteria TMDL document for the Everglades West Coast. Develop a draft TMDL Consolidated report(s) and hold a public meeting(s) for a TMDLs for bacteria impairments consistent with the 2-year TMDL workplan. Alternatively, develop a strategy, in coordination with the MS4 program, to address bacteria impairments.	Timely completion	Milestone	6/30/2023
WQETP6	Develop a plan for outreach to stakeholders for alternative restoration plans throughout the state	Develop a plan to provide formal and informal outreach to stakeholders for existing alternative restoration plans and development of new alternative restoration plans throughout the state	Timely completion	Milestone	12/2/2022
WQETP7	Develop an outreach plan. Continue public outreach of alternative restoration plans throughout the state	Foster productive relationships with stakeholders through public outreach to support the identification and development of alternative restoration plans.	Timely completion	Milestone	6/30/2023

Goal Number	Division Objective	Division Measure	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Target	Due Date
Water Quality Restoration Program					
WQRP1-1	Update basin management action plans (BMAPs)	Draft an outreach and engagement schedule that outlines a plan for staff efforts to meet with BMAP stakeholders and present draft interim milestones associated with 2025 deadlines; keep the division office informed of progress through routine updates	Timely Completion	Milestone	10/15/2022
WQRP1-2	Update basin management action plans (BMAPs)	Determine areas for updates and revisions to the BMAPs (i.e. incorporation of wastewater and OSTDS plans, process for prioritizing projects, etc.), and develop draft BMAP language	Timely Completion	Milestone	12/1/2022
WQRP2	Revise reporting and outreach tools	Continue efforts on the development of an updated portal for collection of BMAP project data; specifically, develop and implement pilot reporting platform and test using subset of BMAP stakeholders for the 2022 data collection effort	Timely Completion	Milestone	3/31/2023
WQRP3	Revise reporting and outreach tools	Review and propose improvements to Florida Statewide Annual Report Story Map.			10/17/2022

Goal Number	Division Objective	Division Measure	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Target	Due Date
WQRP4	FSESCI reporting	Complete a summary report on previous training and auditing efforts for the Florida Stormwater, Erosion, and Sedimentation Control Inspector (FSESCI) Qualification Program. Include total individuals trained, the number of training events, audit information, and other pertinent information.	Timely completion	Milestone	6/30/2023
WQRP5	Develop BMAP program online resource tool	Expand the IRL internal online resource tool to all BMAPs to aid in the development and implementation of BMAPs	Timely completion	Milestone	12/31/2022
Water Quality Standards Program					
WQSP1	Complete Triennial Review rulemaking	Continue to evaluate changes needed to 62-302 and 62-303. When ERC is full, prepare revised Notice of Proposed Rule and supporting information, brief Secretary on the rulemaking package, and present TR to the ERC	Timely completion	Milestone	06/30/2023
WQSP2	Review WQBELs, stream exclusion "petitions," mixing zone submittals, and submittals demonstrating attainment of the stream numeric nutrient standard	Coordinate with applicant and district; provide review comments within 3 weeks of submittal from district or permit applicant, unless additional time is specifically agreed upon by division management	Percent of submittals that are timely reviewed	90% (A)	Annual measure

Goal Number	Division Objective	Division Measure	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Target	Due Date
WQSP3	Review SSAC and Variance Submittals	Coordinate with applicant and district; provide review comments within 6 weeks of submittal from district or permit applicant, unless additional time is specifically agreed upon by division management	Percent of submittals that are timely reviewed	90% (A)	Annual measure
WQSP4-1	Conduct lab and field audits in response to program requests, and provide bioassessment proficiency audits as required under SOPs	Coordinate with the entity to be audited, conduct audits, and provide preliminary audit reports within 3 months of audit and receipt of audited records	Percent of preliminary audit reports prepared timely	90% (A)	Annual measure
WQSP4-2	Conduct lab and field audits in response to program requests, and provide bioassessment proficiency audits as required under SOPs	Work with audited parties on corrective actions, and prepare final audit report within 3 months of complete response from the audited party	Percent of final audit reports prepared timely	90% (A)	Annual measure
WQSP4-3	Conduct lab and field audits in response to program requests, and provide bioassessment proficiency audits as required under SOPs	Conduct 5 or more audits per year	Number of audits performed	5 (A)	Annual measure

Goal Number	Division Objective	Division Measure	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Target	Due Date
WQSP5	Provide QA training to department staff and stakeholders	Conduct 10 or more training events on statewide SOPs, surface and groundwater sampling methods, bioassessment methods; and other QA topics	Number of training events conducted	10 (A)	Annual measure
WQSP6	Assess the QA report				
WQSP7	Assess the implementation of the department's QA policy (DEP 972)	Survey department QA officers on the status and quality of their program's QA activities; work with department programs to document and improve their quality systems, and draft annual QA report and submit it to the Division Office	Timely completion	Milestone	5/31/2023
WQSP8	Conduct Lake Vegetation Index (LVI) analysis work	Continue to meet schedule for contract deliverables to refine LVI assessment regions and potential lake classes, explore additional metrics and environmental drivers, and develop LVI Stressor ID process	Timely completion of project tasks as laid out in the contract	Milestone	6/30/2023
WQSP9	Maintain Bioassessment Proficiency Program	Offer audit opportunities for first-time SCI samplers 4 times/year, establish new HA testing sites, and respond to requests for SCI refresher audits, HA testing, and online test-taking.	Number of first-time SCI audit opportunities	4 (A)	Annual Measure

Goal Number	Division Objective	Division Measure	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Target	Due Date
Watershed Services Program					
WSP1-1	Improve the Florida NHD	Edit and provide the latest edited NHD layer to OTIS for uploading to the Spatial Data Engine (ArcSDE) library (Fall update)	Timely completion	Milestone	11/15/2022
WSP1-2	Improve the Florida NHD	Edit and provide the latest edited NHD layer to OTIS for uploading to the Spatial Data Engine (ArcSDE) library (Spring update)	Timely completion	Milestone	5/16/2023
WSP2	Improve the Florida Land Use Land Cover (LULC) spatial data for the area of the SRWMD	Complete editing of the LULC layer for the area of the Suwannee River Water Management District (SRWMD) and provide the layer to OTIS for uploading to the DEP Spatial Data Engine (ArcSDE) library	Timely completion	Milestone	7/29/2022
WSP3	Improve the Florida Land Use Land Cover (LULC) spatial data for the area of NFWMD	Establish a schedule to edit and provide the latest edited LULC layer for the area of the Northwest Florida Water Management District (NFWMD) to OTIS for uploading to the Spatial Data Engine (ArcSDE) library; implement the schedule's milestones.	Percent completion of LULC edits and QA checks	Percent Completion to be determined when imagery is available	To be determined when imagery is available (imagery for the NFWMD counties will begin to be released sometime between July - August 2022)
WSP4	Manage the Watershed Information Network (WIN) Phase 1	Provide quarterly updates to DEAR Program Administrators on WIN Management status of data providers	Timely Completion	Quarterly	7/29/2022 10/31/2022 1/31/2023 4/28/2023

Goal Number	Division Objective	Division Measure	Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Target	Due Date
WSP5	Provide ambient water quality data to EPA	Transmit ambient water quality data from WIN and SBIO to the EPA Water Quality Exchange (WQX) data repository in fulfillment of 106 grant funding requirements; submit a status report to EPA	Timely completion	Milestone	3/31/2023
WSP6-1	Initiate the WIN Continuous Monitoring (CM) analysis, design and construction project	Pending initiation of an approved IT Project by OTIS, initiate development of project scope, charter and solicitation with OTIS.	Timely completion	Milestone	6/30/2023
WSP6-2	Manage the WIN CM analysis, design and construction project	Manage the approved IT project according to established project/contract milestones.	Timely completion	Milestone	6/30/2023
WSP7	Implement division data management priorities	Implement FY22/23 additional division data management priorities as established through DEAR data management strategy activities	Timely completion	Milestone	6/30/2023

Mid- and Long-term Goals

The goals and objectives tables above contain the mid-and long-term goals from prior business plans that are now actionable items for the division in FY 2022-23. Some goals cross DEAR programs, but they are listed under the presumed primary or lead program.

Mid-term Goals (two to three years out)

Water Quality Monitoring Program

- Research potential alternatives to using Trimble units for status network station location and develop a succession plan for use of different technology if an alternative is found.
- Take what we have learned from coordination between lab and samplers to improve the process for sampling teams to notify lab of sample numbers, with a process that would be easy for sampling teams. Provide recommendations for LIMS enhancement or better use of the current features in LIMS. Develop strategies that could be used to assess estuaries for 305(b) reporting and include estuaries in the 2026 Integrated Report.
- Improve and make the data management process consistent throughout the Program, including the tracking and flow of how documents are archived, and data entered into departmental databases.

Water Quality Evaluation & TMDL Program

- Develop strategies and approaches to derive stream nutrient TMDLs, including H1.
- Track, participate in, and influence the national conversation regarding the TMDL Prioritization 2.0.
- Evaluate alternatives to the current Impaired Waters Rule Assessment Database, currently a Microsoft Access database, including any necessary revisions to data management procedures and output applications that use the assessment information.
- Develop strategies to consider the needs of disadvantaged and historically underserved communities under TMDL Prioritization 2.0 in a phased manner.

- The first phase of the effort will involve using demographic data to identify potentially disadvantaged or underserved communities and then evaluate the historic level of water quality monitoring in waterbodies most likely used by these communities.
- The second phase of the effort will involve community outreach and engagement so that DEP can receive input on community needs and concerns, which will then be used to refine future 2-year workplans or other restoration outreach (e.g., support for 4b and 4e plan development).

Water Quality Restoration Program

- Integrate Bacteria TMDL approach with revised restoration approaches for bacteria impaired waters and implement a streamlined approach to restoring bacteria-impaired waters, adopting rules if necessary.
- Develop and implement a Golf Course Recognition Program.
- Develop voluntary “protection plans” templates for unimpaired areas.

Watershed Services Program

- Implement DEAR Data Management Priorities as they are established, mid-term examples of which include:
 - Construct and implement the approved design for a Continuous Monitoring data system for WIN (WIN CM)
 - Initiate analysis for bringing biological data to WIN (WIN Phase 3)
 - Initiate analysis of the merits and approach for consolidating GWIS with WIN
- Redesign WIN search and list screens as a proactive measure to enhance performance as the repository grows.
- Continue and complete an expanded data cleanup identification and resolution process to ensure data quality adheres to WIN minimum data quality standards following removal of autonomous transactions.
- Re-examine and refine or re-design Project Intended Use in WIN.

Water Quality Standards Program

- Evaluate options for an OFW "managed areas" update to address name changes to parks, aquatic preserves, and other managed areas; new acquisitions not currently covered under the OFW rule; and limitations of the current GIS data layer.
- QA Rule Rulemaking - Revise/add methods to DEP SOPs that are incorporated by reference to update existing SOPs (as needed) and to add new SOPs for new methods/procedures or new equipment, for example, the statewide alternative method approval for in-line chlorine meters.
- Develop a recommendation to revise the freshwater specific conductance criterion. The recommendation will consider EPA's draft methodology for developing specific conductance criteria, use Florida's stream condition index data, and will be regionally specific. The analysis supporting the recommendation will include an evaluation of how waterbody type affects the biological response to specific conductance.
- Improve implementation and quality system for bioassessment methods – update the SCI Primer to include guidance for sampling small and large systems, update Rapid Periphyton Survey implementation based on completed data analysis, and modify the implementation, metrics and calibration of the Lake Vegetation Index if warranted by ongoing contracted data analysis.
- Work with EPA to develop a path forward to revise and update the Department's human health criteria and hold public workshops to elicit feedback on the chosen approach.
- Continue working with offices throughout the department to ensure that all programs that generate or use environmental data have documented and active procedures for quality control and review of those data. Re-evaluate metrics and analyze survey results and Inspector General Audit results to determine the usefulness and/or if improvements are needed to the annual QA report to the Secretary.
- Develop policy and provide guidance on data usability for continuous monitoring (CM) probes that are not currently approved by DEP SOPs for use in ambient water assessments. Develop guidance for CM of traditional parameters (pH, DO, temperature, conductivity) and add continuous monitoring minimum QA requirements to DEP SOPs.
- Evaluate estuary numeric nutrient criteria (NNC) developed with <20 data points, calculate revised criteria if applicable.
- Conduct a study to examine relative effectiveness of recovering extractable organics analyzed by EPA Method 8321 from groundwater and surface water using sampling equipment constructed of different material types.

- Evaluate potential biological metrics or indices for use in the assessment of marine and estuarine waters. Develop a “toolkit” that identifies habitats and geographic locations with existing marine bioassessment tools that may be used to assess the biological condition of marine waters for various purposes on a case-by-case basis.

Chemistry Program

- Continue to update methods and instrumentation to improve the range of services, accuracy and sensitivity of results, and cost-efficiency.
- Develop strategies to stabilize staffing.

Biology Program

- Continue to update methods and instrumentation to improve the range of services, accuracy and sensitivity of results, and cost-efficiency.
- Develop strategies to stabilize staffing.
- Develop biovolume calculations for taxonomic phytoplankton data.
- Complete Microbiological Hold Time Study to evaluate the feasibility of increasing the current 8-hour holding time from collection to incubation for *Escherichia coli* bacteria samples analyzed using the Quanti-Tray method.

Scientific Support Services Program

- Maintain and, where possible, improve laboratory infrastructure in coordination with the Department of Management Services. Identify funding sources for individual projects and utilize DMS monies if available. Mid-Term projects include:
 - Electrical Switchgear and BAS (\$700,000 - \$1,000,000)
 - Labs Bridge Walkway Enclosure (\$600,000)
 - Mechanical Chaseway Design Project (\$1.5 - \$2 M)
 - ADA Bathroom Construction (includes DEAR in BMC) (\$1.4 M)

- Upgrade of halon fire suppression system - 3rd-floor labs (\$130,000)
- Replacement of old DI water pipes and fittings
- Replacement of vacuum pump system and expand vacuum connections to the C214 lab

Long-term Goals (four to five years out)

Water Quality Monitoring Program

- Reorganize the management of the Regional Operation Centers and convert OPS to FTE within the entire Program.

Water Quality Evaluation & TMDL Program

- Develop an assessment methodology for narrative nutrient standard, so that we can have a consistent method to place chlorophyll *a* into category 2 with or without a bioassessment.
- Coordinate with WQSP to identify Class IV waters and then assess these waters where appropriate.
- Develop data handling processes and computational approaches to assess continuous monitoring data under the IWR.
- Evaluate there is a nexus between impaired waters and the impacts of climate change that requires immediate attention in TMDL development.

Water Quality Restoration Program

- Implement onsite sewage treatment and disposal system (OSTDS) remediation plans for areas around the state's impaired Outstanding Florida Springs. Conduct 5-year evaluations of springs BMAPs, update OSTDS remediation plans, and identify additional management strategies and restoration projects where needed.
- Update all BMAPs to include remediation plans for OSTDS and domestic wastewater treatment facilities.

Watershed Services Program

- Implement DEAR Data Management Priorities as they are established, examples of which may include:
 - Evaluate the scope of DEAR data uses vs. data loading to WIN; determine if there are additional non-regulatory data DEAR desires to have in WIN
 - Explore/develop a LIMS to WIN primary key linkage to assist DEAR data searches between the two.
 - Scope and subsequently implement solutions for use of tiered data.

Water Quality Standards Program

- Develop numeric nutrient criteria for waterbody segments that are not currently covered by Estuary Nutrient Region (ENR) criteria
- Provide increased QA support services, including prioritizing Quality of Science Reviews for programs with out-of-date quality plans (≥ 4 years) and establishing a rotating schedule for DEP SOP trainings within the districts.
- Improve implementation and qualify system for bioassessment methods – provide recommendations on which bioassessment tools are most appropriate in springs runs and spring vents.
- Develop guidance for CM of non-traditional parameters, including nitrate, phosphorous, and chlorophyll *a*, and add continuous monitoring minimum QA requirements to DEP SOPs.

Chemistry Program

- Implement strategies to stabilize staffing.
- Periodically review scientific literature to determine potential future chemical analysis needs of DEP Programs.

Biology Program

- Implement strategies to stabilize staffing.
- Periodically review scientific literature to determine potential future biological analysis needs of DEP Programs.

Scientific Support Services Program

- Maintain and where possible, improve laboratory infrastructure in coordination with the Department of Management Services (DMS). Identify funding sources for individual projects and utilize DMS monies if available. Long-Term projects include:
 - Window and Door Replacement (\$440,000)
 - Upgrade HVAC control systems

Successes, Achievements, and Improvements

- Staff of the WSP WIN section together with OTIS staff completed a significant system-wide upgrade of the Watershed Information Network (WIN) data repository. The upgrade improved data processing, improved error logging, tremendously reduced storage space requirements and strain on its DEP server, without sacrificing performance for users of WIN.
- Staff of the WSP WIN section together with OTIS staff updated the process to load data from the Watershed Information Network (WIN) data repository to the U.S. EPA Water Quality Exchange (WQX). Loading data to WQX is one of the requirements for DEAR and DEP under the U.S. EPA 106 Grant. This process update enabled loading only new and changed records in WIN to WQX, resulting in a significant reduction in the number of incremental loads needed and the number of staff and server time needed.
- Staff of the WSP WIN section together with OTIS staff redesigned the WIN data translations process to improve performance, streamline the process and correct for assumptions made during the initial analysis and design.
- Staff in the WSP GIS section, with input from ROCs, WQAP, WQSP and the Biology Program completely redesigned the Survey123 Algal Bloom response survey and layer. This effort included using MS Power Automate to integrate existing field sheets into the Algal Bloom survey so new lab sheets would be created from the digital submissions. This work improved the efficiency and quality of field data capture and reduced effort level needed for DEAR program staff working on Algal Bloom response (time, quality and cost savings).
- WQAP's Southeast Regional Operation Center (SE ROC) conducted bi-weekly sampling of Port Mayaca (SFWMD structure S308) for Harmful Algae Blooms in coordination with South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) (March-October 2021)
- Southeast Regional Operation Center (SE ROC) completed sampling in coordination with Food and Drug Administration contractor for *Cyclospora* and microbial source tracking in C-23 canal (10/05/2021)
- WQAP's Jordan Skaggs (SE ROC) trained Indian River County – Space Coast Surfriders on surface-water sampling and submitting microbial source-tracking analytes (07/27/2021)
- WQAP implemented a process to incorporate updates and improvements to the ESRI Survey123 field forms for use in Status and Trend Networks monitoring.
- WQAP developed a Survey123 Maintenance Workgroup to address issues with the Strategic Monitoring and Status and Trend Network electronic field surveys, relay updates to users, and identify replacement devices that are suitable for field use.

- WQAP WMS completed and published a study titled Regional extent, environmental relevance, and spatiotemporal variability of neonicotinoid insecticides detected in Florida's ambient flowing waters through analyses of Status and Trend and Strategic Monitoring Program neonicotinoid data, existing US EPA aquatic invertebrate water quality benchmarks, stream discharge, and land use coverage. The article is found at <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10661-022-10000-3>.
- [WQAP WMS completed the Study of Select Lakes for Wastewater Inputs http://publicfiles.dep.state.fl.us/dear/DEARweb/WMS/Reports_Docs_SOPs/2020_Wastewater_Indicator_Sampling_of_Lakes.pdf. Of the 20 lakes resampled, sucralose was detected in all except one. At least one other wastewater indicator was detected in 13 of the 19 lakes providing sucralose detections. While all wastewater indicator detections were relatively low, 6 lakes (Lake Alice, Lake Ann, Lake Juniper, Lake Sampson, Lake Seminole, and Little Lake Wilson) had sucralose concentrations greater than 1 microgram per liter (µg/L) and detections of at least one other wastewater tracer
- WQAP WMS staff conducted a successful in-person Status and Trend sampler training course in Tallahassee during March 2022. The last in-person Status and Trend sampler training had been a refresher course held in October 2019.
- [FWC had planned to spray large patches of hydrilla in McIntosh Bay in April of 2022 during which they reported persistent algal blooms to the DEP algal Report Dashboard. FWC wanted to avoid increasing the size of the bloom by spraying and causing eutrophication by plant die off. WQAP's Northeast Regional Operation Center (NE ROC) coordinated with Alachua County and FWC to take algae samples. Once microcystins were detected in toxin results, WQAP and Alachua County began trading off bi-weekly sampling of McIntosh Bay and the surrounding water in Orange Lake. Shortly after the initial sample, FWC had a public meeting concerning the Hydrilla treatment. Brian Davis of NE ROC participated in the meeting to represent FDEP and answer public concerns regarding the ongoing algae bloom. Many citizens were worried about the bloom so DEP's presence at the meeting was helpful in calming nerves and answering questions on how often it would be sampled. FWC began using the results to determine that hydrilla treatment should be put off for the near future.]
- WQAP conducted a Response to Harmful Algae Blooms (HAB) - FDEP Training. Over 80 participants, including from many local and State-wide monitoring agencies joined this training. The goal of the training was to assure consistency of HAB responses. This virtual training was offered on March 10 and included a presentation on identifying appropriate sampling sites, sample collection techniques, documentation, and Q&A. Also, the on-going coordination between FDEP and DOH was discussed. The presentations were recorded and posted on ftp sites for future reference.
- WQETP WAS staff successfully completed the inaugural statewide biennial assessment of water quality assessments. The division has historically implemented the impaired

waters assessment process using a basin rotation cycle that covered the entire state over a five-year period. Under this previous approach, the division assessed approximately one-fifth of the state's waters every year. Waterbodies were divided into five groups, which were assessed on a rotating basis over a five-year cycle. In 2020, the division implemented a new approach where all waterbody segments in the state will be assessed every two years through a "Statewide Biennial Assessment". Secretary Hamilton signed an order adopting 566 additions to the Verified List and delisting 440 waters. The second biennial assessment is beginning to develop the next two-year iteration of the basin assessments.

- WQETP WAS staff successfully completed and submitted to EPA the "EPA Submittal Package" that includes the Combined Assessment Cycles for Group 3 – Cycle 3 through Group 2 – Cycle 4. The submittal documentation included data and information needed for EPA to approve Florida's 303(d) list through the ATTAINS tracking system.
- WQSP SDS staff published an Outstanding Florida Waters Story Map to the DEP website (2022)
- WQSP SDS staff completed one public workshop to discuss updates to the Department's proposed Triennial Review (2021).
- WQSP AEQAS staff conducted on-site nutrient testing at the Piney Point site as part of the 2021 emergency discharge response.
- WQSP AEQAS staff published the "DEP DEAR Intro to Quality Assurance (QA)" training in the People First Learning Management System to make this on-demand training available to all DEP staff.
- WQSP AEQAS staff converted all in-person DEP Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) training classes to an interactive virtual format.
- WQSP AEQAS staff completed a Statewide Alternative Methods Approval for in-line chlorine meter (approved December 2020, amended March 2022).
- WQSP AEQAS staff initiated a long-term comparison study between LAKEWATCH and DEP (2022).
- WQSP AEQAS staff provided substantial QA support for Innovative Technology grants through QAPP reviews, drafting of guidance for QA reviews, and the establishment of office hours for QA questions related to any Department contract or grant.
- Lab Biology Program and NW ROC staff assisted Dr. Michael Cole of Cole Ecological, Inc by extracting, collecting, and sending specimens of the Elmids beetle, *Oulimnius nitidulus*, to a lab in Massachusetts for DNA barcoding. The researcher is trying to better understand the distribution of the species in Northeast U.S. and Canada. A Biology Lab staff member then presented the results at the annual DEP ROC meeting and the Florida Association of Benthologists meeting.

- Lab Biology Program secured a purchase agreement for microbiological sample analysis with Diversified Laboratory in Jacksonville. This lab serves as a replacement after the ALS laboratory which closed at the end of 2021. Adding this overflow laboratory ensures microbiological data from Florida's NE region will not be qualified for analysis occurring beyond the eight-hour hold time and therefore usable for compliance purposes.
- The DEP Laboratory successfully passed the TNI accreditation audit in February 2022. The Lab Biology Program, despite significant staff turnover, had only one finding and no deficiencies for the Bench workgroup.
- The Liquid Chromatography workgroup, within the Chemistry program, completed a major improvement project for its analysis of algal bloom toxins. The improvements included implementation of a preparation technique that is less prone to compound degradation, specifically for the analysis of anatoxin-A and saxitoxins. This has resulted in improved accuracy of results and conformance with published algal toxin methodologies. The characterization of harmful algal blooms is a very important task of the DEP Laboratory.
- Pesticide use in Florida evolves over time which requires the Chemistry Program to add to its analytical suite in order to stay current and provide useful information to its customers. The Gas Chromatography (GC) workgroup validated and added 15 new pesticides and derivatives and two pharmaceuticals to its organonitrogen and phosphorous pesticides suite.
- Certain chemicals found in sunscreen products have been reported to threaten the health of coral reefs and the Chemistry Program had received several enquiries as to whether it could analyze for such compounds. A test for the analysis of three common sunscreen ingredients in water was developed and validated by the GC group within the Chemistry program.
- Total Kjeldahl Nitrogen (TKN), one of the DEP Laboratory's most frequently requested analyses, is a labor-intensive process that produces significant amounts of hazardous waste. In combination with nitrite and nitrate analysis TKN is used to assess total nitrogen (TN). A test for the direct analysis of TN in waters was developed and validated. TNI certification was sought and is expected to be approved shortly.
- Upgrade of exhaust fans in Lab C214 (\$55,000) on target to be complete in 2022 (currently in progress)
- Upgrade of the lab's KVA/UPS system (\$18,000) Completed Dec 2021

Appendix A – Acronym List

— A	Annual
— ATTAINS	Assessment, TMDL Tracking and Implementation System
— BMAP	Basin management action plan
— BMP	Best management practice
— CM	Continuous Monitoring
— DEAR	Division of Environmental Assessment and Restoration
— DEP	Florida Department of Environmental Protection
— EPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
— FCO	Fixed capital outlay
— FTE	Full-time equivalent
— FY	State fiscal year (July 1 through June 30)
— GIS	Geographic information system
— KPI	Key performance indicator
— LIMS	Laboratory Information Management System
— LULC	Land use/land cover
— NHD	National Hydrography Dataset
— OFW	Outstanding Florida Water
— OPS	Other personnel services
— OSTDS	Onsite sewage treatment and disposal system
— OTIS	Office of Technology and Information Systems
— Q	Quarterly
— Q1	Quarter 1, state fiscal year (July through September)
— Q2	Quarter 2, state fiscal year (October through December)
— Q3	Quarter 3, state fiscal year (January through March)
— Q4	Quarter 4, state fiscal year (April through June)
— QA	Quality assurance
— RCP	Office of Resilience and Coastal Protection
— SBIO	Statewide biological database

— SCI	Stream characterization index
— SERC	Statement of estimated regulatory cost
— SOP	Standard operating procedure
— SPA	STORET public access
— SSAC	Site-specific alternative criteria
— STAR	Statewide annual report
— STORET	Storage and Retrieval database
— TMDL	Total maximum daily load
— USGS	U.S. Geological Survey
— WBID	Waterbody Identification (number)
— WIN	Watershed Information Network
— WMD	Water Management District
— WQMP	Water Quality Monitoring Program
— WQBEL	Water quality based effluent limitation
— WQETP	Water Quality Evaluation and TMDL Program
— WQRP	Water Quality Restoration Program
— WQSP	Water Quality Standards Program
— WSP	Watershed Services Program
— WQX	Water Quality Exchange
— YTD	Year-to-date

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