



Weekly Update

May 07 - 11, 2007

**Mission Statement:**

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.gov](http://www.sfwmd.gov)

South Florida Water
Management District
www.sfwmd.gov

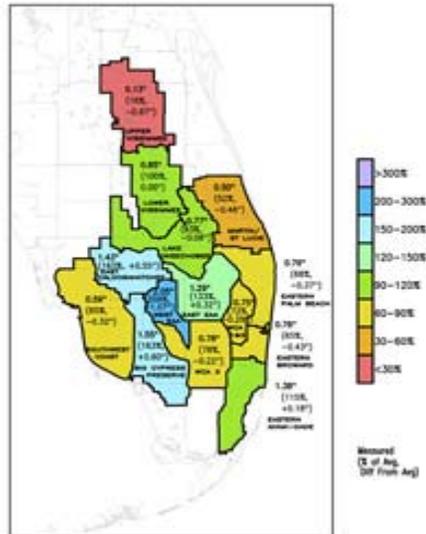
District News and Happenings

- Last week, the Florida Legislature demonstrated their continued and unwavering support of Everglades restoration, unanimously passing Senate Bill 392 to expand the Lake Okeechobee Protection Act and redouble Florida's financial commitment to environmental improvement. To improve the quality, quantity, timing and distribution of water in the northern Everglades system, the bill requires the District, in cooperation with the Departments of Environmental Protection and Agriculture and affected local governments, to develop protection plans for the St Lucie and Caloosahatchee River watersheds. The legislation also requires improved best farming practices, more stringent regulations for the application of wastewater residuals in the watershed and an accelerated timeline for implementing a Total Maximum Daily Load for the Caloosahatchee. Most significantly, yesterday's action by the Legislature extends the Save Our Everglades Trust Fund for another decade and dedicates an additional \$2 billion to protect and restore the Everglades, Lake Okeechobee and the coastal estuaries.

- On May 4, the District sent a letter to municipalities recommending they step up enforcement to help protect our water system and issue violations rather than warnings. More than 775 citations were issued last week by county governments and municipalities. District staff continues ground and aerial surveillance and have initiated 131 new enforcement actions resulting from documented non-compliance with water shortage orders.

- The District's Emergency Management Operations Center is battling drought and monitoring wildfires while running a hurricane preparedness drill this week, coinciding activities that could become a genuine threat later this summer. On May 8-10, the District will conduct its annual "Hurricane Freddy" exercise. The primary purpose of this year's exercise is to demonstrate and evaluate the agency's ability to quickly activate its Emergency Operations Center and mobilize its field response teams in coordination with various other state agencies. This will be accomplished by exercising plans, policies, procedures, systems and facilities in response to a simulated catastrophic hurricane event affecting South Florida. The District's Hurricane Freddy exercise will be held in conjunction with Florida's statewide hurricane exercise, "Hurricane Tolbert." The Florida Department of Emergency Management, the Department of Environmental Protection and various other state agencies also will be involved in the statewide exercise, which began on Monday, May 7, with a pre-landfall evaluation.

System-Wide Overview



Click map for larger image

Rainfall overview:

- District-wide rainfall for the past week was 0.90 inches.
- The rainfall outlook for the next seven days is for below average rainfall.

System-wide overview:

Mainly dry for the remainder of the week. A well-defined area of low pressure off the coast of Georgia continues to dominate our weather. The District's Water Supply Department is compiling pumpage and chloride data submitted weekly by public water supply utilities in the Lower East Coast. Similar reports will be compiled for the Upper East Coast and Lower West Coast.

U.S. Drought Monitor:

The [Drought Monitor](#) focuses on broad-scale conditions and identifies general drought areas, labeling droughts by intensity. This week, areas of the District fall into four areas of intensity, ranging from abnormally dry to extreme drought.

Lake Okeechobee:

Lake Okeechobee continues to decline and was at 9.42 feet NGVD 29 (8.12 feet NAVD 88) on Tuesday, which is 0.23 feet lower since that day last week and 0.67 feet lower than one month ago. This month's submerged aquatic vegetation surveys are complete. Plant counts were similar to last month findings. However, this month there were 34 dry sites compared to 18 dry sites last month. Plant counts are decreasing at the nearshore sites as the sites dry out, but plants are emerging at more lakeward sites as water levels decline and light levels become more optimum for growth and development. As lake levels continue to decline monthly sampling programs are being scaled back or even suspended because either sites are no longer accessible by boat or boat ramps are no longer usable for launching.

Upper Chain of Lakes/Kissimmee Basin:

The upper Kissimmee Basin received 0.13 inches of rain over the last seven days, and the lower basin received 0.85 inches. Snail kites continue to nest on Lake Tohopekaliga and Lake Kissimmee. Small releases from Lake Tohopekaliga continue to allow a more gradual recession for snail kites. No other releases are being made. The water stage has remained stable in the other lakes. Concentration of dissolved oxygen in the Phase I restored river channel remains above thresholds of concern. The Kissimmee River has lacked flow for 182 days.

St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee Estuaries:

In the St. Lucie Estuary, no releases occurred at S-80 over the past week.

Average salinities at the Roosevelt Bridge and at the A1A Bridge exceed the upper limit of the preferred range. Salinity conditions are fair for oysters in the St. Lucie Estuary and good for seagrasses. In the Caloosahatchee Estuary, no discharge occurred at S-79 over the past week. Salinity conditions are poor in the upper estuary. In the lower estuary and San Carlos Bay, the high salinities are good for seagrass and fair for oysters.

Water Conservation Areas (WCAs):

The WCAs received 0.69-1.5 inches of rain during the last week, and all of the WCAs are below regulation. In WCA-1, the difference between the marsh and canal is more than 1 foot, while in WCA-3A, the difference is only 0.33 feet. This means that as the drought progresses, the WCA-1 marsh will have a greater propensity to suddenly dry out than the other WCAs. The rain was responsible for large reversals. This reversal was good for northern WCA-3A, because it reduces the muck fire risk. However, this reversal was bad for the other locations, because it will interfere with wading bird foraging success. Water depths continue to be too low in WCA-2A, WCA-2B and northern WCA-3B.

Everglades National Park:

The Park wetland water levels displayed mixed trends as a result of receiving 1.1 inches of patchy rainfall during the past week. Levels dropped between 0.5-4 inches in some areas and rose between 0.2-1.3 inches in others.

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

Florida Bay:

Florida Bay salinity trends were again mixed for the week. Many areas saw increasing concentrations early in the week, dropping by the latter part of the week.

Area Water Restrictions:



Click map for larger image

[Everglades Agricultural Area](#)

Modified Phase Three or extreme water shortage conditions have been declared for Everglades Agricultural Area farmers who rely on Lake Okeechobee for irrigation water. This requires a 45 percent cutback in their weekly allocations.

[Lake Okeechobee Service Area](#)

(Includes portions of Hendry, Glades, Lee, Okeechobee, Palm Beach, Martin counties) Phase Two restrictions remain in place for other Lake Okeechobee

Service Area water users. This require a 30 percent reduction for agricultural and other District permitted users and limits lawn watering to no more than two days a week for residents and businesses using surface water sources.

Lower East Coast

(Includes eastern Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach and Monroe counties, as well as residents and business in Martin County served by the Tequesta Water Utility) Phase Two restrictions require a 30 percent reduction for agricultural and other District permitted users and limits lawn watering to no more than two days a week for residents and businesses using surface water sources. These restrictions apply to all traditional surface and groundwater sources - including water from public utilities, private wells, lakes, canals and ponds.

Lower West Coast

(Includes Hendry, Glades, Lee and Collier counties and a portion of Charlotte County) Phase Two restrictions require a 30 percent reduction for agricultural and other District permitted users and limits lawn watering to no more than two days a week for residents and businesses using surface water sources. These restrictions apply to all traditional surface and groundwater sources - including water from public utilities, private wells, lakes, canals and ponds.

Upper East Coast

(Includes Martin and St. Lucie counties) Phase 1 or moderate restrictions are now in effect for residents and businesses in Martin and St. Lucie counties, except those as residents and business in Martin County served by the Tequesta Water Utility who are under Phase Two restrictions. Lawn watering is allowed up to three-days-a-week and, again, these restrictions apply to all traditional surface and groundwater sources.

Agricultural users in the Lake Istokpoga area and in St. Lucie and Martin counties continue to have limits on withdrawals from area canals.

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 Niki Spencer at 800-432-2045 or 561-686-8800, ext. 6004.

** 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.*