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**STATE RELEASES 2007 SOUTH FLORIDA ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT**

**Annual report highlights progress to restore Everglades,  
Lake Okeechobee, South Florida ecosystem**

**WEST PALM BEACH** - The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) today released the 2007 South Florida Environmental Report detailing a year of scientific, engineering and restoration work to improve the environmental quality of America's Everglades and the entire South Florida ecosystem.

"Florida is an international leader in environmental restoration," said DEP Secretary Michael W. Sole. "Our state is committed to sound science, engineering excellence and common-sense resource management - all supported by dedicated funding that will ensure continued progress."

Key findings in the 2007 South Florida Environmental Report include:

- Florida's 41,000 acres of treatment wetlands captured and treated nearly 1.5 million acre-feet, or 488 billion gallons, of water during Water Year 2006 - improving the quality of water flowing into the Everglades and reducing phosphorus loads by close to 70 percent.
- Best farming practices in the Everglades Agricultural Area prevented 118 metric tons of phosphorus from entering the River of Grass.
- Since their implementation, best farming practices and stormwater treatment areas have prevented 2,500 metric tons of phosphorus - the equivalent weight of more than 2,000 average-size cars - from entering America's Everglades.
- In a single year and ahead of schedule, Florida expanded and enhanced three Stormwater Treatment Areas, increasing available treatment area by 5,336 acres.
- Closing on a final 13,000 acres in 2006, Florida completed the 102,064-acre

land acquisition needed for the restoration of the Kissimmee River. The \$578 million program to rescue the river is demonstrating environmental returns. Wading birds and waterfowl are returning to the restored floodplain with an estimated 657 nests observed in 2006.

- For the first time in history, publicly issued revenue bonds called *Certificates of Participation* are being used for natural resource restoration. Their sale successfully raised \$572 million for Everglades restoration projects.

"The 2007 South Florida Environmental Report provides a comprehensive update on our scientific research, restoration projects and environmental returns," said Carol Wehle, Executive Director of the SFWMD. "This report documents the world-class work taking place in South Florida and demonstrates Florida's commitment to restoration."

The result of a pilot project authorized by the Florida Legislature in 2004, the two-volume annual South Florida Environmental Report consolidates more than 50 individual reports documenting the State's work to improve the Everglades, Kissimmee Basin, Lake Okeechobee, estuaries and coastal areas. The report provides extensive research summaries, data analyses, financial updates and a searchable database of environmental projects throughout the South Florida ecosystem.

The State of Florida and the South Florida Water Management District have invested more than \$2 billion toward the [Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan](#), an additional \$1.8 billion for Everglades water quality improvements and \$200 million toward the [Lake Okeechobee and Estuary Recovery Plan](#).

The 2007 South Florida Environmental Report, including a 52-page executive summary, is available online at <http://www.sfwmd.gov/sfer/>

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*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.*

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