

Weekly Update: October 19, 2005



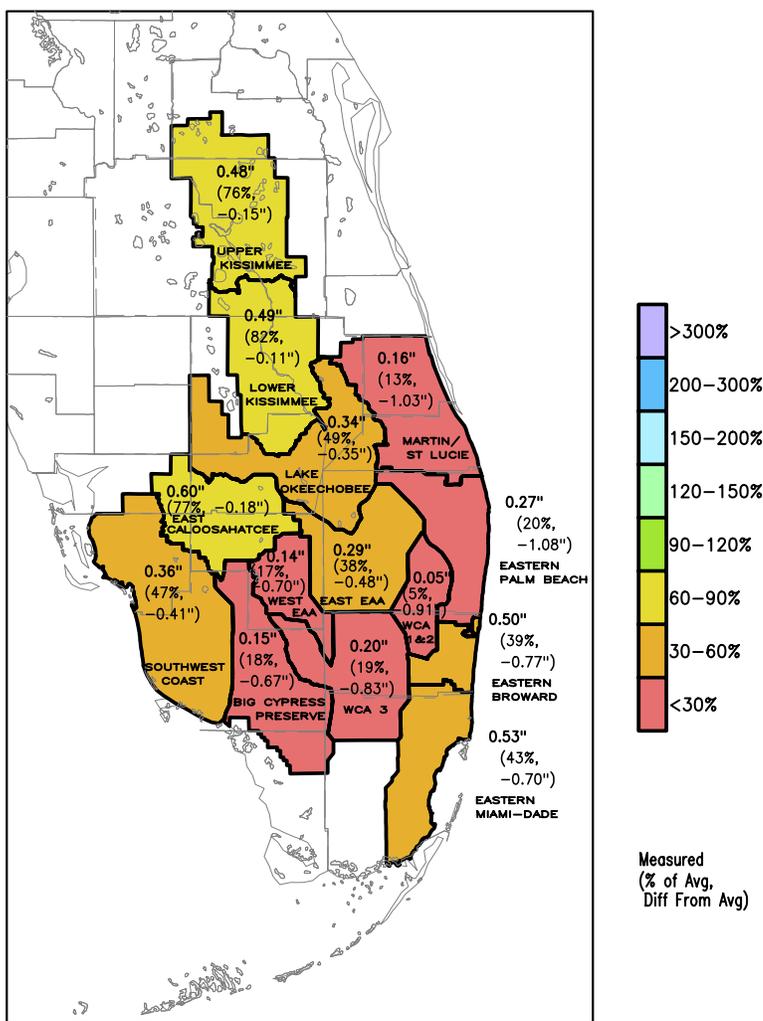
just the
FACTs

This fact sheet is provided as a reference to encourage a greater understanding of the various issues related to managing water in south Florida.

State of the Water Management System

To underscore our commitment to keep you informed, we will send this update weekly. We encourage you to share this water resources information with your constituents.

SFWM District Rainfall
12-OCT-2005 to 18-OCT-2005



DISTRICT-WIDE: 0.33" (38%, -0.53")

GRADS: COLA/IGES

2005-10-18-12:03

Rainfall overview:

- District-wide rainfall for the past week was less than 1/2".
- Rainfall for the next 7 days is dependent on Hurricane Wilma.
- Outlook for the remainder of the wet season is for an increased likelihood of above average rainfall.



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System-wide overview:

If Hurricane Wilma follows the currently forecasted track, it will strike south west or central west Florida sometime about Saturday morning and travel across the state in a northeasterly direction. This will result in significant rainfall, especially in the southern and eastern portions of the District. After the passage of Wilma, rainfall is projected to be below average. In part because of the threat posed by Hurricane Wilma and the longer lead time, operations has begun moving water from smaller lakes that are at or slightly above their regulation schedules to the larger downstream lakes that are below schedule. The outflow from Lake Kissimmee is not expected to increase as a result of this operation. In preparation for excess rainfall, water managers have begun to lower coastal canals to increase the capability for secondary drainage districts to lower their systems.

Lake Okeechobee — Lake level is at 15.57 ft NGVD, up 0.03 ft since last week. Last year on this date, the lake was 2.24 ft higher as a result of rains from hurricanes Frances and Jeanne. Surveys conducted on Oct. 13 indicated algae blooms near Pahokee and along the lake's western and northern shores. Areas with concentrated algae blooms included Fish Eating Bay, Eagle Bay Island, and the western and northern margins of King's Bar.

Upper Chain of Lakes/Kissimmee Basin — The upper basin received 0.48" of rain to bring the 30-day total to 4.73", which is 115% of normal. The lower basin received 0.50", which brings the 30-day total to 4.34", or 110% of normal. Stage for upper basin lakes are at or above regulation schedule except for lakes Kissimmee, Cypress and Hatchineha, which are below schedule. Vegetation management continues to treat for floating plants. Snail kites have three active nests on Little Grassy Island in Lake Tohopekaliga.

St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee Estuaries — There were no releases from Lake Okeechobee during the past week. Freshwater extends at least down to Ft. Myers in the Caloosahatchee Estuary. Salinity conditions in both estuaries are fair.

Water Conservation Areas — All depths decreased significantly. However, WCA-1 remains well below regulation schedule, and WCA-2A and WCA-3A remain above regulation schedule. Prolonged deep water may stress trees in these areas as well as the foraging and breeding activities of mammals, reptiles and some birds.

Everglades National Park — Rain gauges were damaged during previous storms, so data from the park is still interrupted and patchy. Rainfall during the past week ranged from zero to 0.5". Due to low rainfall, marsh water levels were generally down everywhere in the Park.

Note: This rainfall information is based on rain gauges within the park. The map on page one captures District rain gauge data only.

* SFWMD water managers and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers work together to manage Lake Okeechobee. Water releases from the lake are made in accordance with a federally authorized regulation schedule based on many factors such as time of year, current water conditions, predicted rainfall and lake level.

State of the Water Management System

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Florida Bay — Water levels at the Taylor Slough Bridge have dropped rapidly (nearly 0.25 ft) in the last 10 days. As is expected and needed for ecosystem health at this time of year, the upstream reaches of Taylor River are fresh.

Algae Update — Monitoring continues on blue-green algae in Lake Okeechobee, St. Lucie River/Estuary, Caloosahatchee River, Kissimmee River/Upper Kissimmee Chain of Lakes and the District's eastern canals at 41 fixed monitoring sites.

Additional information, frequently asked questions and related links, can be found on the District's blue-green algae web site at <http://www.sfwmd.gov/site/index.php?id=611>.