THE SOUTHWEST FLORIDA REGIONAL FORUM

STRENGTHENING SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

From Coastlines to the Heartland

Agenda

9:00 – 9:05 AM

Welcome

Welcome & Regional Overview

Rebekah Harp, Interim Executive Director, SWFRPC

9:05 – 9:15 AM

Setting The Stage

Southwest Florida Resilience Collaborative

Asmaa Odeh, Deputy Director, SWFRPC

- Phase I: Background and Accomplishments
- Forum Purpose & Goals

9:15 – 11:45 AM

Community Voices

Foundation for Resiliency – Roundtable Discussions

a) Resiliency

- ***Ana Carolina Coelho Maran**, Ph.D., P.E., Chief of District Resiliency, SFWMD*
  - Group Discussion & Polling Report Out

b) Brownfields, Redevelopment/Land Use, Economic Development

- ***Tara Szydlowski**, Florida Division Brownfields Manager, Terracon*
  - Group Discussion & Polling Report Out

c) Coastal to the Heartland: Natural Resources & Agriculture

- ***Kimberly L. Morgan**, Ph.D., UF Extension Economist, SWFREC*
- ***David Outerbridge**, Lee County Extension Director, UF IFAS Agriculture & Extension Service Division*
  - Group Discussion & Polling Report Out

11:45 AM - NOON

Come Back Together

Advancing Collaborative Strategies

Rebekah Harp, LyÛSMY Executive Director/Asmaa Odeh, Deputy Director, SWFRPC

- Next Steps & Closing Reflections
- Adjourn

THE SOUTHWEST FLORIDA REGIONAL FORUM

STRENGTHENING SOUTHWEST FLORIDA

From Coastlines to the Heartland

NAME:_____ **ORGANIZATION:**_____

How long have you lived in SW Florida?

_____

Which of the following best describes your professional role?

a) Local government
b) Planning/Regional Planning
c) Emergency Management
d) Business/Private Sector
e) Nonprofit/Community Organization
f) Academic/Research

1: Regional Resilience Priorities

1. **Which resilience challenge is the most urgent for your community?**
   a) Sea level rise and coastal flooding
   b) Extreme rainfall and storm surge
   c) Extreme heat
   d) Agricultural vulnerabilities (crops, water supply, soil health)
   e) Redevelopment of vulnerable/underutilized lands (brownfields)
   f) Transportation vulnerabilities (roads, bridges, evacuation routes)
   g) Economic development and workforce resilience

2. **What is the biggest barrier to advancing resilience efforts in your community?**
   a) Limited funding and resources
   b) Regulatory or permitting challenges
   c) Lack of technical expertise or staff capacity
   d) Need for stronger regional collaboration
   e) Public awareness and community buy-in
   f) Balancing resilience with economic development pressures

Coastline Resilience

3. **Which strategies should be prioritized for protecting coastlines? (Select top 2)**
   a) Beach nourishment and shoreline stabilization
   b) Nature-based solutions (living shorelines, mangrove restoration)
   c) Hard infrastructure (seawalls, flood barriers)
   d) Policy tools (zoning, setbacks, conservation easements)
   e) Community education and engagement
   f) Protection of critical transportation corridors and evacuation routes

2: Brownfields & Redevelopment

1. **What is the greatest opportunity for brownfield sites in Southwest Florida?**
   a) Redevelopment into resilient housing
   b) Green space, parks, or natural buffers
   c) Renewable energy or clean technology projects
   d) Community/economic development hubs
   e) Agricultural or aquaculture innovation sites

2. **What is the biggest challenge to redeveloping brownfields?**
   a) Cleanup and remediation costs
   b) Liability concerns
   c) Lack of funding or incentives
   d) Limited community support or awareness
   e) Coordination between jurisdictions

3: Agriculture & Food Security

1. **What is the greatest risk facing agriculture in Southwest Florida?**
   a) Saltwater intrusion and flooding
   b) Water shortages and drought
   c) Soil erosion and degradation
   d) Extreme heat and crop stress
   e) Market disruptions from extreme weather
   f) Development & Urbanization

2. **Which resilience strategies should be emphasized for agriculture?**
   a) Diversification of crops and farming practices
   b) Improved irrigation and water management systems
   c) Soil health and conservation practices
   d) Protection of farmland from encroaching development
   e) Regional/local food system strengthening

Closing

1. **Where should the Southwest Florida Resilience Collaborative provide technical assistance?**
   a) Coastline protection
   b) Agriculture and food security
   c) Brownfield redevelopment
   d) Transportation resilience
   e) Economic development and workforce resilience
   f) Regional collaboration and planning capacity
   g) Securing state and federal funding

Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council

SARASOTA

- 479 thousand people
- +9% population in 2020-2024
- 37% population 65 and older
- 197 thousand jobs
- 3400 homes at risk of annual flood by 2100

CHARLOTTE

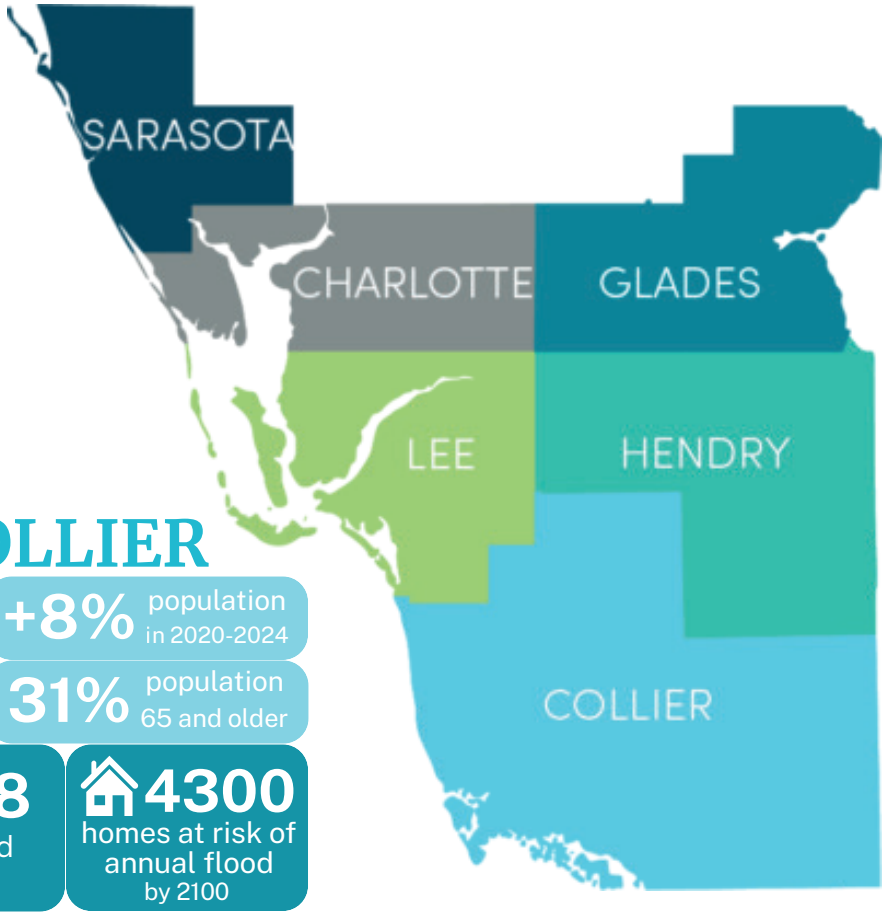
- 211 thousand people
- +11% population in 2020-2024
- 40% population 65 and older
- 58 thousand jobs
- 3200 homes at risk of annual flood by 2100

GLADES

- 13 thousand people
- +5% population in 2020-2024
- 26% population 65 and older
- 2 thousand jobs
- 56 acres at risk of annual flood by 2100

LEE

- 827 thousand people
- +8% population in 2020-2024
- 27% population 65 and older
- 309 thousand jobs
- 9800 homes at risk of annual flood by 2100



HENDRY

- 45 thousand people
- +13% population in 2020-2024
- 15% population 65 and older
- 13 thousand jobs
- 150 acres at risk of annual flood by 2100

COLLIER

- 408 thousand people
- +8% population in 2020-2024
- 31% population 65 and older
- 178 thousand jobs
- 4300 homes at risk of annual flood by 2100

Sources: 2024 UF Bureau of Economic and Business Research; 2025 Bureau of Labor Statistics; 2021 Climate Central

$100 Million
Gross Regional Product (GRP)

2 Million
People in the region

$1 Billion
Farm-gate sales in 2017

Sources: 2023 Bureau of Economic Analysis; 2025 UF Bureau of Economic and Business Research; 2017 USDA Census of Agriculture

Southwest Florida Regional Planning Council

Impacts of Climate Change in the Region

3.6ft
sea level rise by 2100

17
avg drought events from 2000-2019

Sarasota

+3.2°F
avg annual temperature since 1970

-0.9in
avg annual precipitation since 1970

Fort Myers

+2.4°F
avg annual temperature since 1970

+6.4in
avg annual precipitation since 1970

Sources: 2021 IPCC found in Climate Central; 2023 US Global Change Research Program; 2024 NOAA ACIS found in Climate Central

Other Resiliency Factors At Play

Southwest Florida counties have the **highest risks** of cardiovascular disease, dehydration, acute renal disease, and respiratory disease **associated with heat.**

Mangrove habitats in Charlotte and Lee counties cover **63,000 acres** as of 2016, and a loss of 3,150 acres is expected by 2040.

Agricultural land covers 31% of the region with **1.3 million acres** as of 2017.

Sarasota, Lee, Charlotte, and Collier attract a total of **61,672 out-of-county commuters**.

Sources: 2021 BMC Public Health; 2019 CHNEP; 2017 USDA Census of Agriculture; 2025 FGCU Regional Economic Research Institute

Potential Benefits of Investing in Resiliency

Brownfields

- **11-13% of jobs and housing growth** expected could occur on brownfields
- **Reduces impervious surface** expansion by 73–80%
- **Residential property value** increases of 5–15.2% within 1.29 miles

Adaptation

- Every **$1 invested in resilience and preparedness saves $13** in damage, cleanup, and economic losses
- Adaptation investments could lead to **26,410 Total Job Years Created** in 2020-2024 in Tampa Bay

Sources: 2020 US EPA; 2024 US Chamber of Commerce; 2022 Tampa Bay Partnership

What's Growing in Southwest Florida?

Product	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bell Pepper	■	■	■	■	■						■	■
Blueberries				■	■							
Broccoli	■	■	■									
Cucumber			■	■	■					■	■	■
Eggplant	■	■	■	■	■	■					■	■
Grapefruit	■	■	■	■	■				■	■	■	■
Oranges	■	■	■	■	■	■			■	■	■	■
Peaches				■	■							
Potatoes		■	■	■	■	■						
Snap Beans	■	■	■	■	■						■	■
Squash	■	■	■	■	■					■	■	■
Strawberries	■	■	■	■								■
Sweet Corn	■	■	■	■	■	■				■	■	■
Tangerines	■	■	■	■	■				■	■	■	■
Tomatoes	■	■	■	■	■	■				■	■	■
Watermelon				■	■	■	■					




Economic Importance of Agriculture to Southwest Florida

Kimberly L. Morgan
Barbara Hyman

University of Florida
Southwest Florida Research & Education Center
2685 State Road 29 North
Immokalee, FL 34142

Issues Important to Southwest Florida Agriculture:

Exotic pests & diseases (Citrus Greening)

Farm worker health and access to labor

Global competition and trade policies

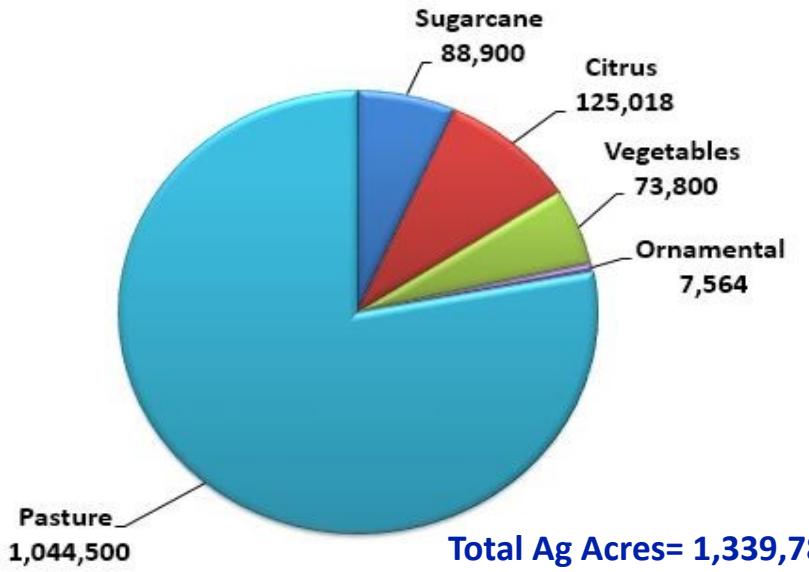
Water quality and management issues

Food safety regulations

Southwest Florida— Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry, and Lee

Updated July 2022

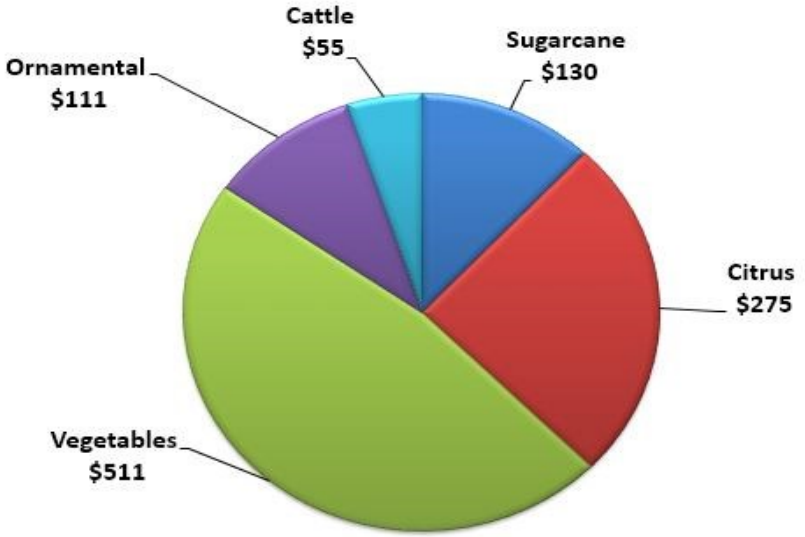
Southwest Florida Agricultural Acreage*, 2017



Total Ag Acres= 1,339,782

(31% of all acres in SW FL)

Farm-Gate Sales*, 2017 (M$)



Total Sales = $1.08 Billion

*Source: 2017 USDA Census of Agriculture (Note: Forestry acreage and products NOT included)

SW FL Production Costs and Yields, 2021-22

	Annual Costs (including harvesting)	Yields (Units/Acre)
Oranges (processed)[1]	$1,883/Acre	154 (90 lb-bx)
Tomatoes, round	$16,863/Acre	1,700 (25 lb-ctn)
Bell Peppers	$18,399/Acre	1,100 (28 lb-bu)
Iowa Field Corn	$771/Acre	201 bu

SW FL Grower Prices, 2020-21

		Price	Price Range	Break-Even Price
Oranges (processed, delivered-in mid-price)				@ 150 boxes/acre
Early-Midseason	Bx	$13.08[1]	$12.04—$16.58	$15.89[2]
Valencia	Bx	$15.33[1]		$16.00[2]
Tomatoes	Ctn	$18.99	$7.00—$18.99	$9.92/25 lb-ctn
Bell Peppers	Bu	$18.43	$14.17—$18.43	$16.73/28 lb-bu

1/ Florida Processor Statistics database

2/ Singerman, A. 2022, Feb 7. "Cost of production for Processed Oranges in SW FL in 2020/21." doi.org/10.32473/edis-FE1111-2022

3/ Wade. T.,B. Hyman, and E. McAvoy. 2020, Nov 9. "Constructing a SW FL Bell Peppers Enterprise Budget." edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/FE1088

4/ Wade. T.,B. Hyman, E. McAvoy, and J VanSickle. 2020, Dec 16. "Constructing a SW FL Tomato Enterprise Budget." edis.ifas.ufl.edu/publication/FE1087

Summary of Economic Contributions of Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Food Industries in SW FL, 2018

	Employment		Industry Output		Value Added	Labor Income	Other Property	Taxes
County	Direct (Jobs)	Contrib. (Jobs)	Direct (M$)	Contrib. (Jobs)	Contrib. (Jobs)	Contrib. (M$)	(M$)	(M$)
Glades	1,695	2,235	217	317	164	98	54	6
Hendry	9,548	12,357	931	1,458	761	620	75	36
Charlotte	11,331	15,214	841	1,486	943	576	161	85
Collier	40,276	54,352	3,273	5,841	3,294	2,205	762	275
Lee	59,230	81,038	4,964	8,796	4,745	3,019	1,209	458

Court, C.D., J-P. Ferreira, 2020, May 15. "2018 Economic Contributions of Agriculture, Natural Resource, and Food Industries in Florida." UF/IFAS Economic Impact Analysis Program.

Agricultural production is a business. Significant financial resources are required to grow crops. Land will remain in agriculture so long as growers receive a long-run return on investments.

*EPA's invites you to a **free public webinar!***

EPA Tools & Resources Webinar

Collaborating with our State Partners on Disaster Resiliency Planning

Wednesday, November 19, 2025, at 3:00 to 4:00 PM ET

REGISTER HERE

Certificates of attendance are offered!

In 2016, EPA entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Environmental Council of the States (ECOS) and the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) to collaborate in developing tools, reports, workshops, meetings, communications pathways, and other initiatives that will leverage resources and advance a mutually shared mission of protecting the public's health from environmental threats and hazards and strengthen environmental health systems across the country. This unique alliance has consistently delivered impactful and timely results, bridging environmental science and public health through joint projects, knowledge sharing, and capacity-building efforts.

This webinar will provide a summary of projects completed to date under the MOA and then provide a deeper dive into the most recent project focusing on state disaster resiliency planning. Each year, the resilience of states and island jurisdictions is tested by hurricanes, floods, extreme heat events, droughts, destructive wildfires, and other natural disasters and homeland security threats. These events require support from state health and environmental agencies to address not only the immediate challenges of the communities, but also longer-term recovery efforts. There are numerous resources available to support state and territorial health agencies and their environmental counterparts in these efforts. ASTHO and the ECOS have been partnering to better understand state activities around resiliency planning and implementation. Join the webinar to learn more about this project, including case studies from Vermont and Colorado.

Who should attend? State, territorial, tribal, and local environmental and public health agencies, community organizations, and others interested in learning about disaster resiliency planning.

Webinar series schedule and recordings:
epa.gov/research-states/epa-tools-and-resources-webinar-series

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For registration questions:
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