

Weekly Update: February 15, 2006



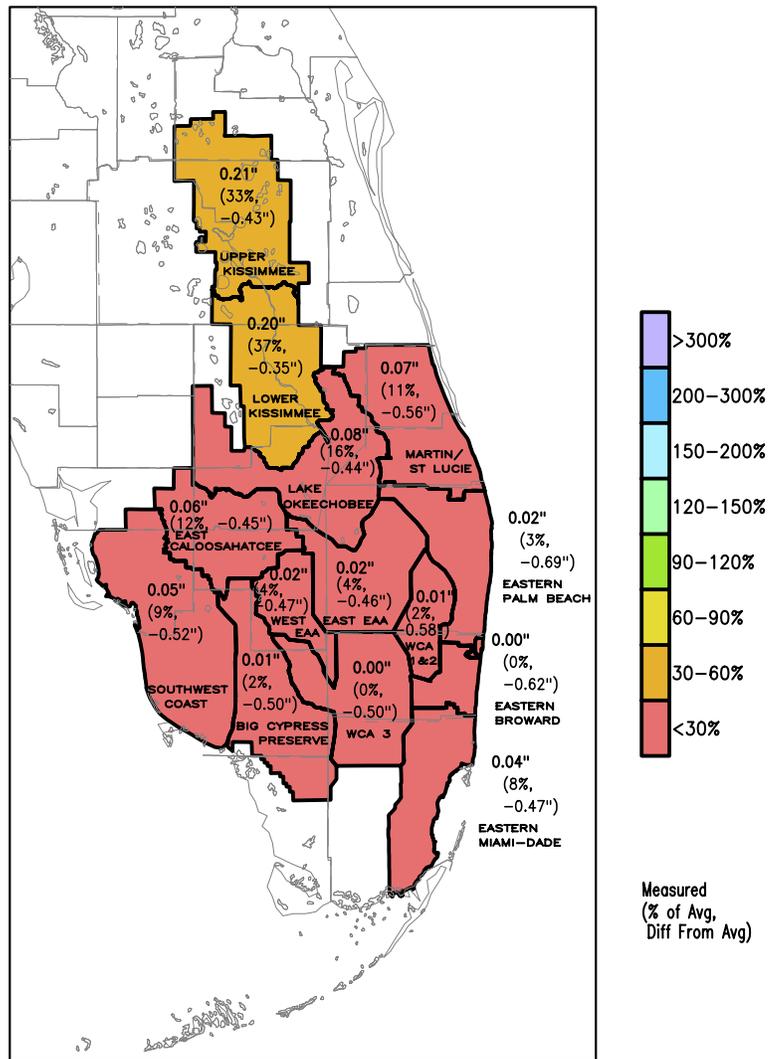
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**FACTs**

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  
08-FEB-2006 to 14-FEB-2006



**DISTRICT-WIDE: 0.07" (13%, -0.48")**

GRADS: COLA/IGES

2006-02-14-12:04

**Rainfall overview:**

- District-wide rainfall for the past week was negligible.
- The rainfall outlook for the next 7 days is for below average rainfall.



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## State of the Water Management System

**Weekly Update:** February 15, 2006 (page 2)

### System-wide overview:

Rainfall over the last week totaled approximately 0.07 in District-wide, with an estimated 0.25 in falling in the Kissimmee Valley. The total for the first 13 days of the month is 2.69 in or 256% of average. The forecast for the next 14 days is for below average rainfall.

**Lake Okeechobee** — The Lake stage is approximately 15.51 ft NGVD. The salinity in the Caloosahatchee and the St. Lucie Estuaries is currently well within the tolerance limits for both temporary and permanent species that inhabit these two systems, and ecological conditions do not require additional input of fresh water at this time. However, a temporary deviation allowing up to level one pulse releases to the estuaries has been approved. The District provided recommendations strictly based on environmental considerations that did not support the temporary deviation. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) however, takes many factors into consideration when making decisions about releases from Lake Okeechobee. The USACE's decisions are longer-term, the District on the other hand, makes recommendations based on the shorter-term water supply and environmental needs of the system.\*

**Upper Chain of Lakes/Kissimmee Basin** — In the last seven days, the upper basin received 0.21 in of rainfall to bring the 30-day total to 2.57 in, which is 104% of normal. The lower basin received .20 in, which brings the 30-day total to 3.58 in or 178% of normal. Most of the upper basin lakes have stages that approximate their respective regulation schedules. Lake Kissimmee is approximately 0.69 ft below schedule.

**St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee Estuaries** — Discharge this past week at S-80 (St. Lucie) and S-79 (Caloosahatchee) was rainfall-driven and ended on Feb. 11 and Feb. 12, respectively. Salinity conditions in both estuaries are good.

**Water Conservation Areas** — Small sections of WCA-3A and 3B received about 0.1 in for the week.

- Due to the rainfall of last week, the significant reversals have receded everywhere except in WCA-1, where inflows from water management structures have now brought WCA-1 up to the regulation schedule.
- WCA-2A water depths decreased by 0.12 ft this past week. This region is now about 0.75 ft above the Regulation Schedule.
- The stage in WCA-2B decreased by 0.13 ft; however, the depth (3.43 ft) is too deep for foraging by wading birds.
- Stages in WCA-3A decreased by 0.08 ft and depths now range from a low of 0.9 ft (fair foraging depth) in the northern regions to a high of 2.86 ft (poor foraging depth) in the southern regions.

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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:** February 15, 2006 (page 3)

**Everglades National Park** — The Park and Florida Bay received between 0.1 and 0.25 inches for the week. Water levels have dropped across the Park wetlands this week. The drop was highest in Shark River Slough, where there was nearly a 2 in decline since last week. The weekly drop was 1 in in the panhandle at the Taylor Slough Bridge (TSB). These results are different than the typical (but not necessarily beneficial) seasonal trend, whereby TSB typically shows the fastest recession rate of these areas. Downstream water levels at the foraging site decreased through much of last week. As of Saturday, water levels were very close to the 4.9 in optimum for concentrating spoonbill forage fish.

*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 across Florida Bay this week were seasonal, with some fluctuation due to wind events.

### **Other District News and Happenings** —

- A contract in the amount of \$8,975,000 with Barnard Construction Company, Inc. for the construction of the C-44 Reservoir/STA Project Reservoir and STA Test Cell Program was approved at last week's Governing Board meeting.
- The District, in partnership with Barnard Construction, the contractor building the C-43 Reservoir, held a job fair this weekend at the Labelle Chamber of Commerce. The fair was used to recruit local individuals to work on the C-43 project. A steady flow of people attended throughout the morning and about 20 people received on-the-spot interviews at the job fair.
- A groundbreaking ceremony for the STA expansions was held on Thurs., Feb. 9 with DEP Secretary Colleen Castille and Florida Audubon Executive Director David Anderson.
- A groundbreaking ceremony for construction of the C-43 Test Cells is scheduled for Feb. 24 at 9:30 a.m. at Berry Groves.