



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

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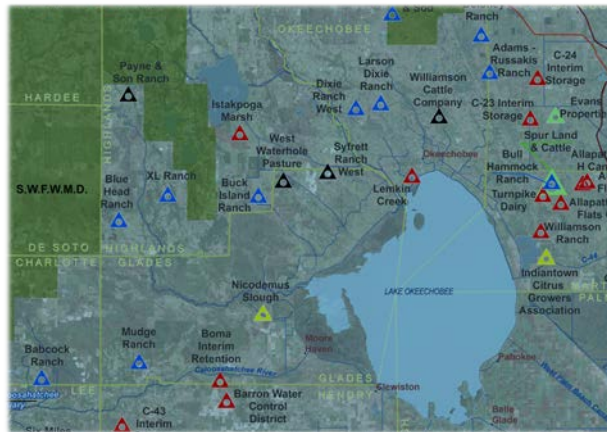
South Florida Water Management District

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SFWMD Ramps Up Pumping at Water Storage Areas *Expanded storage is being utilized in response to lake releases*



(Click on the map to see water storage projects.)

West Palm Beach, FL — To help protect South Florida's estuaries, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) has begun boosting and also starting up pumping operations at several water storage sites in response to an increase in water releases from Lake Okeechobee.

"We have been continuously working to capture and store water before it reaches the lake and estuaries," said Jeff Kivett, SFWMD Division Director of Operations, Engineering and Construction. "With releases from the lake increasing because of water conditions, our engineers are working to get every ounce of storage from available areas."

With Lake Okeechobee's level at 14.78 feet NGVD today — almost a foot higher than this time last year — the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has been increasing releases from the lake to both estuaries.

To address impacts from those releases, the District has taken a host of actions to store water at key sites across several counties, including:

Starting Up at BOMA (Glades County)

This week, SFWMD engineers activated all three pumps at the District's Caloosahatchee Water Quality Treatment and Testing Project site (property formerly owned by BOMA Corp.), strategically located in the Caloosahatchee watershed. The site has approximately 1,500 acre-feet, or about 489 million gallons, of water storage capacity, with pumps pulling water directly from the Caloosahatchee River before it reaches the estuary.



(Click the image for a larger version.)

While the site will one day become a nitrogen removal project to improve water quality, District engineers determined water could be stored there on an interim basis. The site was also used in 2014 for emergency storage.

Pumping Started at Mirror Lakes (Lehigh Acres in Lee County)

Pumping into the Mirror Lakes property began last week. The project was built to rehydrate Mirror Lakes Preserve with 1,000 acre-feet, or about 326 million gallons, of water storage. The project will also restore flow south of State Road 82 with 500 acre-feet, or about 163 million gallons, of water storage and move water to the Estero watershed with 2,000 acre-feet, or about 653 million gallons, of water storage.

The SFWMD helped fund Phase 1 of the effort, and engineers determined there is capacity now to pump water into the site. The District is working with its local partners in the project to begin pulling water onto the site from the surrounding watershed. This water would have otherwise flowed to the Caloosahatchee Estuary.

Caulkins Water Farm (Martin County)

Engineers completed planned testing and maintenance work early to restart pumps on Valentine's Day at the 450-acre pilot project to store water on fallow citrus land. The project can pump approximately 40.7 million gallons of water a day directly out of the C-44 Canal, preventing it from reaching the St. Lucie Estuary.

The site became fully operation in February 2014 and was successfully utilized during the 2014 wet season to store approximately 8,942 acre-feet, or about 3 billion gallons, of water. Currently, approximately 125 acre-feet of water is being pumped into the site per day.

Nicodemus Slough (Glades County)

In January, the District began full-capacity pumping into the new Nicodemus Slough water storage area in Glades County. To send water onto the 16,000-acre project area, four pumps are each moving approximately 30,000 gallons of water per minute.

Through early February, about 6,700 acre-feet, or 2.2 billion gallons, of water has been pumped onto the site, which has a full pumping capacity of 120,000 gallons per minute.

Public Information on SFWMD Water Management

In concert with a host of web-based tools that capture ecological, rainfall and water level data, the District provides an operational “water tracker” map to tell the story of how much water SFWMD moves from Lake Okeechobee and where it goes. The map is updated weekly.

The online water tracker displays:

- Information, photos and weekly flow data from the four SFWMD structures that move water south from Lake Okeechobee
- Routes that water take from the lake
- Color-coded map of storage capacity in the three Everglades Water Conservation Areas

For More Information:

- Operational Planning documents & data: www.sfwmd.gov/opsreports
- Interactive “Moving Water South” map: www.sfwmd.gov/movingwatersouth

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About the South Florida Water Management District

The South Florida Water Management District is a regional, governmental agency that oversees the water resources in the southern half of the state – 16 counties from Orlando to the Keys. It is the oldest and largest of the state’s five water management districts. The agency mission is to manage and protect water resources of the region by balancing and improving water quality, flood control, natural systems and water supply. A key initiative is cleanup and restoration of the Everglades.