

Weekly Update: April 19, 2006



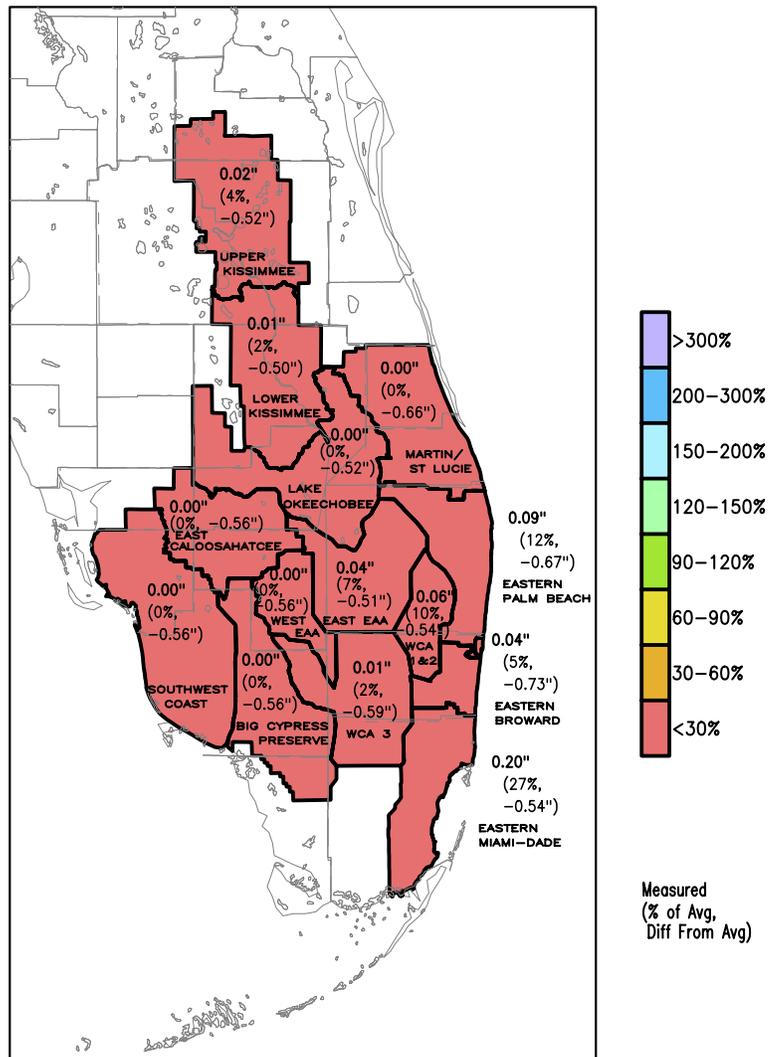
*just the*  
**FACTs**

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  
12-APR-2006 to 18-APR-2006



**DISTRICT-WIDE: 0.03" (5%, -0.55")**

GRADS: COLA/IGES

2006-04-18-15:02

**Rainfall overview:**

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



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## State of the Water Management System

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### System-wide overview:

This past week, 0.03" inches of rain fell District-wide. Rainfall for the last 30 days has been 41% of normal. Below average rainfall is anticipated over the next 15 days District-wide.

**Lake Okeechobee** — The Lake stage is approximately 14.00 feet NGVD 29 (12.70 feet NAVD 88), down 0.18 feet since this day last week and 1.17 feet lower than on this date last year.\* No new ecological data is available at this time; however, based on the past several weeks of observation, improvements in ecological conditions might be expected if lake levels continue to fall.

**Upper Chain of Lakes/Kissimmee Basin** — In the last seven days, the upper basin received 0.02 inches resulting in a 30-day total of 0.94 inches, which is 34% of normal. The lower basin received 0.01 inches of rainfall during this same period, which resulted in a 30-day total of 0.74 inches or 30% of normal. The spring recession for the upper basin lakes continues. Snail kite activity continues to be concentrated over Lake Toho. The only confirmed nests are in Lake Toho near the upper end.

**St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee Estuaries** — Modified level-1 pulse releases to both estuaries began on April 15. Salinity conditions in both estuaries are good.

**Water Conservation Areas (WCAs)** — Recession rates were good across the Everglades, and depths are dropping below 1 foot in many regions, making the sloughs good for foraging by long-legged wading birds such as wood storks and great egrets. The WCA-2B recessions were higher than desired; however, this is not a problem, because water levels remain deep (2.46 feet), making the sloughs unavailable for foraging. All the WCAs are slightly below regulation. Wading birds are now foraging throughout the Everglades, and there is no indication that anything has changed from last week.

**Everglades National Park** — Measurable rainfall was recorded across many areas of the Park and Florida Bay early last week. Eastern areas generally saw higher accumulations (1- 2 inches in the wetland areas and in the mangrove ponds), than the western regions. To the west rainfall was patchy, with just over 0.5 inches measured at Craighead Pond, but much less (< 0.1 inches) in Shark River Slough. Wetland water levels responded to these local rainfall events by increasing dramatically in eastern Everglades National Park, but continued to decline in western areas of 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.*

**Florida Bay** — Salinity in eastern Florida Bay declined much of last week due to the rainfall, but then increased Friday with shifting winds. This decrease/increase pattern yielded little overall change for the week in the eastern bay stations. Similarly activities occurred at the mouth of Taylor River; however, the Taylor River ponds received a fair amount of precipitation, and salinity in this area remains depressed compared to last week's report.

\* 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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**Keetch-Byram drought index** — This is used by the Florida Division of Forestry to indicate soil dryness. The scale ranges from zero (no moisture deficit) to 800, which means moisture is not found for eight inches below the soil. It is based on daily rainfall and temperature measurements, and increases for each day without rainfall. High values of the KBDI are an indication that conditions are favorable for the occurrence and spread of wildfires. The index can be viewed at [http://www.fl-dof.com/fire\\_weather/KBDI/](http://www.fl-dof.com/fire_weather/KBDI/). The April 18 KBDI average for the District's 16 counties is 560 -- an increase of 25 points since last week -- with a minimum of 14 in Orange, Osceola and Monroe counties and a maximum of 740 in Palm Beach county.

### Other District News and Happenings —

- The Presidential Monitoring Committee on the Niger Delta Development Commission is a group of 15 scholars and scientists visiting south Florida to learn about District restoration efforts. During their week-long visit, District staff will give presentations on Lake Okeechobee, the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan/Acceler8, Kissimmee River Restoration and the Caloosahatchee River. In addition, they will be touring S-5A, STA-1W, Grassy Island STA and Butler Dairy.
- Later this month, the District and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will hold two ribbon cutting ceremonies:
  - Taylor Creek/Nubbin Slough on Thursday, April 27 at 1:00 pm.
  - Ten Mile Creek on Friday, April 28 at 12:30 p.m., adjacent to Structure 382.

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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.