

Weekly Update: May 31, 2006



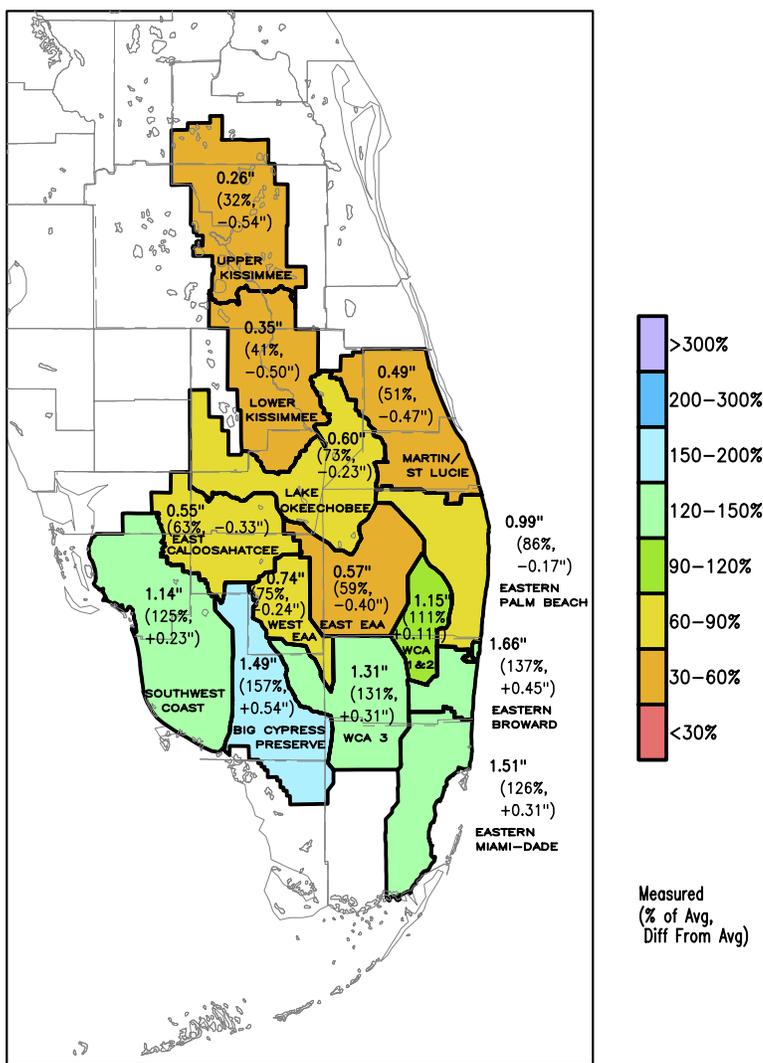
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FACTs

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
25-MAY-2006 to 31-MAY-2006



DISTRICT-WIDE: 0.84" (89%, -0.11")

GRADS: COLA/IGES

2006-06-01-12:02

Rainfall overview:

- District-wide rainfall for the past week was less than 1 inch.
- The rainfall outlook for the next seven days is for average or above average rainfall.



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System-wide overview:

Average rainfall was observed District-wide except in the Kissimmee Valley, where below average rainfall was observed this month for most of the basin. The forecast for the next 10-12 days is for average or above average rainfall.

Lake Okeechobee — The Lake stage is approximately 12.70 feet NGVD 29 (11.40 feet NAVD 88), down 0.11 feet since this day last week and 1.27 feet lower than on this date last year.* Average water clarity measurements recorded during the monthly submerged aquatic vegetation transect sampling improved and indicate that light is reaching the bottom at a number of sites, especially in the south. Overall, water quality in Lake Okeechobee appears to be gradually improving.

Upper Chain of Lakes/Kissimmee Basin — In the last seven days, most of the sub-basins received 0.24 inches to 0.5 inches with the Lake Hart sub-basin receiving 0.73 inches. Discharges continued from East Lake Tohopekaliga (Toho) at S-59 and from Lake Toho at S-61. Stage recession rates were 0.03 feet/day in East Lake Toho and 0.04 feet/day in Lake Toho. Snail kite nesting continues on Lake Toho. Concentration of dissolved oxygen remains well above thresholds of concern, which is good for aquatic organisms. Stage recession on the floodplain continues to be gradual.

St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee Estuaries — Over the past week, salinity increased at both monitoring sites in the St. Lucie Estuary. The increase in salinity observed over the past week indicates that freshwater inflow was low. Salinity conditions in the St. Lucie Estuary are good. In the Caloosahatchee Estuary, discharge at S-78 averaged 536 cubic feet per second. Discharge at S-79 averaged 270 cubic feet per second. The 30-day average discharge at S-79 is 765 cubic feet per second and within the preferred range. While salinity in the Caloosahatchee also increased this past week, conditions remain good.

Water Conservation Areas (WCAs) — Rainfall over the Everglades averaged between 1 to 2 inches over the last week, with up to 4 or 5 inches locally in WCA-3A. Water levels have begun to rise in WCA-1 and 2A, though recessions are continuing in WCA-3B and northeastern Shark Slough. In WCA-2A, water has reached the surface again with the past few weeks' rainfall, and depths in WCA-1 are still good for wading bird foraging. Foraging by wading birds is still expected to be good in many areas of WCA-3 and WCA-1 because depths are under 0.5 ft. Stages are below regulation in the WCAs except for WCA-2A.

Everglades National Park — Much of the Park received between 1 to 2 inches of rain for the week, with a local maximum accumulation of nearly 3 inches at Taylor Slough Bridge. Water levels increased or remained the same across Park wetlands for the week. In Shark River Slough, the 1.2 inches of rainfall failed to increase water levels. Similar precipitation fell in the panhandle for the week, producing only a slight increase in water levels (0.6 inches). At Taylor Slough Bridge, though, water levels rose steeply again for the second week, up 7 inches, to just below the ground surface (0.3 foot).

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

* 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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Florida Bay — Weekly totals were close to 0.5 inches in Florida Bay. Salinity concentrations in the bay remained nearly the same as last week, suggesting that local rainfall accumulations are matching the high rates of evaporation. It is common for the seasonal drop in salinity to lag behind the start of the rains by at least 1 month (and in the case of some of the more isolated central Florida Bay basins, by several months) as the Everglades is recharged and flow begins moving toward the bay.

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/. The May 30 KBDI average for the District's 16 counties is 546 – a decrease of 21 points since last week – with a minimum of 30 in Monroe County and a maximum of 718 in Palm Beach County.

Other District News and Happenings —

- The bid opening for the Acceler8 Acme Basin B Discharge Project has been moved to June 8 and will be presented at the Governing Board meeting on June 14. The project will improve Everglades water quality by diverting urban runoff. The stormwater runoff from Acme Basin B will be diverted to the C-51 West Canal and then to the Stormwater Treatment Area 1 East (STA-1E) for treatment prior to discharge to the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge. The Acme Basin B Discharge Groundbreaking is scheduled for 9 a.m. on June 20 in Wellington.
- The District received nine awards from the National Association of Government Communicators: first place for individual writing and photography portfolios and external newsletter WaterMatters; second place for the Good Horse Sense: Protecting Water Resources brochure; and Awards of Excellence for the South Florida Environmental Report (annual report and technical report), internal newsletter, Everglades Forever Web site and Acceler8 Media Event. The Smithsonian, Department of Treasury and NASA were among the other agencies in this competition.
- A Water Academy for Martin and St. Lucie counties is scheduled for Friday in Port St. Lucie. The event for local officials will cover current water resource issues in the upper east coast.

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.