



# Special Edition: Know Your Ag Reserve!



Dear Friends and Neighbors,

As your Commissioner, the unrelenting preservation and conservation of our precious Agricultural Reserve, together with the unique ecosystem that it embodies, still remains one of my top priorities. This 22,000-acre South Florida treasure is more than just a mere collection of protected land parcels. On the contrary, the "Ag Reserve" is both a critical environmental buffer and a nationally-ranking hub for produce and other farm products that serves as a stalwart foundation for our local economy.

Today, however, we now find ourselves standing at a critical crossroads, one in which we as a community must carefully navigate amid mounting pressure for abandoning the protective framework that has long defined and preserved this unique region.

I am committed to smart, sustainable development that addresses the recent surge in light industrial projects, otherwise known as the so-called "warehouse bubble." While the commerce designation has seen significant activity from developers, there is an increasing recognition that residents require more accessible community services.

Accordingly, as our local population continues to expand, it is imperative that we continue to provide essential services to take care of residents without compromising long-established environmental standards. In approaching these matters, we must 'do it right' by prioritizing the actual needs of our families, children, and seniors.

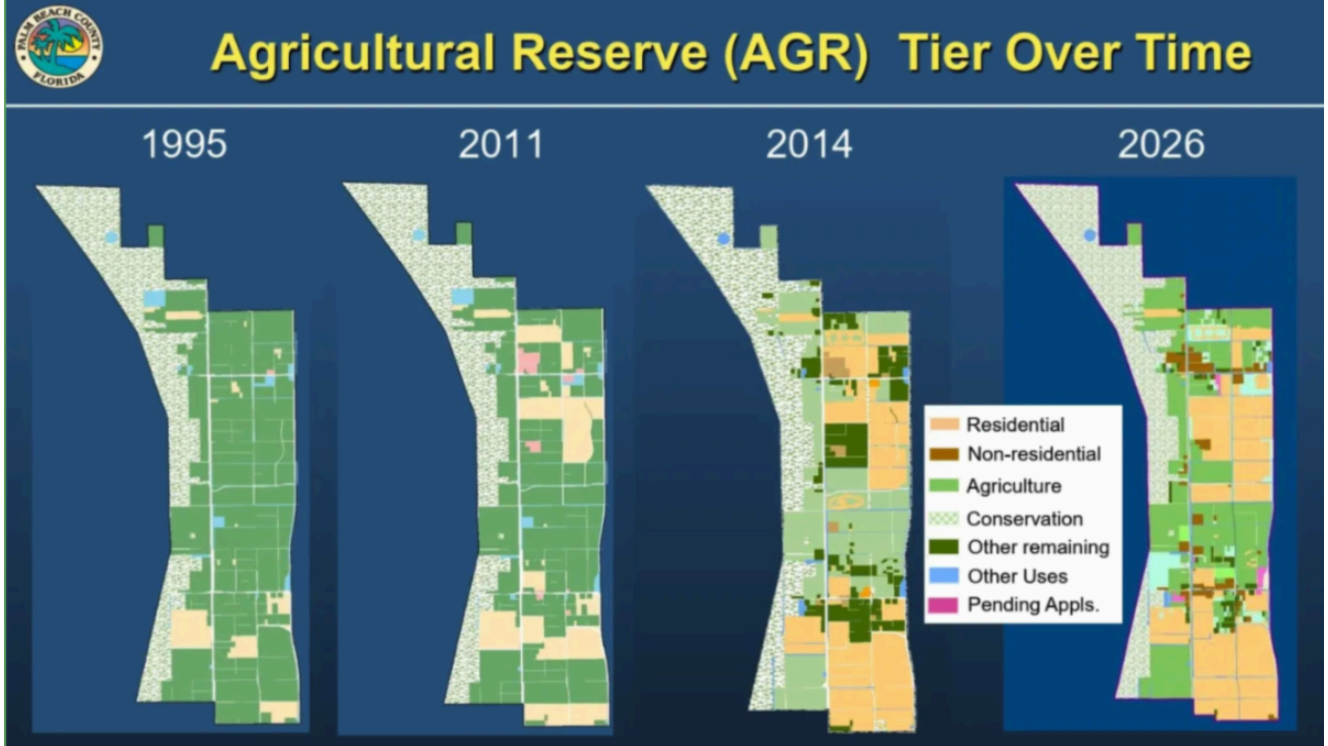
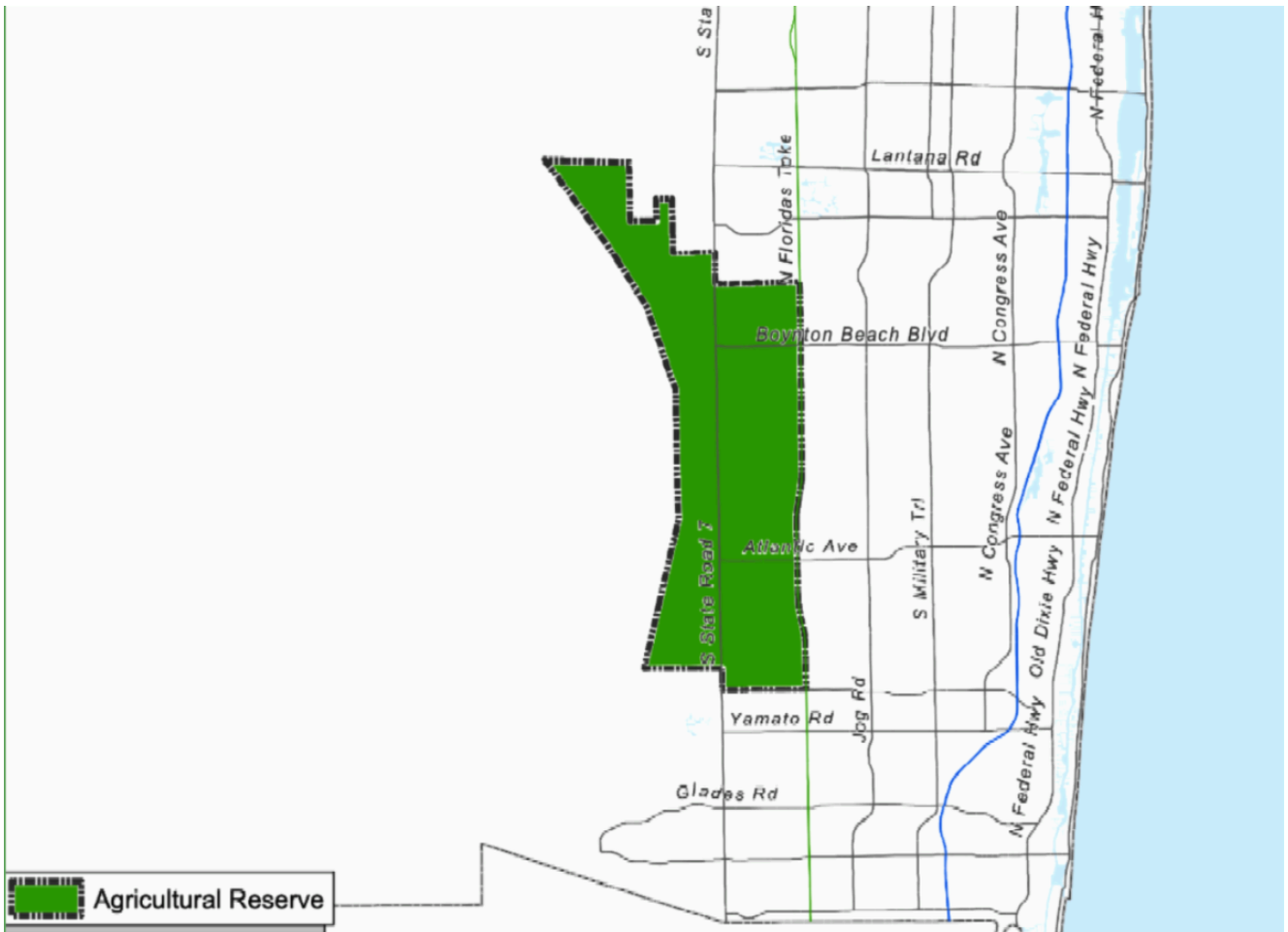
Your voices will be crucial in determining how to properly develop and enhance the Ag Reserve without violating its underlying spirit. Together, we can and will find a balance that respects our legacy farmers while also creating a vibrant, prosperous future for all parties that are involved in these significant ongoing deliberations.

Fighting For You,



Maria Sachs

## **The Ag Reserve: Brief History & What's at Stake**



(Source: PBC Planning, Zoning & Building Dept.)

## The Roots of Our Ag Reserve: History and Harvest

The Ag Reserve is a national leader in winter vegetable production due to its specific soil composition, which is ideal for high-value crops. The region is a top producer of green bell peppers, specialty peppers, and fresh sweet corn, alongside a diverse bounty of strawberries, cucumbers, and leafy greens.



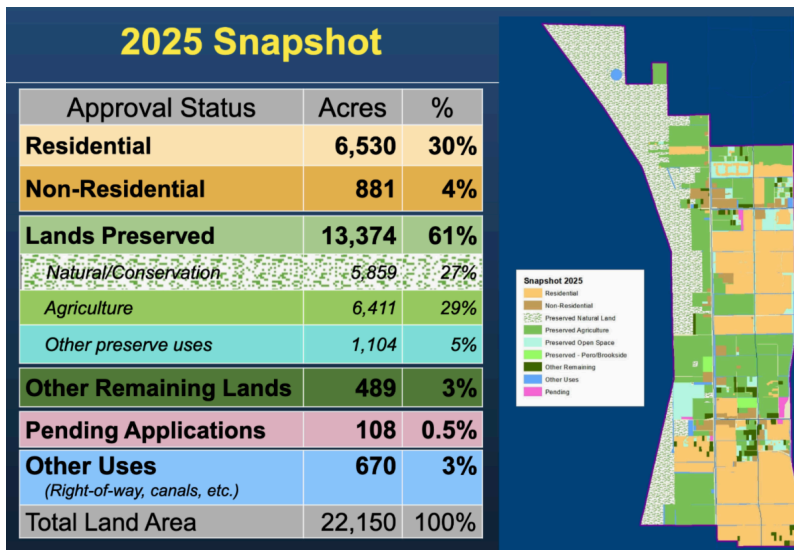
PBC Commissioner Maria Sachs (6th from L) proudly stands with a whole host of legacy-farmer owners and other key executives at her previously-held Ag Reserve Workshop. (Source: Office of PBC Comm. Maria Sachs, Dist. 5)

This agricultural legacy is sustained by foundational legacy-farm operations that continue to anchor the industry within District 5:

- **Alderman Farms Sales Corporation** (Jim Alderman, President / CEO): A legacy leader in both conventional and organic farming techniques, specializing in tomatoes, herbs, and beans.
- **Bedner's Farm Fresh Market, LLC** (Stephen Bedner, Owner / Officer): A pioneer in integrating retail and U-Pick operations with commercial farming of strawberries, corn, and peppers.
- **East Coast Trading Import Export and Logistics, Inc.** (Mercedes Garcia, President / Owner): Doing business as East Coast Farms & Vegetables, this company is a major supplier of value-added fruits and vegetables, specializing in fresh-cut products and organic meal-prep items.
- **Florida Crystals Corporation** (Pepe Fanjul, Jr., President): A premier, fully integrated sugarcane company that pioneered organic sugar farming in the U.S. across hundreds of thousands of acres.
- **Green Life Farms, LLC** (Ned Dwyer, CEO): An innovative leader in controlled-environment agriculture, using hydroponic facilities to grow chemical-free leafy greens and herbs.

- **Hugh Branch, Inc.** (Brett C. Bergmann, President): A family-founded industry leader since 1956, serving as the country's largest purveyor of sweet corn and a major distributor of fresh Florida vegetables.
- **Mecca Family Farms, Ltd.** (Leonard Mecca, President): A long-standing agricultural entity in South Florida structured as a Florida Limited Partnership, involved in the cultivation and distribution of fresh regional produce.
- **Pero Family Farms Food Company, LLC** (Peter F. Pero IV, CEO): A massive operation managing over 11,000 acres and recognized as one of the nation's leading producers of bell peppers and organic vegetables.
- **Rorabeck's Plants & Produce, Inc.** (Robert Rorabeck, President): A central hub for local and seasonal produce distribution, offering a vast selection of bulk fruits, vegetables, and specialty organic items.
- **Roth Farms, Inc.** (Rick Roth, President): A multi-generational operation in the Everglades Agricultural Area focusing on leafy vegetables, radishes, sweet corn, and sugar cane.
- **TKM Bengard Farms, LLC** (Toby Basore, Principal / Production): Known as the largest lettuce grower east of the Mississippi, this operation manages over 8,000 acres of leafy greens and sweet corn.
- **Yee Farms, Inc.** (Roland Yee, President): A family-operated staple for over 75 years, specializing in the production of high-quality Asian produce like bok choy and napa cabbage across South Florida.

### **Critical Milestones: Protecting the 60/40 Framework**



(Source: PBC Plan., Zon. & Building Dept.)

A truly landmark achievement for the Reserve was the rejection of the G.L. Homes land swap back in 2023, reinforcing our commitment to strict preservation rules. This maintained the "60/40 rule," which requires 60% of land to be preserved in exchange for 40% development.

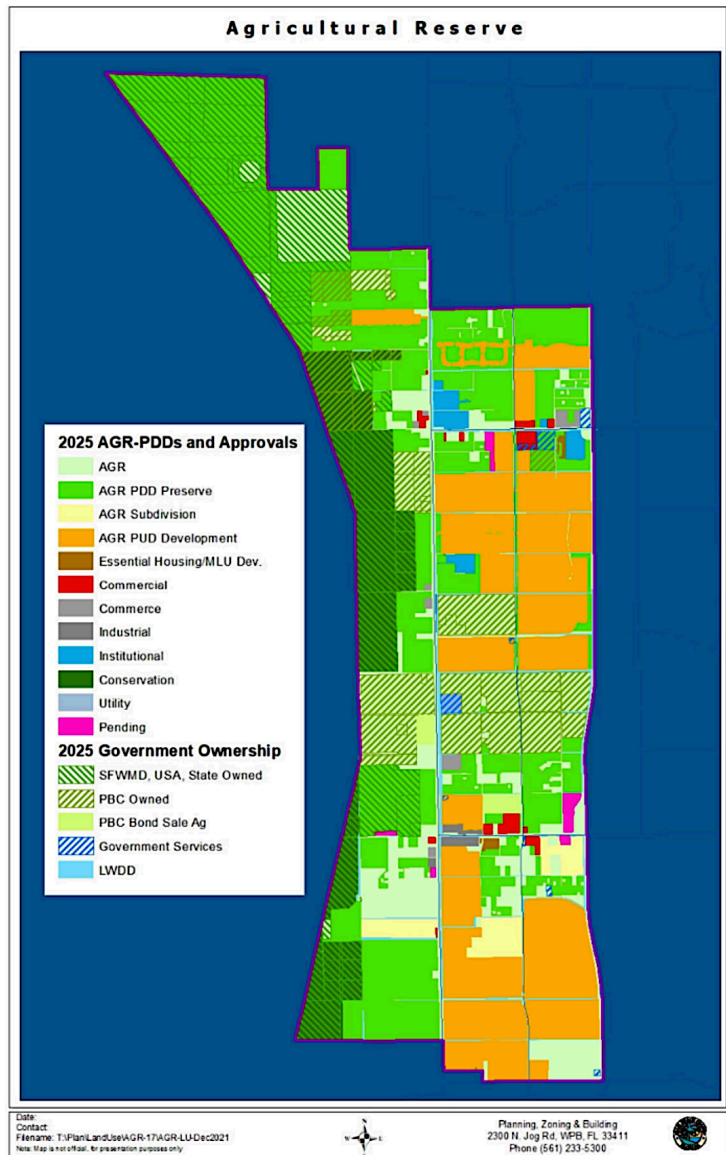
These rules were established to allow limited supporting uses while preventing the gradual erosion of agricultural protections. Today, this total includes over 2,400 acres of publicly owned core conservation lands in the west and nearly 11,000 acres of private agricultural easements surrounding residential clusters in the east.

## Crossroads: The Rise of Light Industrial Encroachment

In recent years, developers have utilized a "commerce" designation to build numerous light industrial projects, leading to concerns from residents about "too many warehouses."

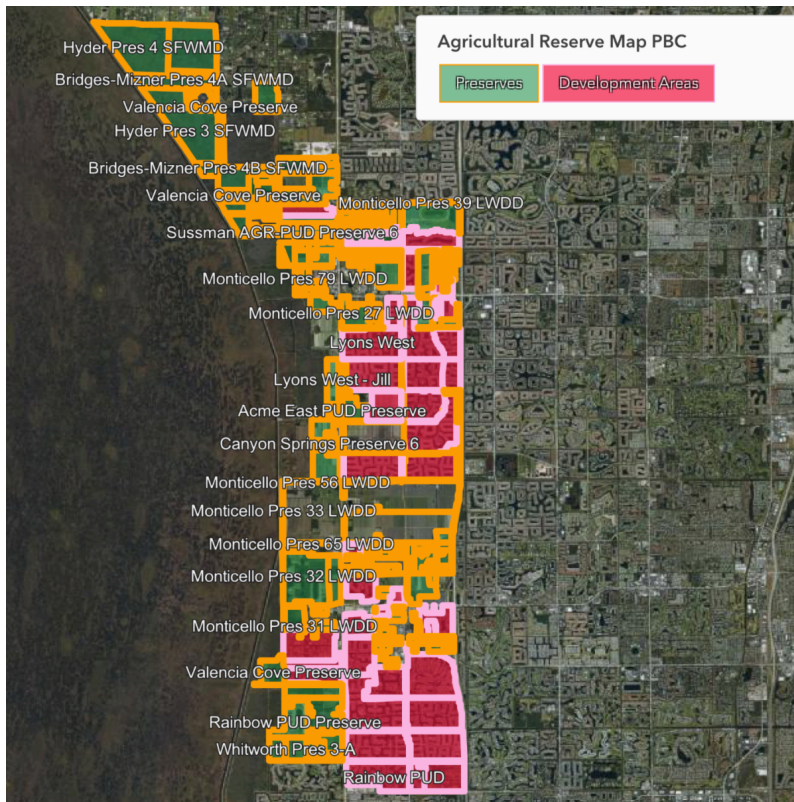
Major projects like the Logistics Center at Delray and West Atlantic Business Center have altered the corridor along State Road 7. This shift has created a surplus of industrial space while leaving a deficit of services for the people living in the region.

Residents and officials are now identifying a need for fitness centers, cultural gathering places, and recreation for children rather than even greater degrees of warehouse expansion.



(Source: PBC Plan., Zon. & Building Dept.)

## The Path Forward: Smart and Balanced Development



(Source: PBC Plan., Zon. & Building Dept.)

My approach is centered around a functional, sustainable development pattern that embodies the "Third Place" design concept (i.e. other spaces separate from home and work that jointly foster community, socialization, and a sense of belonging). As such, I am advocating for special mixed-use districts that would ideally feature pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, town-homes over retail, and community piazzas that would serve as local amenities.

We must move away from industrial rooflines and heavy truck traffic toward projects that invigorate neighborhoods. By thoughtfully integrating housing, shopping, and recreation, we can provide the services our growing population needs while remaining legally committed to the open spaces that define our home.

## **COBWRA: The Group That Shaped the Ag Reserve**



PBC Commissioner Maria Sachs (R) shares a smile with COBWRA's 2nd Vice President Irwin Cohen (L) as she formally swears in and installs him into his executive leadership position during a recent COBWRA delegates meeting at Valencia Shores. (Source: Office of PBC Comm. Maria Sachs, Dist. 5)

Founded in 1981, as development began to push west of Boynton Beach, the Coalition of Boynton West Residential Associations (COBWRA) serves as a formidable model of volunteer-led, grassroots advocacy that has been instrumental in safeguarding the Agricultural Reserve, with the following distinguished individuals all having served as COBWRA's various Presidents over the years:

- **Barbara Roth**, *Current President* (2022–Present)
- **Beth Rappaport** (2019–2022)
- **Phil Barlage** (2018–2019)

- **Myrna Rosoff** (2017–2018)
- **Glen Harvie** (2016–2017)
- **Myrna Rosoff** (2013–2016)
- **Stuart Caine** (2012–2013)
- **Ken Lassiter** (2009–2012)
- **Barbara Katz** (2006–2009)
- **Sandra Greenberg** (2003–2006)
- **Lewis Doctor** (2000–2003)
- **Dagmar Brahs** (1997–2000)
- **Gene Sokoloff** (1995–1997)
- **Paul Gellis** (1993–1995)
- **Al Miller** (1991–1993)
- **Philip Leslie** (1987–1991)
- **Kenneth Sanden** (1984–1987)
- **Dr. Richard Carrington** (1981–1984)

Today, COBWRA brings together representatives from over 100 homeowner and condominium associations, representing the interests of tens of thousands of residents within unincorporated Palm Beach County. COBWRA functions as a vital catalyst for tangible community improvements and has played a defining role in the long-term environmental stewardship of the Ag Reserve. Through a dedicated network of committees, volunteers have spent decades engaging in hands-on initiatives that range from supporting roadway safety and school enhancements to spearheading the very policies that protect open space and farming operations. By bridging the gap between residents and government officials, COBWRA has successfully maintained the delicate balance between necessary residential development and the essential preservation of the Ag Reserve's "green" soul. Being far more than just a mere advisory group, COBWRA transforms volunteer energy into tangible regional improvements that are worth celebrating. I am truly proud to stand with COBWRA and work alongside this dedicated group to protect our community's character and future.

## Grand Opening! Canyon Dist. Park (Phase II)



Commissioner Sachs (Ctr.) joins other fellow Palm Beach County elected officials, local leaders, and community figureheads for the official ribbon cutting ceremony commemorating the grand opening of Canyon District Park (Phase II). (Source: PBC Parks & Recreation Dept.)

It was an honor to witness the further transformation of our community as we officially opened Phase II of Canyon District Park, a project that truly embodies our commitment to enhancing the quality of life for all Palm Beach County residents. Standing here today, I am incredibly proud to see these new baseball and softball fields, the vibrant sand volleyball courts, and our wonderful destination accessible playground ready for families to enjoy. This expansion is more than just an addition of world-class amenities; it is a smart investment in our collective wellness and a dedicated space where neighbors can forge lasting connections. By providing these batting cages, pavilions, and unique public art, we are fostering an environment that encourages active living and reduces the stresses of everyday life. I remain dedicated to

supporting such thoughtful developments that prioritize healthy, happy living and ensure our county remains a premier destination for recreation. This milestone marks a significant step forward in our mission to create inclusive, high-quality spaces that serve every generation of our growing community.

## **New Upcoming PBC Programs & Local Events!**

### **FREE Full Moon Yoga & Night Under Stars - Old School Sq.**

- Date: Thursday, April 30, 2026
- Time: 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.
- Location: [51 N. Swinton Ave., Delray Beach, Florida 33444](#)
- Website: [downtowndelraybeach.com/do/free-full-moon-yoga-and-ecstatic-night-under-the-stars](https://downtowndelraybeach.com/do/free-full-moon-yoga-and-ecstatic-night-under-the-stars).



# FREE Full Moon Yoga & Ecstatic Night Under the Stars

## DATES AND TIMES

- 📅 Thursday, Apr 30, 2026 6PM - 9PM
- 📅 Monday, Jun 29, 2026 6:30PM - 9:30PM
- 📅 Tuesday, Jul 28, 2026 6:30PM - 9:30PM

## LOCATION

- 📍 [Old School Square](#)  
51 N Swinton Ave

## DETAILS

FREE Full Moon Yoga is back with Jessica Om and Pedro Luna! Enjoy a magical evening at Old School Square under the full moon. Discover an immersive experience designed to awaken your spirit and elevate your energy.

We'll begin with a Full Moon-Inspired Yoga Flow, co-led by Jessica and Pedro, with live beats by DJ SUBSQWAD to guide your movement and breath. Once the energy settles, we'll rise again—DJ SUBSQWAD will lift the vibe with rhythmic sounds to inspire free-form movement and ecstatic dance.

All are welcome to express, move, and glow. Flow artists are encouraged to bring their props and join the celebration.

Come as you are and celebrate the power of community, movement, music, and the moon. Let's flow, release, and rise together.

## SCHEDULE

- 6:00 PM - 6:30 PM:** Arrive, set your mat and your intention, settle in, shop our curated vendors
- 6:30 PM - 8:00 PM:** Yoga Flow with Pedro and Jessica (all levels welcome!)
- 8:00 PM - 9:00 PM:** DJ Set and Ecstatic Dance with DJ SUBSQWAD

## Florida Atl. University's "Dance Showcase" - FAU Theatre

- Dates: Fri., May 1 & Sat., May 2, 2026
- Times: 7 p.m. (Friday); 2 p.m. & 7 p.m. (Saturday)

- Location: 777 Glades Road, Boca Raton, FL 33431
- Website: [fauevents.universitytickets.com/w/event.aspx?SeriesID=435](http://fauevents.universitytickets.com/w/event.aspx?SeriesID=435).

## FAU's "Dance Showcase"

Saturday, May 2, 2026

2:00 PM – 4:00 PM

FAU's University Theatre  
777 Glades Road, Boca  
Raton, FL, 33431, United  
States

FAU's Department of Theatre & Dance is proud to present its "Dance Showcase" from May 1-2, 2026!

Join us for Florida Atlantic's inaugural student choreography dance concert, Dance Showcase! Watch the stage come alive with bold, original, student choreography in styles ranging from hip hop, jazz, contemporary, ballet, and more. You do not want to miss this unforgettable weekend of creativity, passion, and excitement. Directed by Aidan Nettles.



### Schedule of performances:

Friday, May 1, 2026, at 7 PM

Saturday, May 2, 2026, at 2 PM and 7 PM

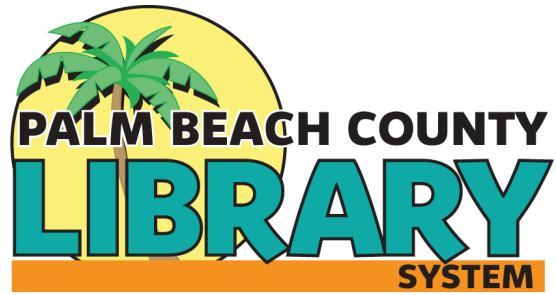
## Palm Beach County Library Happenings

### A Jazzy Little Program

- Date: Wed., April 29, 2026
- Time: 3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.
- Location: Glades Road Branch, [20701 95th Avenue South, Boca Raton, FL 33434](https://www.pbcgov.com/20701-95th-Avenue-South)
- Description: Celebrate the joy of jazz with a creative, hands-on craft inspired by two legendary musicians: Louis Armstrong and

Miles Davis! This activity blends art, music, and history in a fun and meaningful way. Perfect for ages 5–11.

- Event Link: [pbclibrary.bibliocommons.com/events/698b34754dacf581ff7a4cad](https://pbclibrary.bibliocommons.com/events/698b34754dacf581ff7a4cad).



CONNECT. INSPIRE. ENRICH.

[www.pbclibrary.org](http://www.pbclibrary.org)

### Mother's Day Card Making

- Date: Tue., May 5, 2026
- Time: 3:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
- Location: Canyon Branch Library, [8915 Senator Joe Abruzzo Ave., Boynton Beach, Florida 33472](#)
- Description: Create a handmade card for someone special. We provide the materials; you provide the creativity. Suitable for children, teens and adults.
- Event Link: [pbclibrary.bibliocommons.com/events/69b4265a2b552e8e21b2e1a7](https://pbclibrary.bibliocommons.com/events/69b4265a2b552e8e21b2e1a7).

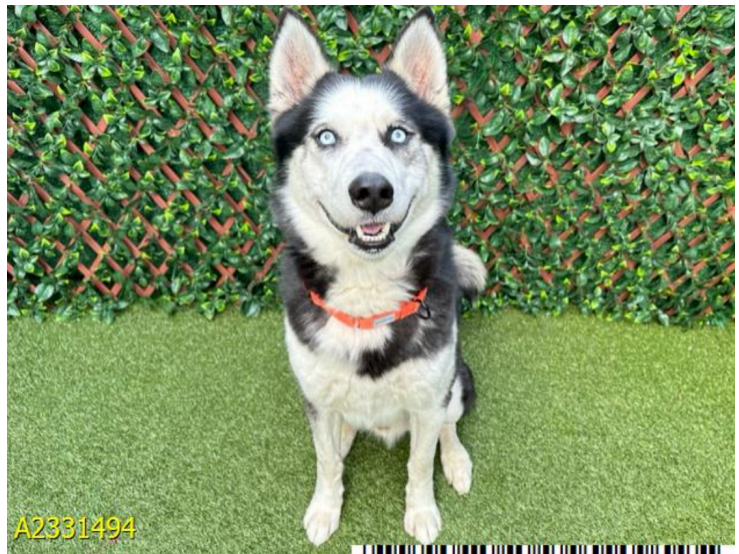
*For a full list of upcoming events and registration details, visit:*  
[pbclibrary.bibliocommons.com/v2/events](https://pbclibrary.bibliocommons.com/v2/events).

## PBC Animal Care and Control Spotlight

I'm **FRANZ!** If you need a new furry pal, I'm your doggy to be!

Adopted pets are spayed, neutered, vaccinated, treated for ticks and fleas, micro-chipped and more.

If you're interested, please call **561-233-1200** and provide reference number **A2331494**.



*For more on other cats needing a forever home in Palm Beach County visit:* [secure.co.palm-beach.fl.us/snap/adoptabledogs](https://secure.co.palm-beach.fl.us/snap/adoptabledogs).



**SAVING A DOG  
WON'T CHANGE  
THE WORLD.  
BUT FOR THAT DOG,  
THE WORLD CHANGES  
FOREVER.**

**ALL DOGS DESERVE A FAMILY.**

*For information on fostering sheltered dogs, cats and other at-risk animals in Palm Beach County, please visit:  
[discover.pbc.gov/publicsafety/animalcare/Pages/Foster2Petpals.aspx](https://discover.pbc.gov/publicsafety/animalcare/Pages/Foster2Petpals.aspx).*

**SWA PBC 211 - Mental Health Resources**

# Help is 3 Numbers Away



**211** maintains a comprehensive database of community resources and provides information and referrals for essential needs like:

**211** also can connect people with information and referrals for:



**988** provides crisis support for:

- Thoughts of Suicide
- Mental Health Crisis
- Substance Use Crisis
- Emotional Distress



**911** provides first responder dispatch for:

- Medical Emergency
- Fire
- Reporting a Crime
- Disaster Response
- Life Threatening Situation



# MAKE THE RIGHT CALL

**988** SUICIDE & CRISIS  
**LIFELINE**

**Urgent mental health-related distress**  
*Thoughts of Suicide \* Mental Health Crisis  
Substance Use Crisis*

**EMERGENCY  
9-1-1  
RESPONSE**

**Life or property  
threatening  
emergencies,  
such as:**

*Impaired Driving \* House Fire \* Medical Emergency  
Abduction \* Vehicle Accident \* Robbery \* Domestic  
Violence \* Suspicious Activities \* Heart Attack or Stroke  
Hazardous Conditions \* Crime in Progress*

**2·1·1**

**Information  
and Resources,  
such as:**

*Housing and Utility Issues \* Locate Shelter \* Locate a  
Food Bank \* Natural Disaster Relief \* Tax Preparation  
Assistance \* Veterans Services \* Support Groups  
Counseling Services*



**POISON CONTROL 1-800-222-1222**

(Source: Florida (FL) 211 - [fl211.org](http://fl211.org))

***\*ALSO STAY TUNED FOR UPCOMING NEWS  
ABOUT OUR FUTURE PALM BEACH COUNTY  
AGRICULTURAL RESERVE BUS TOUR!\****

**Please contact us with any questions or concerns.**

**561-355-2205**

**MSachs@pbc.gov**

**Commissioner Maria Sachs | District 5  
Palm Beach County Board of County Commissioners**

PBC Commission District 5 | 301 N. Olive Avenue | West Palm Beach, FL 33401 US