



March/April 2019

Palm Beach County District Six



Lake Okeechobee and President's Visit to Canal Point



There's been much discussion surrounding Lake Okeechobee in recent weeks. The Army Corps of Engineers began seeking public input for a new Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule. This means the Lake Okeechobee water level range could be revised. Congressman Brian Mast has been leading the effort to lower water levels to 10.5 feet; whereas, the water is currently held between 12.5 to 15.5 ft. Palm Beach County is adamantly opposed to a 10.5 ft level for numerous reasons, including water supply and environmental damage to the Lake Worth Lagoon.

On March 12, the Board of County Commissioners passed a resolution in opposition. I am urging other local governments and organizations to do the same, and many have done so, including Okeechobee, Glades, and Hendry Counties, the Cities of Pahokee and South Bay, the Indian Trail Improvement District, the Economic Council of Palm Beach County, and the Chamber of Commerce of the Palm Beaches. Additionally, local members of the Florida House of Representatives have sent a letter to the Army Corps expressing concern over a potential lowered lake level.

Moving forward, Palm Beach County will be joining Martin, Hendry, Okeechobee, and Glades Counties for a joint meeting on May 7 at 6 pm at Okeechobee High School to further discuss the issues surrounding this debate.

On March 29, President Trump visited Canal Point in order to tour Lake Okeechobee and the Herbert Hoover Dike. After his visit, I sent a letter thanking him for his attention to these important issues and for his support of full funding to complete the rehabilitation of the dike. However, in his budget proposal to Congress for Fiscal Year 2020, the President asked for only \$63 million for Everglades restoration. There is bipartisan agreement that this is too low, so I urged him to revise his request to \$200 million.

I will continue to work alongside my fellow commissioners and our community partners to protect Palm Beach County's interests in the future of Lake Okeechobee and the entire Everglades system.

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA, ON THE RE-EVALUATION OF LAKE OKEECHOBEE OPERATIONS BY THE U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS PURSUANT TO THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT ASSESSMENT FOR THE LAKE OKEECHOBEE SYSTEM OPERATING MANUAL.

WHEREAS, Lake Okeechobee is the liquid heart of an integrated regional water management system and is essential and interconnected to communities, businesses, public water supply utilities and ecosystems throughout Palm Beach County; and

WHEREAS, Lake Okeechobee is an integral component of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) and is critical to meeting the environmental restoration and water supply needs of South Florida; and

WHEREAS, Lake Okeechobee is essential to protecting the region's water supply infrastructure from saltwater intrusion by providing a source of freshwater to prevent the migration of saltwater into coastal wellfields; and

WHEREAS, Lake Okeechobee's authorized project purposes include flood control, water supply, recreation, navigation, environmental effects to fish and wildlife, and cultural and recreational resources; and

WHEREAS, Section 1108 of the 2010 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) directs the Secretary of the Army to expedite completion of the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule to coincide with completion of the Herbert Hoover Dike project, and may include all relevant aspects of the CERP; and

WHEREAS, in January 2019, the County received notice from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) that, in accordance with Section 1108 of the 2010 WRDA, the Corps is beginning preparation of a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) assessment for the Lake Okeechobee System Operations Manual (LOSOM), which is to re-evaluate and define operations for the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule that takes into account newly complete additional infrastructure which will soon be operational components of the water management system; and

WHEREAS, rehabilitation activities on Lake Okeechobee's Herbert Hoover Dike by the Corps began in 2001 and are expected to be complete by 2022; and

WHEREAS, the Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule of 2008 (LORS08) was implemented as an interim measure to protect the public from the risk of catastrophic failure of the Herbert Hoover Dike; and

WHEREAS, Palm Beach County, in partnership with state and local partners, has invested over \$500 million in the acquisition, restoration and management of approximately 32,000 acres of natural areas and invested approximately \$88 million to restore the Lake Worth Lagoon; and

WHEREAS, Palm Beach County wishes to provide direction as to which measures that Palm Beach County supports and opposes in the Lake Okeechobee operations re-evaluation process and the resultant LOSOM;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA, that the Board hereby supports the following as it relates to the re-evaluation of Lake Okeechobee operations by the Corps:

1. A science-based evaluation that is transparent and acknowledges and balances all congressionally-authorized purposes of Lake Okeechobee operations; and
2. Performance measures that appropriately and accurately characterize impacts to all communities as it relates to water supply, the environment, and the economy; and
3. The incorporation of data and methods to ensure proposed operations improve lake ecology, protect water supplies and are robust and resilient to expected climatic variability; and

4. The implementation of water storage and water quality treatment projects in Lake Okeechobee tributary basins north of the Lake; and
5. Lake Okeechobee operations that reduce flood risk and flood insurance premiums for residents and businesses in the Glades communities located southeast of Lake Okeechobee; and
6. Lake Okeechobee operations that assist in achieving restoration flows and other key ecosystem goals, including performance measures developed by CERP's Restoration Coordination & Verification (RECOVER) program; and
7. The avoidance and/or minimization of Lake Okeechobee discharges to the Lake Worth Lagoon and the Loxahatchee River; and
8. Reductions in water use restrictions and setbacks on public water utilities and existing permitted users, as compared to those which occur under LORS08.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board opposes the following as it relates to the re-evaluation of Lake Okeechobee operations by the Corps:

1. Drastically lowering Lake Okeechobee to levels not supported by sound science (e.g. 10.5 feet) which would induce drought conditions, impact the ability to deliver water to critical ecosystems, and result in significant environmental damage; and
2. Lake Okeechobee operations that result in increased risk of saltwater intrusion into coastal wellfields which would cause irreversible damage to freshwater supplies, affect the health and safety of residents, and result in the need for massive alternative water supply infrastructure investments; and
3. Lake Okeechobee operations that result in restrictions on recreational and commercial fishing, which would impact small businesses such as marinas, fishing guide services and the hospitality industry.

This Resolution shall become effective immediately upon its adoption.

The foregoing resolution was offered by Commissioner McKinlay, who moved its adoption. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Wise, and upon being put to a vote, the vote was as follows:

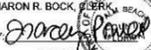
MACK BERNARD, Mayor	-	Aye
DAVID KERNER, Vice Mayor	-	Aye
COMMISSIONER HAL R. VALECHE	-	Aye
COMMISSIONER GREGG K. WEISS	-	Aye
COMMISSIONER ROBERT S. WEINROTH	-	Aye
COMMISSIONER MARY LOU BERGER	-	Aye
COMMISSIONER MELISSA MCKINLAY	-	Aye

The Mayor thereupon declared the resolution duly passed and adopted on this 12th day of March, 2019.

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND LEGAL SUFFICIENCY

BY: 
Michael W. Jones
Senior Assistant County Attorney

PALM BEACH COUNTY, FLORIDA
BY ITS BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

SHARON R. BOCK, Clerk
BY: 
Deputy Clerk



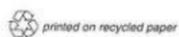
MELISSA MCKINLAY
County Commissioner
District 6
Palm Beach County
Board of County Commissioners

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April 10, 2019

President Donald Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I want to thank you for your recent visit to Lake Okeechobee and tour of the Herbert Hoover Dike. As the County Commissioner who represents this region of Palm Beach County, I greatly appreciate your administration's attention to these matters. During your visit, you heard from federal, state, and local officials about the importance of the lake to Everglades restoration, the local environment, and public safety.

In light of this, I am writing to urge you to amend your FY 2020 budget proposal of \$63 million for Everglades restoration funding. There is bipartisan agreement from Florida's federal and state officials that your initial request falls short of the amount necessary to advance these essential projects. Instead, I urge you to revise your request and ask Congress to fund restoration at \$200 million.

This funding is imperative to restoring and preserving the Everglades, one of the world's most incredible ecosystems and a significant driver of Florida's tourism industry. Essential projects such as the Central Everglades Planning Project and the Everglades Agricultural Area Southern Reservoir must be funded and expedited in order to improve water resources and water quality throughout South Florida.

I want to conclude by thanking you for providing full funding for the Herbert Hoover Dike rehabilitation. This will allow the dike to be complete by 2022 and provide essential protection for the residents who live near Lake Okeechobee, as well as significant environmental benefits. I was pleased to hear you note during your visit the importance of strengthening the dike so that we do not ever see a repeat of the 1928 hurricane tragedy during which thousands lost their lives.

Thank you again for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Melissa McKinlay
Board of County Commissioners
District 6

- cc: William Crozer, White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs
Zachery Michael, White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs
Governor Ron DeSantis
Senator Marco Rubio
Senator Rick Scott
Rep. Lois Frankel
Rep. Ted Deutch
Rep. Alcee Hastings
Rep. Brian Mast

16-County Coalition

At the March 22 meeting of the 16-County Coalition, Commissioner McKinlay was elected to serve as Vice-Chair. In this leadership role, she looks forward to continuing to work with our partners throughout the region for the responsible management of our water bodies and resources.

FANTASTIC FOOD GIVEAWAY



SATURDAY, MAY 18th
10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Hands Park - 500 NW 5th Street - Belle Glade

Please Join Us!



Rader



Polsky



McKinlay

**State Senator Kevin Rader,
State Representative Tina Polsky
& Palm Beach County
Commissioner Melissa McKinlay
as partners with FARM SHARE!**

GROCERY GIVEAWAY!

Families should bring a large canvas bag to walk-through distribution line containing produce, bread and other staples free of charge. First come, first served; No pre-registration needed

Approximately 500 food cartons are being provided by Farm Share, a 501 (C) (3) non-profit dedicated to recovering, sorting and distributing nutritious food for people in need. Farm Share Inc - This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

For additional information please contact Robert Rease at 561-449-6932

Substance Use Epidemic

On April 1, Governor Ron Desantis announced his decision to reestablish the Office of Drug Control and create a Statewide Opioid Task Force, both of which Commissioner McKinlay has long supported. On December 4, 2018, Commissioner McKinlay and her fellow commissioners called for a resolution to be placed in the County's State Legislative Agenda urging the creation of a statewide opioid task force. These decisions are important steps in the fight against addiction and will help save lives.

Unfortunately, the Governor did not extend the opioid epidemic emergency declaration with this announcement. Thus, for the first time since May 3, 2017, the State of Florida does not recognize this epidemic as a state of emergency. Commissioner McKinlay sent a letter to Governor DeSantis calling on him to issue a new emergency declaration.

On March 9, Commissioner McKinlay was recognized by the Delray Beach Drug Task Force for her community advocacy efforts. The Delray Beach Drug Task Force is doing superb work in our County to combat the opioid epidemic and save lives, and Commissioner McKinlay was honored to be recognized by them.



MELISSA MCKINLAY
County Commissioner
District 6
Palm Beach County
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April 23, 2019

The Honorable Ron DeSantis
Governor of Florida
The Capitol
400 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Dear Governor DeSantis:

On April 1, you issued Executive Order 19-97, which reestablished the Office of Drug Control and created a Statewide Task Force on Opioid Abuse. I applaud these efforts as essential to combating Florida's opioid crisis. However, I was greatly disappointed that you chose not to extend the emergency declaration. Thus, for the first time since May 3, 2017, the state of Florida no longer recognizes the opioid epidemic as a state of emergency. I urge you to reconsider this decision.

In EO 19-97, you note that "combating the opioid epidemic...is a critical public health issue that requires immediate attention." You further note that the "number of opioid-caused deaths in Florida continues to increase." According to the Medical Examiners Commission Drug Report, there were 4,280 opioid-caused deaths in 2017, a nine-percent increase from the prior year.

In EO 19-36, issued on February 1, you extended the emergency declaration by stating that "the opioid epidemic continues to pose an immediate threat to the health, safety, and welfare of the State of Florida and its residents." As the staggering statistic above demonstrates, you were absolutely correct. In fact, the Trump Administration just renewed the nationwide public health emergency on April 15, recognizing that this epidemic still rages on. With opioid-caused deaths continuing to increase in Florida, it is imperative to continue our state of emergency.

To combat this epidemic effectively, government must wield all tools available to it. This includes those granted under a state of emergency, such as the budget flexibility to ensure agencies have the funds necessary to respond swiftly and effectively. This declaration also lends an official imprimatur of seriousness to the crisis that is essential to raising public awareness of the dangers of opioids and the all-hands-on-deck approach needed to combat the epidemic.

By re-declaring the opioid epidemic as a state of emergency in Florida, you send a strong signal to local governments and other stakeholders that we can count on you for the support necessary to fight this battle, however long it may take. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Melissa McKinlay
Palm Beach County Commission
District 6

cc: Florida Attorney General Ashley Moody



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County Commissioner
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Official Electronic Letterhead

For Immediate Release:
 (561) 355-2206
 April 1, 2019

Palm Beach County Commissioner Melissa McKinlay Applauds DeSantis Decision to Reopen Office of Drug Control

Palm Beach County Commissioner Melissa McKinlay today applauded the announcement by Governor Ron DeSantis that he was re-establishing the Office of Drug Control, an office created by former Governor Jeb Bush but discontinued under former Governor Rick Scott. Despite repeated calls to do so, Governor Scott refused to reopen the office despite the sharp rise in opioid deaths during his tenure.

"Governor DeSantis' decision to reopen the Office of Drug Control is a significant moment in Florida's fight against addiction," Commissioner McKinlay said. "As this epidemic rages on, it is great news that our new Governor recognizes the value of this office to focus attention on the crisis and enhance intergovernmental efforts to save lives."

Commissioner McKinlay also applauded the Governor's decision to create a statewide opioid task force, chaired by Attorney General Ashley Moody. On December 4, 2018, Commissioner McKinlay and her fellow commissioners included a resolution in Palm Beach County's state legislative agenda in support of the establishment of a statewide opioid task force.

"Communities across Florida are desperate for our state government to develop a comprehensive strategy to address the opioid crisis," Commissioner McKinlay said. "A statewide task force is an essential step forward to developing the policies that will save the lives of our fellow Floridians."

In 2016, Tasha McCraw, the daughter of Commissioner McKinlay's former aide, lost her life to addiction. In Tasha's memory, Commissioner McKinlay continues to fight to save the lives of those suffering from addiction.

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Opioid Epidemic Panels

On March 13, The North County Neighborhood Coalition (NCNC) held its Annual Breakfast at the Ibis Golf and Country Club. Over 150 individuals representing business, government, and community organizations attended. NCNC President Sal Faso moderated a panel on the opioid crisis in Palm Beach County featuring Commissioner McKinlay, State Attorney Dave Aronberg, and Florida Department of Health EMS Medical Director Ken Schepke.



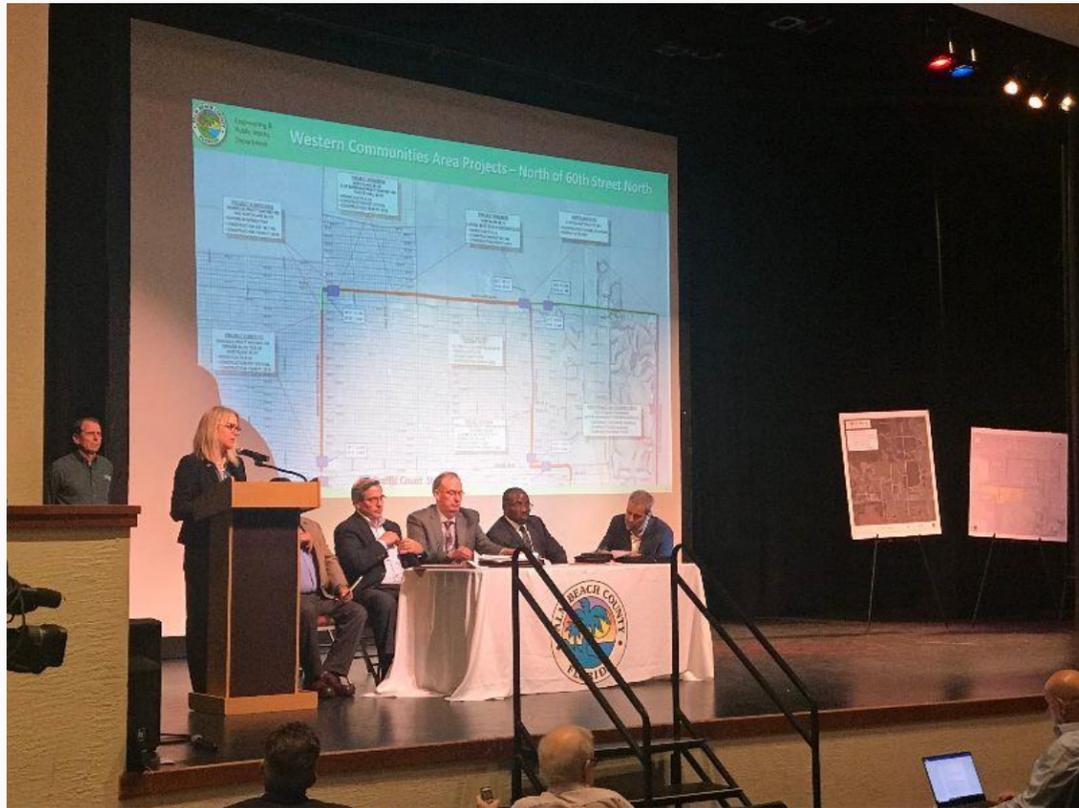
On April 10, Commissioner McKinlay participated in an opioid panel discussion hosted by the Junior League of the Palm Beaches. Also participating were Dr. Belma Andric, Chief Medical Officer, Healthcare District of Palm Beach County; John Hulick, Drug Policy Manager, Palm Beach County; Lissa Franklin, Assistant Executive Director, Delray Beach Drug Task Force; and Justin Kunzelman, CEO, Rebel Recovery.



Acreage-Area Traffic Town Hall

Commissioner McKinlay held a townhall on Acreage-area traffic issues at Seminole Ridge High School on Monday, March 11. Approximately 150 constituents attended and heard presentations from Florida Department of Transportation District 4 Secretary Gerry O'Reilly, County Engineer David Ricks, Indian Trail Improvement District Engineer Jay Foy, and PBC Transportation Planning Agency Executive Director Nick Uhren.

The presentations included upcoming plans for road improvements to alleviate traffic concerns in the Acreage-area. During the public comment period, Commissioner McKinlay listened carefully to the concerns shared by the attendees and reiterated her commitment to pushing for the projects in this region to be expedited to bring relief as soon as possible. The presentations can be found on Commissioner McKinlay's [District 6 webpage](#).



Glades Town Hall

On March 13, Commissioner McKinlay held a town hall at the Belle Glade Public Library. Joining her at this well-attended meeting were (l-r in the below photo) Fire Rescue Chief Reginald Duren; County Administrator Verdenia Baker; Water Utilities Director Jim Stiles; Deputy Director of the Department of Housing and Economic Sustainability

Sherry Howard; Executive Director of Planning, Zoning, and Building Ramsay Bulkeley; and County Engineer David Ricks.



Josh's Benches for Awareness

Palm Beach County is so proud to partner with Josh's Benches for Awareness, a wonderful local nonprofit whose mission is suicide prevention and mental health awareness. This organization is doing incredibly important work to save lives by installing yellow benches inscribed with helpline numbers in public areas to help those struggling with suicidal thoughts. The benches are helping to remove the negative stigma those seeking help often face.

The yellow benches have been installed at several locations throughout our county, including at Westgate Recreation Center and at the Village of Wellington's Village Park. For more information, visit <http://joshsbenches.com/>.



Black Gold Jubilee

Commissioner McKinlay attended the 40th Annual Black Gold Jubilee on April 6 at Torry Island in Belle Glade. This wonderful festival brings the Glades communities together to celebrate the end of the harvest season. Highlights included a 5k/10k run, rides, games, a parade, music, fabulous food, and a firework show.

Commissioner McKinlay is pictured here with 2019 Jr. Harvest Queen Peyton Pelham. Congratulations to Peyton, and also to the 2019 Harvest Queen Kennedy DesRochers!

To learn more about agriculture in Palm Beach County, click here: <http://discover.pbcgov.org/coextension/Pages/default.aspx>.



Bedner's Farmworker Housing

On April 3, Commissioner McKinlay was honored to cut the ribbon in the Glades on the brand new, \$3 million renovated housing project for Bedner Farms! The Bedner's Farm Fresh Market Family provides safe, healthy, and clean housing for their seasonal farmworkers. Thanks to the amazing County staff under the leadership of Planning/Zoning/Building Director Ramsay Bulkeley for making this a reality. This is farmworker housing done right, and thank you to the Bedner Family for leading by example! We are looking forward to the next renovation project!

Bedner's filmed a wonderful short video about their new farmworker housing. See it here: [Bedner's Farmworker Housing Video](#)



Human Trafficking

Commissioner McKinlay has attended several human trafficking events recently. On April 4, she met with Bradley Myles, the Executive Director/CEO of Polaris, a wonderful organization whose mission is to combat and eradicate human trafficking. On April 23, Commissioner McKinlay participated in a Coffee and Conversation event at Place of Hope to discuss human trafficking. Back in January, she participated in the human trafficking panel discussion at Place of Hope's Inaugural Human Trafficking Awareness Luncheon.

Coming up in July at the National Association of Counties Annual Conference, Commissioner McKinlay will be moderating a panel discussion on human trafficking with Polaris. This will be a great opportunity to foster discussion, ideas, and awareness of human trafficking with county representatives throughout the United States.

Recent BCC News

In memoriam – observed a moment of silence in memory of former County Commissioner Maude Ford Lee, who passed away on April 14. The board agreed to name a new Community Services facility in her honor.

Impact fees – adopted an ordinance amending the Unified Land Development Code pertaining to impact fees, including changes to school impact fee benefit zones. Staff was authorized to enter into a new contract with Tindale Olive Associates to revise the impact fee update report to incorporate the latest trip generation rates, capital infrastructure costs and credits. The revisions will take approximately a year to complete.

Supervisor of Elections – confirmed direction to proceed with design and construction of a new, county-owned Supervisor of Elections (SOE) production facility. The project was given high priority so as to be ready for occupancy by June 2023. Currently, the SOE leases warehouse space in Riviera Beach for ballot tabulation and processing.

Opioid Response Plan – approved a contract amendment with Southeast Florida Behavioral Health Network, Inc. extending the end date to September 30, 2019, and increasing the contract amount by \$798,000 (\$1.348 million total contract amount) for the continuation of expanded bed capacity, treatment of substance use disorders, care coordination, and prevention programs to educate the community about the dangers of opioid and substance use disorders.

LHAP – approved the FY 2019-2021 through 2021-2022 Local Housing Assistance Plan (LHAP) as required by the State Housing Initiatives Partnership (SHIP) Program Act. In so doing, Palm Beach County will be in a position to receive funding under the SHIP program during the next three years when the state makes funding allocations. SHIP funds do not require a local match.

Palm Tran – approved a grant application in the amount of \$883,244 with local matches totaling \$102,676 to purchase and equip 12 replacement paratransit vehicles for Palm Tran.

Lake Okeechobee – authorized staff to move forward with organizing a joint commission meeting with the other four counties surrounding Lake Okeechobee.

Upcoming Dates

- Joint Meeting to Discuss Lake Okeechobee between Palm Beach, Martin, Glades, Okeechobee, and Hendry Counties. Tuesday, May 7, 6 pm. Okeechobee High School Lecture Auditorium, 2800 HWY 441 North, Okeechobee, FL 34972.
- Farm Share Food Giveaway. Saturday, May 18, 10 am - 1 pm. Hands Park, 500 NW 5th Street, Belle Glade.

Commissioner Melissa McKinlay

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