

Orange County Commission for the Environment
Meeting Summary
January 12th, 2026; 7:00 pm
Hybrid Meeting

Present: Kristie Mather, Ian Morse, John Bucher, Regina Baratta, Aimee Vandemark, Patrick Fn’Piere, Mark Randall, Matthew Ferguson, Mayur Lodaya, Lily Schacht, Leto Copeley, Margot Lester, Jeffrey Ryan

Absent: Veronica Beattie, William Branch

Staff: Wesley Poole, Chris Hirni (Teams), Kalani Allen, Karina Nabors, Amy Eckberg, Abby Mattingly (Teams), Mel Gilles, Isis Mateos-Guevara (Teams)

I. Call to Order

Chair Regina Baratta called the meeting to order at 7:06 pm.

II. Additions or Changes to Agenda

Kristie Mather asked to add an item to the Updates and Information Items regarding the Sierra Club...granted. Amy Eckberg asked to introduce their intern, Isis Mateos-Guevara...granted and followed with introduction.

III. Approval of DRAFT Meeting Summary – November 10th, 2025

Motion to approve by Vice-Chair Ian Morse; seconded by Mark Randall; all in favor; none opposed; motion passed.

IV. Nature of Orange Photo Contest

Abby Mattingly presented the winning photos from last year’s Nature of Orange Photo Contest and followed with a request that the CFE continue sponsorship this year. Motion to approve by Chair Regina Baratta; seconded by Margot Lester; all in favor; none opposed; motion passed.

V. CFE Annual Report and Work Plan

The group discussed edits and inclusions for the Annual Report and Work Plan that is due in January. Once a final draft was created, the group voted on the document that will be submitted. Motion to approve by Chair Regina Baratta; seconded by Kristie Mather; all in favor; none opposed; motion passed.

VI. Climate Action Grant Petition

Amy Eckberg presented a petition written by BOCC member Sally Greene to expand the CCAG funds from the BOCC to include climate adaptation as well as mitigation. After a

Orange County Commission for the Environment
Meeting Summary
January 12th, 2026; 7:00 pm
Hybrid Meeting

discussion on the way the grant process currently works versus the proposal, the group agreed that some things needed to be tweaked before next year's grant process. Regarding Sally Greene's petition, the group voted on whether or not to support it. Chair Regina Baratta motioned to support it; seconded by Mayur Lodaya; Vice-Chair Ian Morse abstained from voting; Kristie Mather voted no; remainder of group in favor; motion passed.

VII. State of the Environment Report Round Table

The group discussed the status of State of the Environment Report sub-topics, missing materials, and emerging issues to cover. Chair Regina Baratta stated that she would like to be done by June. Aimee Vandemark asked members for help with the Tree Canopy Study and stated that Bradley Saul (previous CFE member) is planning to help assimilate the data for the report. Some members expressed concern over the amount of time it would take to complete.

VIII. Sub-Committee Breakouts

The CFE broke out into committee assignments and worked on State of the Environment sub-topics.

Sub-Committee Breakout Meeting Summaries

Air & Energy Resources Sub-committee:

Present: John Bucher, Ian Morse, Kristie Mather, Matthew Ferguson, Margot Lester

Absent: Veronica Beattie

Staff: Amy Eckberg

- *Discussed the state of all the topics currently drafted and those in progress. Drafts have been produced for the majority of topics. Those that do not have a full draft have a significant portion already created. We addressed questions of scope for the remaining topics to help them get to draft status sooner. We will have a subcommittee meeting on January 26th to address progress, and to move towards the creation of our final draft for the group.*

Orange County Commission for the Environment
Meeting Summary
January 12th, 2026; 7:00 pm
Hybrid Meeting

Water Resources Sub-committee:

Present: Patrick Fn’Piere, Mark Randall, Mayur Lodaya, Lily Schacht, Jeffrey Ryan

Absent: None

Staff: Wesley Poole

- *Discussed status of data collection, approach to combining documents, how to make the report accessible and interesting. Status updates on reports being written by other groups. What would it take to replicate Wake County groundwater study in Orange County?*

Land Resources Sub-committee:

Present: Regina Baratta, Aimee Vandemark, Leto Copeley

Absent: William Branch

Staff: Chris Hirni (Teams), Karina Nabors, Kalani Allen, Mel Gilles

- *Discussed what organisms to include in the indicator species section of the SOE. Aimee will reach out to Natural Heritage Site on indicator species. Planning a Thursday morning meeting with OC staff to help plug holes and answer questions on land use, protected land, etc. Mel gave Leto some insight into Solid Waste Management research and contacts. As we put our work together, we are to be mindful of ADA compliance with visuals.*

IX. Updates and Information Items

- Chair Regina Baratta passed out flyers advertising the RIPPLE award and asked CFE members to share at least (2) flyers each. Amy Eckberg notified the group that they had received (8) applications so far and the deadline to submit was February 1st.
- Kristie Mather notified the CFE that the Sierra Club was looking for questions to ask BOCC candidates to see if they would endorse certain items.
- Kalani Allen notified the CFE that DEAPR staff had an Earth Evening discussion coming up and the format would be different this year so be thinking how the CFE would like to participate.

Orange County Commission for the Environment
Meeting Summary
January 12th, 2026; 7:00 pm
Hybrid Meeting

X. Adjournment

Chair Regina Baratta motioned to adjourn the meeting at 9:04 pm; seconded by John Bucher; all in favor; none opposed; motion passed.