



Pinellas Partners in Recycling Meeting Notes for January 14th, 2026

Virtual

Overview and Attendance

Joseph Neilsen, Biotech Applied Research; Zack Farr, Biotech Applied Research; Wilfred Holmes, City of Belleair; Jacolby Washington, City of Clearwater; Jonathan Campbell, City of Clearwater; Savannah Bunch, City of Dunedin; Laura, City of Dunedin; Deanna Doss, City of Gulfport; Keely Kessler, City of Key West; Calley Pate, City of Oldsmar; Austin Smith, City of St. Petersburg; Edgar Castro Tello, City of Tampa; Tessa Coulter, City of Tampa; Holly Langston, City of Tarpon Springs; Nick Gerakios, City of Tarpon Springs; Veatrice Farrell, Digital Education Foundation; Christopher Perry, Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection; Jennifer Ciaravella, Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection; Karen S Moore, Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection; Sommer Turner, Florida Dept. of Environmental Protection; Tessa Jones, Goodwill Industries- Suncoast, Inc.; Timothy Felder, Goodwill Industries- Suncoast, Inc.; Angela Fama, Hillsborough County; Lisa Leseigneur, Hillsborough County; Stephanie Watson, Hillsborough County; Pat DePlasco, Keep Pinellas Beautiful; Ashley Wyland, Pinellas County Solid Waste; Catherine Eichner, Pinellas County Solid Waste; Kiana Sladicki, Pinellas County Solid Waste; Leslie Caplin, Pinellas County Solid Waste; Phil Nichols, Pinellas County Solid Waste; Tyler J Ward, Recycling Services of Florida; Shelby Lewis, RRS; Lynn St. Vil, St. John's County; Jennifer Angelo, Town of Indian Shores; Diane Daniel, Vacation Donations; Brenna Hagggar, Waste Management; Mike DeClerck, Waste Management; Daric Hunt, Waste Pro; Andrew Mekemson, Waste Pro; Abby Ward; Derek G, St. Petersburg; and Rowan Wells.

Daric Hunt, Waste Pro, recorded the notes.

Call to Order

Ashley Wyland, Pinellas County Solid Waste, called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

Review of November 5th, 2025, PPR Meeting Notes

No objections to notes as written.

Introductions

New members who introduced themselves included: No Introductions

Presentation

Zack Farr and Joseph Neilsen, Biotech Applied Research

Zack Farr is the CEO of Biotech Applied Research (BAR), a Florida-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit focused on developing biochar technologies that close the loop between waste management,



water quality, and soil restoration. Based in Central Florida, BAR partners with state agencies, universities, and private sector stakeholders to transform agricultural and storm debris into high-value “biochar” for water filtration, soil amendment, and carbon sequestration.

Under Zack’s leadership, BAR is pioneering circular nutrient management—capturing nutrients from waterways using biochar filtration media, and redeploying that nutrient-enriched carbon back onto farmland to rebuild soil health and reduce fertilizer demand. BAR’s current initiatives include regional partnerships with FDACS, UF/IFAS, and Residents for Resilience in Fort Lauderdale, as well as field-scale deployments across Central Florida’s citrus belt.

Zack’s mission is to build a self-sustaining circular bioeconomy in Florida—one that turns waste liabilities into local jobs, clean water, and healthier soils. His work bridges environmental engineering, rural economic development, and scalable carbon solutions for Florida’s future.

[Presentation Recording](#) and [Presentation Slides](#)

Elections of Officers

Postponed

- Elections for PPR Chair and Vice-Chair have been postponed to the March 18th, 2026, meeting.

Updates

State Updates

- Christopher Perry
 - Currently a battery EPR proposal going through legislation – FDEP has not yet been asked yet to complete a bill analysis

Regional Updates

Hillsborough County

- Angela Fama
 - Hillsborough County recognized the winners of the second annual Waste Reduction & Recycling Art Contest with the county’s first-of-its-kind recycling truck wrap recognition.
 - These moving billboards led to [media coverage](#) promoting the contest, which resulted in \$18,000 of earned media and a 280% increase in submissions for the third annual Art Contest. Truck wraps and media coverage proved to be the most effective return for driving contest participation due to the influx of submissions; compared to promoting the Art Contest with winning posters at County Rec Centers, a county [Newsroom](#), and sharing at outreach events/presentations.



- Hillsborough County had two main holiday media stories – holiday recycling and promoting proper battery disposal.
- Based on data from Critical Mentions, a global media monitoring platform that provides news analytics, [Holiday recycling](#) earned media equates to a \$203,000 value and an estimated audience of 237,000.
- In the holiday recycling story, we referenced Tampa Bay Recycles to reiterate that recycling rules vary, and it's important for residents to check their local program.
- We've done a number of media interviews in December on [Proper battery disposal](#), with another interview yesterday and a follow-up from a previous interview due to the recent Dade City battery fire. We will have the full campaign metrics to report at the next PPR meeting.
- The regional campaign highlights proper battery disposal to promote keeping solid waste workers and the community safe. Additionally, City of Tampa, Temple Terrace, and Plant City customers can utilize Hillsborough County's free battery disposal drop-off.
- Hillsborough County has partnered with the City of Tampa on the 2026 Recycling Guide. The Recycling Guide serves as one of our biggest outreach tools to share our message with students and the community. This first-of-its-kind partnership resulted from customer feedback and will feature a 2-page spread from the City of Tampa, with the remainder of the Recycling Guide focusing on services available to county customers and city residents. The benefit of partnering on the next edition of the Recycling Guide is to unify on messaging, highlight shared services, and reduce residential confusion from recycling program differences.

City of Tampa

- Edgar Castro Tello and Tessa Coulter
 - City of Tampa Waste & Recycling App has been launched
 - Switched from Recollect to Recycle Coach
 - Online widget will be available soon
 - [Bead collection drop-off locations](#) provided beginning February 2 and staying available until May
 - Wrapped carts; used local company, reach out to Tessa for more information if looking to wrap trash or recycling carts!



- - [3Rs Art Contest](#) ongoing – deadline to submit art or poetry is February 6th
 - Prizes for winners include: tickets to ZooTampa, The Florida Aquarium, a WM sponsored prize
 - Art will be on collection trucks and poetry will be displayed

Pinellas County

- Ashley Wyland
 - Previewed the 2026 Recycle Guide
 - Hard copies being delivered to Solid Waste tomorrow – email recycle@pinellas.gov if interested in copies!
 - Digital version will be online soon.
 - Previewed new PPR external SharePoint site
 - Not live yet but once it launches, all PPR members will receive the link and viewing access

Pinellas County Municipal Updates

City of St. Petersburg

- Austin Smith



- New Recycling Specialist with St. Petersburg!
- Rehauling Waste Wizard
 - Updating structure and information
- Education Overhaul
 - Taking the lead on the education program

City of Dunedin

- Savannah Bunch
 - Introduced new Environmental Specialist, Laura Valletti
 - [Gulf Coast Fest](#) – February 28th from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
 - New name for the Hope Spot Fest
 - Still zero-waste and promoting environmental stewardship
 - Composting Program Campaign
 - Launched pilot program with fire station
 - Collecting food waste with Renuable
 - Potential Partnership with Tampa Bay Markets
 - Working on partnership to collect food waste with Renuable at the markets

Community Updates

Keep Pinellas Beautiful (KPB)

- Pat DePlasco
 - New Interns Starting for the Spring Semester
 - Interns have been instrumental to the growth of KPB
 - Usually have between 9 – 12 interns per semester
 - Middel School Workshop – WOW – Wonders of our Watersheds (01/24/26 & 01/31/26)
 - Free workshop
 - [Register here](#)
 - Annual Luncheon Upcoming
 - February 12th from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.



- [Register here](#)
- Great American Cleanup – begins March 1st, 2026
- \$100K Grant from Volunteer Florida
 - Will use to restore beaches in Treasure Island
- Upcoming events with KPBC - <https://www.kpbcares.org/upcoming-events>

Vacations Donations

- Diane Daniel:
 - Indian Rocks Beach Greenfest on March 21st, 2026
 - Ramping up for busy season of rentals
 - Provides collection bins at multiple properties that have short-term rentals – has been successful!

Work Group Updates

Contamination

- Ashley Wyland
 - New battery landing page about how to safely dispose of batteries. Hillsborough promotion ongoing.
 - <https://pinellas.gov/how-to-safely-dispose-of-batteries/>

Open Discussion

- N/A

Announcements

- N/A

Adjournment

Next Meeting: March 18th, 2026 @ 9:30 am via **Zoom (disregard Microsoft Teams meeting link on calendar appointment, meetings are held via Zoom link provided)**