

Weekly Update: March 22, 2006



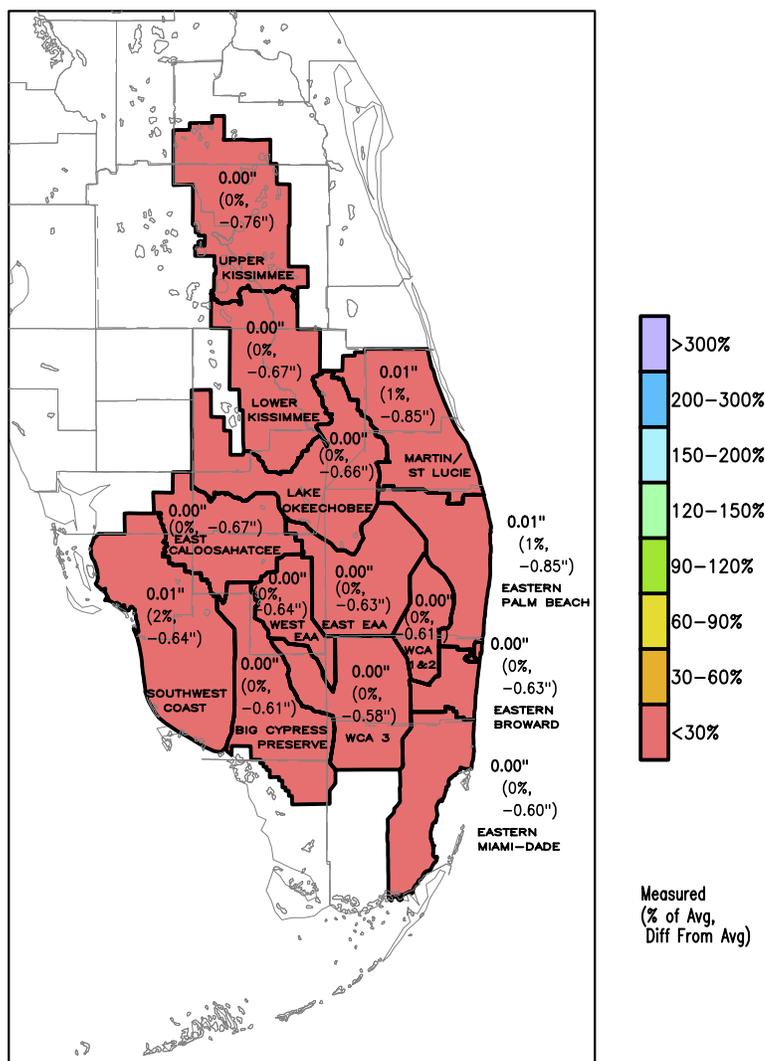
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**FACTs**

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.*

SFWMD Rainfall  
15-MAR-2006 to 21-MAR-2006



**DISTRICT-WIDE: 0.00" (0%, -0.68")**

GRADS: COLA/IGES

2006-03-21-11:02



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### Rainfall overview:

- District-wide rainfall for the past week was negligible.
- 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:

The District received a negligible amount of rainfall during the last week. A front will move through the area on Mar. 23, bringing some rainfall to the northern portion of the District that night. A second front is expected the following Tuesday/Wednesday. In spite of these rainfall events, below average rainfall is anticipated over the next 15 days.

**Lake Okeechobee** — The Lake stage is approximately 14.78 feet NGVD, down 0.25 feet since this day last week and 0.57 feet lower than on this date last year.\* Water transparency continues to be low with no light reaching the lake bottom in the near shore zone.

**Upper Chain of Lakes/Kissimmee Basin** — In the last seven days, the upper basin received no rainfall resulting in a 30-day total of 0.29 inches, which is 10% of normal. The lower basin also received 0.01 during this same period, which resulted in a 30-day total of 0.43 inches or 16% of normal. The spring recession has started for the upper basin lakes. The algal bloom reported last week in Lakes Hatchineha, Cypress and Kissimmee continues, but no negative impacts have been identified.

Recent upper basin snail kite surveys identified 15 nests in Lake Toho. Courtship activity continues and additional nests are likely. Largemouth bass spawning continues in the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes and most likely will continue into April. Based upon aerial surveys, the floodplain in the Phase I area is much drier than last month. Standing water in the northern part of the Phase I area is largely limited to abandoned channels and floodplain depressions. There is still a substantial area of inundated floodplain in the southern portion of the Phase I area. Very large numbers of wading birds, especially white ibis, glossy ibis and great egret are in the Phase I area. There are also large flocks of ducks in the area, primarily teal, mottled and ring-neck duck.

**St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee Estuaries** — A level 1 pulse release to the St. Lucie Estuary began on Mar. 13. Surface salinities were within the preferred range at both monitoring sites for most of the week. Salinity conditions in the St. Lucie are good. A modified level-1 pulse release to the Caloosahatchee Estuary began on March 13.

**Water Conservation Areas** — There was little or no rainfall in the greater Everglades during the past seven days. All Water Conservation Areas (WCAs) are near regulation. Depths in the Everglades regions used for foraging by wading birds at this time of year range from a low of 0.23 ft in WCA-2 to a high of 2.13 ft in the southern region of WCA-3A. WCA-2B remains over 3 ft and is not expected to contribute to wading bird foraging unless the wet season is delayed.

**Everglades National Park** — Receiving little in the way of measurable rainfall and flow, wetland areas of the Park continue to experience seasonal declines in water levels.

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

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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

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**Florida Bay** — Salinity in several areas of the bay has also started to increase a bit as a result of higher evaporation rates due to higher temperatures, southerly winds and a lack of inflow/rainfall. This is often the point of the dry season where salinity concentrations do begin to rise in these areas, so the District will monitor for hypersalinity, which typically occurs between April-July depending on when the rains start.

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

- District staff conducted successful negotiations for acquisition of Sections 21 and 28 in Martin County (Culpepper Ranch). This will be presented at the May Governing Board meeting for approval.
- The C-44 Reservoir and STA Test Cells Construction Launch is scheduled for Fri, Mar. 24 at 9:30 am at the C-44 Test Cell site in Martin County. Senator Ken Pruitt, Department of Environmental Protection Secretary Colleen Castille, District Governing Board member Len Lindahl and Martin County Vice-Chair DiTerlizzi will be speaking.