

Weekly Update: December 6, 2006



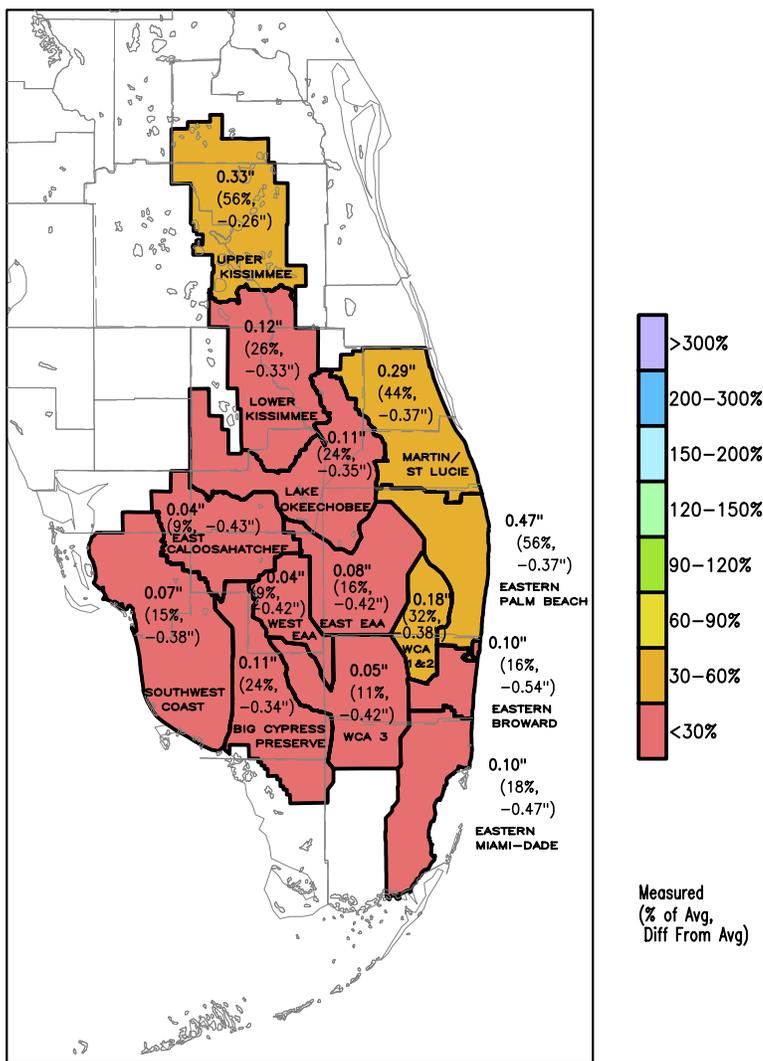
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**FACTs**

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  
29-NOV-2006 to 05-DEC-2006



**DISTRICT-WIDE: 0.16" (30%, -0.37")**

GrADS: COLA/IGES

2006-12-05-16:02



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**Rainfall overview:**

- District-wide rainfall for the past week was 0.16 inches.
- The rainfall outlook for the next seven days is for below average rainfall.

## State of the Water Management System

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**System-wide overview:** Scattered showers will move through the District until Sunday. Rainfall is predicted to be below average over the next 10 days. District-wide rainfall of 1.05 inches and 1.01 inches was recorded for the months of October and November, respectively. The combined total of 2.06 inches of rain marks the driest October/November on record since 1940, when only 1.97 inches fell during the same two month period.

**Lake Okeechobee** — The lake stage is approximately 12.20 feet NGVD 29 (10.90 feet NAVD 88), 0.06 feet lower since this date last week and declining slowly. Surface inflows are 8 cubic feet per second. Surface outflows are 1,045 cubic feet per second. Monthly submerged aquatic vegetation and bloom surveys are scheduled for next week, and results will be reported as they become available.

**Upper Chain of Lakes/Kissimmee Basin** — During the last seven days, the upper basin received 0.43 inches of rainfall to bring the 30-day total to 0.87 inches, which is 35 percent of the long-term average. The lower basin received 0.20 inches of rain to bring the 30-day total to 0.54 inches, which is 25 percent of the long-term average. All of the lakes remain below regulation schedule. Water levels have stabilized in the area of Phase I of Kissimmee River Restoration Project.

**St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee Estuaries** — In the St. Lucie Estuary, no discharges occurred at S-80 during the past week. There have been no discharges from S-80 since late September and no appreciable discharges from Lake Okeechobee to the estuary since April. However, during the past week, salinity decreased slightly, possibly due to intermittent rain, and all readings are fluctuating near the upper limits of the preferred range. Salinity conditions in the estuary are good. In the Caloosahatchee Estuary, no discharges occurred at S-79 during the past week, and there has not been any appreciable and consistent flow since the beginning of October. Near surface salinity increased during the last week in the upper estuary. The 30-day average salinity near the surface at the Ft. Myers sensor exceeded the minimum flows and levels target and the daily average is approaching its upper target limit. In summary, salinity conditions in the lower estuary and San Carlos Bay are good, but are poor in the upper estuary.

**Water Conservation Areas (WCAs)** — Due to low rainfall, the Everglades water levels continue to decrease everywhere. However, water depths are reasonable considering the low amount of rainfall these last few months, ranging from a low of 0.6 feet in the northwest corner of WCA-3A to a high of 2.59 feet in the southern region of WCA-3A. Most areas continue to be deep enough as to not initiate early wading bird nesting. In terms of the regulation schedules, WCA-1 continues to be significantly below regulation, WCA-2A is slightly above regulation and WCA-3A is below regulation.

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\* *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

**Weekly Update:** December 6, 2006 (page 3)

**Everglades National Park** — The Park received about .05 inches of rain this past week, and water levels were generally stable. Recession in both the panhandle and at Taylor Slough Bridge was just under 0.4 inches, which is substantially less than in recent weeks.

*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** — Salinity concentrations generally increased last week in Florida Bay, due in large part to strong reverse flows that pushed bay water into the coastal creeks and embayments. While this point of the year is typically associated with decreasing flows through the creeks, these reversals further dampen the effects of any Everglades water making its way towards Florida Bay.

**Area Water Restrictions** — Total rainfall through the first 11 months of 2006 currently ranks as the second-lowest on record at only 38.35 inches District-wide, approximately 77 percent of the historical average and very nearly equal to the record low of 38.31 inches set during the first 11 months of 1938.

In addition, rain patterns that disproportionately favored southern and southwestern portions of the District have left many areas to the north and northeast in 1-in-25-year dry spells. This is a concern for water managers because low rainfall at the top of the system typically means less water is available for storage and consumption District-wide.

At present, the water level of Lake Okeechobee, a bellwether measurement of the District's water supply, is more than three feet – or 21 percent – below its historical average for this time of year. Water levels in Lake Okeechobee are a major concern for water managers because the Lake serves as the region's primary back-up water supply.

*Mandatory Phase 1* water restrictions remain in force for the Lake Okeechobee Service Area as well as the Northern Indian Prairie Basin, which comprise the Everglades Agricultural Area, portions of Hendry, Glades, Lee, Okeechobee, Palm Beach and Martin Counties, as well as agricultural areas to the south of Lake Istokpoga in Highlands County.

Classified as *moderate* water shortage declarations, these orders predominantly impact agricultural, industrial and commercial water users as well as public water supply utilities in these areas; withdrawals from the Caloosahatchee River; and a relatively small number of residential users whose water source is Lake Okeechobee or any of the surface water canals recharged by the Lake.



## State of the Water Management System

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A formal water shortage warning remains in place for the District's Lower East Coast Service Area, which comprises Monroe, Miami-Dade, Broward and eastern Palm Beach Counties. Though no mandatory water restrictions have been issued as part of this warning, the District is encouraging both residential and agricultural water users here to voluntarily reduce their water consumption as a preemptive measure to avoid or forestall potential water shortage orders and mandatory water restrictions later in the dry season.



More information is available at [www.sfwmd.gov/shortage](http://www.sfwmd.gov/shortage).

### Other District News and Happenings —

- On Dec. 11, the District will have achieved the “Flow-Capable” milestone for Stormwater Treatment Area (STA)-2, Cell 4; STA-5, Flowway 3 and STA-6, Section 2. The ACME C-1 Canal/Pump Station 7 will be flow-capable within a few weeks with the installation of temporary pumps.
- The second phase of the Lake Trafford Restoration project – littoral and shoreline dredging – began last week. This project will provide environmental and water quality benefits to Big Cypress Basin’s Lake Trafford by removing excessive organic accumulations and associated nutrients.
- The C-44 Reservoir/Stormwater Treatment Area Groundbreaking is scheduled for Dec. 11 at 9:30 a.m. As a component of the larger Indian River Lagoon-South restoration project, this *Acceler8* project will capture and treat local stormwater runoff from the 116,516-acre C-44 basin in Martin County, decreasing flows and improving water quality into the St. Lucie Estuary.

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**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.