

Weekly Update: October 25, 2006



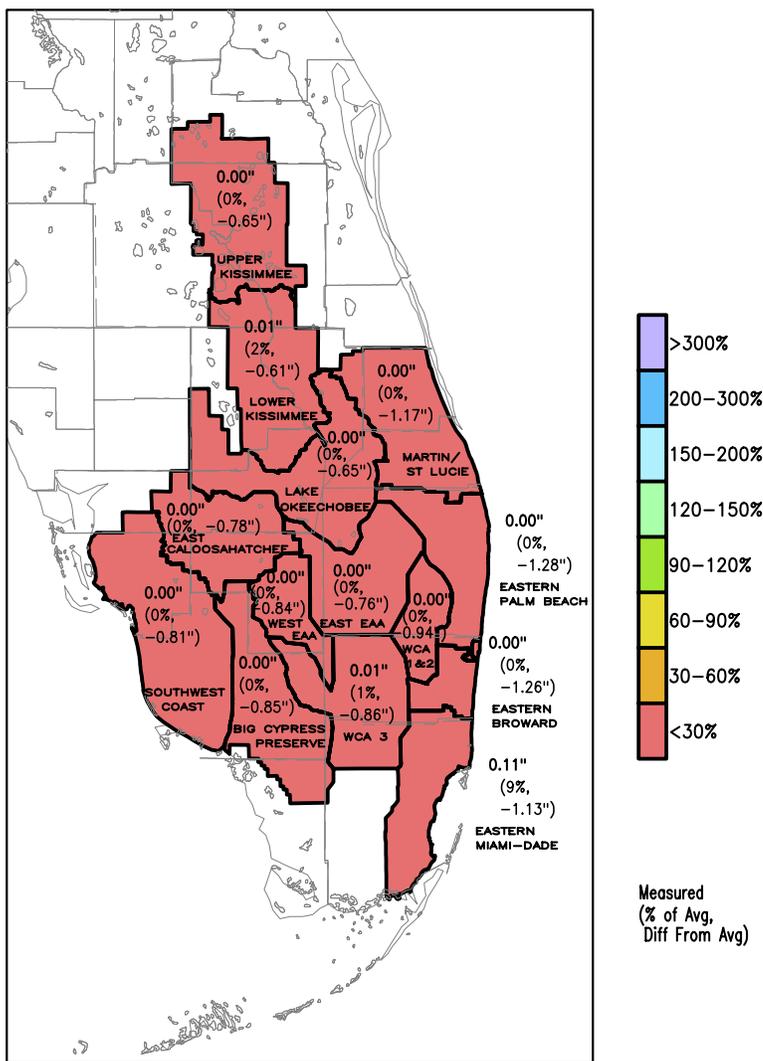
just the
FACTs

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
18-OCT-2006 to 24-OCT-2006



DISTRICT-WIDE: 0.01" (1%, -0.84")

GrADS: COLA/IGES

2006-10-24-16:02



sfwmd.gov
South Florida Water Management District
3301 Gun Club Road
West Palm Beach, Florida 33406
561-686-8800 FL WATS 1-800-432-2045
www.sfwmd.gov

MAILING ADDRESS P.O. Box 24680
West Palm Beach, FL 33416-4680

Rainfall overview:

- District-wide rainfall for the past week was negligible.
- The rainfall outlook for the next seven days is for average rainfall.

State of the Water Management System

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System-wide overview:

The 2006 breeding season was a very good year for wading birds in South Florida for total nests, which exceeded 54,000 and is a 71 percent increase from the previous year and one of the highest recorded since the 1940s. Nesting success increased for most species, particularly for Snowy Egrets and Wood Storks, two species that have fared poorly in recent years. However, Tricolored Heron nest numbers were very low this year and Roseate Spoonbill nest numbers were slightly lower than average. For all species, fledging success (chicks fledged per nest) was generally high relative to recent years and post-fledging conditions were conducive to high survival rates. In 2006 most wading birds continued to use the WCAs for breeding. More good news is that this is the third successive season in which nesting has both occurred and increased at the historic colonies in the estuaries downstream from Shark River Slough in Everglades National Park. At least some of the improvements in this year's breeding effort and success can be attributed to favorable hydrologic and climatic conditions. Dry season water depths and recession rates were classified as 'good' for wading birds, and rainfall and reversal events were limited in frequency and magnitude.

Lake Okeechobee — The lake stage is estimated to be approximately 12.85 feet NGVD 29 (11.55 feet NAVD 88), down 0.2 feet since this date last week. Surface inflows are 22 cubic feet per second with the entire amount coming from Fisheating Creek. Surface outflows are 2,554 cubic feet per second. This is no significant algae bloom activity. Continued low lake levels are anticipated and will maximize the potential for the persistence, or continued recovery, of submerged aquatic vegetation in the lake.

Upper Chain of Lakes/Kissimmee Basin — During the last seven days, the upper basin received no rain. The 30-day rainfall total is .32 inches, which is 8 percent of the long-term average. The lower basin received 0.01 inches of rain to bring the 30-day total to .46 inches, which is 13 percent of the long-term average. Releases from Lake Toho were decreased from 150 cubic feet per second to 100 cubic feet per second and passed through Lake Kissimmee to maintain flow for the Kissimmee River Restoration Project. Lake Toho is more than 1 foot above the low pool stage and 2 feet below the regulation schedule. Lake Kissimmee is approximately 0.38 feet above the low pool stage and 2.9 feet below schedule.

St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee Estuaries — In the St. Lucie Estuary, no releases were made at S-80 in the last week. Average salinities changed little over the past week and remain good. In the Caloosahatchee Estuary, no discharge occurred at S-79 last week. Salinity continues to increase in the estuary and has reached S-79. Salinity levels are still in the tolerable range for Tape Grass in the upper estuary. Salinity conditions are good throughout the Caloosahatchee Estuary and San Carlos Bay.

Water Conservation Areas (WCAs) — October rainfall in the WCAs is less than 15 percent of normal. The lack of any significant rainfall has lowered the Everglades water levels in most areas for the fourth consecutive week. WCA-1 is well below its regulation schedule, while WCA-2A and WCA-3A are slightly above their regulation schedules. Water levels in WCA-3A have dropped an average of 0.65 feet in the last month.

* *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.*

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Everglades National Park — Rainfall in the Park was very light last week with several stations receiving only trace amounts of rain during the past week. Water levels trends were again mixed for the past week. The regional decline at all of the eastern Park wetland stations so early in the dry season may be due to sustained high temperatures and high evaporation rates in the area. Rapid water level declines in Taylor Slough and the Park panhandle can trigger early nesting initiation by spoonbills, which may present problems for successful nesting when reversals occur later this season.

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

Florida Bay — Florida Bay salinity concentrations were elevated in most areas because bay water moved north into the coastal embayment and ponds. Similar to last week, many areas experienced this trend for most of the week with a slight decline in salinity over the weekend. Typically, the highest creek flows occur during the latter period of the wet season (mid-September through October). For the first time in several months, flow reversals caused salinity in the Taylor River ponds to noticeably increase. It is early in the dry season for such an increase, but it may have just been a temporary occurrence due to strong northward flow. These flow reversals are occurring early in the dry season and could pose problems later by reducing the number of aquatic refuges in the marshes and the coastal ponds.

Other District News and Happenings —

- The District is pleased to announce that its inaugural Acceler8 financing consisting of \$546 million, Series 2006 Certificates of Participation (COPs) was successfully offered in the primary market through Citigroup Global Markets in New York City on Oct. 25. According to Citigroup, the SFWMD COPs are the first to be issued for a natural resources project in the United States, and most of the more than \$500 million of capital was raised during a two-hour order period. Strong early sales resulted in an additional \$26 million raised for Everglades restoration, above and beyond the COPs' total par value of \$546 million.
- Last Thursday, the District's Martin/St. Lucie Service Center was named one of the Best Places to Work in Martin County. The Service Center recently relocated and is planning an open house for Nov. 15.

Did you know? The South Florida Water Management District manages and protects the water resources of the region by balancing and improving water quality, flood control, natural systems and water supply. Want to hear more? It would be our pleasure to meet with your organization to give a presentation and answer your questions. If interested, please contact Doris Urban at 800-432-2045 or 561-686-8800, ext. 6202.