

Weekly Update: July 12, 2006



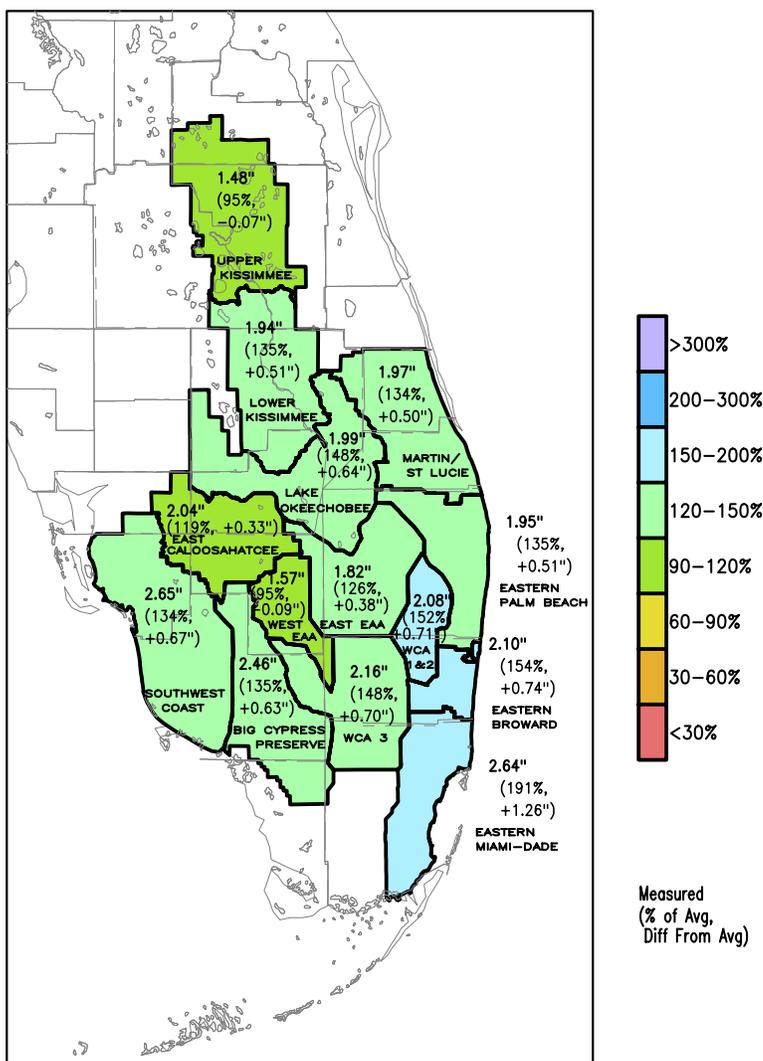
State of the Water Management System

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.

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.

SFWMD Rainfall
05-JUL-2006 to 11-JUL-2006



DISTRICT-WIDE: 2.08" (135%, +0.54")

GRADS: COLA/IGES

2006-07-11-15:02



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Rainfall overview:

- District-wide rainfall for the past week was approximately 2 inches.
- The rainfall outlook for the next seven days is for below average rainfall.

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System-wide overview:

The six-day average rainfall was approximately 2 -2.1 inches, which is slightly above average. The 30-day rainfall total is at 12 inches with the southwest coast receiving above average rainfall. Rainfall is predicted to be above average District-wide for the next few days and below average for the next 10-14 days. The rest of the month is predicted to receive below average rainfall.

Lake Okeechobee — The Lake stage is approximately 12.17 feet NGVD 29 (10.87 feet NAVD 88), up 0.13 feet since this day last week and 4.33 feet lower than on this date last year.* The lake remains at what is considered to be the ideal stage for regeneration of the submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) community. Based on previous experience on Lake Okeechobee, SAV re-growth is expected in about 10 weeks and then only if lake stages remain low. Results from June 2006 bulrush monitoring indicate that stem density is approximately 30-50% lower than it was in June 2005. Over the past year, bulrush stem density at the monitoring sites declined, which is not atypical in the winter.

Upper Chain of Lakes/Kissimmee Basin — In the last seven days, the Kissimmee upper basin received 1.53 inches to bring the 30-day total to 8.21 inches, which is 114% of the long-term average. The lower basin received 1.91 inches to bring the 30-day total to 6.57 inches, which is 97% of the long-term average. Stage has been increasing in all of the upper basin lakes except Lakes Cypress, Hatchineha and Kissimmee. For most lakes, stage is well-below regulation schedule. At least one active snail kite nest remains on Lake Tohopekaliga, and a large number of juveniles have been reported around the lake. Discharges at S-65 were approximately 450 cubic feet per second, and concentration of dissolved oxygen in the restored river channel remains well above thresholds of concern.

St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee Estuaries — Discharge at structure S-80 from the St. Lucie Canal (C-44) averaged 165 cubic feet per second during the past week. Salinity in the St. Lucie Estuary is good, with conditions remaining near the top of the preferred range. From July 5-10, discharge at S-79 to the Caloosahatchee Estuary averaged 702 cubic feet per second. The 30-day average discharge at S-79 is 755 cubic feet per second and within the preferred range. Above normal rainfall in the Ft. Myers area during the last week also contributed freshwater to the Caloosahatchee Estuary. Tape grass beds in the upper estuary between the I-75 Bridge and Ft. Myers have experienced average salinities within the preferred range. In general, salinity in the estuary is good, with concentrations continuing to slowly trend downward.

Water Conservation Areas (WCAs) — Rainfall accumulations for the week across the Everglades ranged from 1.5 inches in WCA-1 and WCA-2, to 3.5 inches in WCA-3B. WCA-3A received about 2.7 inches of rain for the week. WCA-1 and 2 are at regulation. Water levels are slightly higher in WCA-3 than is required for Seaside Sparrow protection. Water depths significantly increased across the Everglades: WCA-1 increased by 0.13 feet and has an average depth of 0.82 feet; WCA-2A increased the most of any region (+0.39 feet) and depth is 0.42 feet; WCA-2B increased by 0.26 feet for an average depth of 0.23 feet; WCA-3A increased by an average of 0.11 feet; however, the northeast region actually decreased slightly to a depth of 0.58 feet; and WCA-3B increased by 0.16 feet for an average depth of 0.92 feet.

* *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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Everglades National Park — The Park received about 2.7 inches of rain for the week. Water levels increased for the week in the Park wetlands. There was a 3-inch increase in water level over the last week at Taylor Slough Bridge, and water levels are close to the ground surface. A similar increase was measured in the panhandle. In Shark River Slough, the water level increase has been slower

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 in Florida Bay dropped at all stations.

Biscayne Bay — High salinity conditions persisted in Biscayne Bay from May 16 through June 15. This was associated with relatively low rainfall and canal discharge in eastern Miami-Dade County compared to 2004 and 2005. During this time, daily rainfall ranged from 0 – 1.7 inches, with a cumulative rainfall of 5.7 inches. Salinity changed little during this time and ranged from near 36 parts per thousand (equal to that of seawater) about 2 miles off the south central bay shoreline to as low as 26 parts per thousand close to shore. These conditions are similar to conditions at this time of year in 2005 and slightly lower than those in 2004. While salinity was higher than levels desired for some estuarine species, conditions were not harmful for most habitats and resident species.

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 eight inches of water has been depleted from 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://flame.fl-dof.com/fire_weather/KBDI/index.html. The July 12 KBDI average for the District's 16 counties is 276, with a minimum of 32 in Lee County and a maximum of 485 in Okeechobee County.

Other District News and Happenings —

- A key report issued by the Special Master appointed by the federal judge overseeing the Everglades lawsuit concludes that phosphorus, a nutrient that can potentially harm Everglades ecosystems if present in large amounts, is successfully being reduced in the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge. Further, the report indicated that the projects planned by the District are in fact the right projects and that the District needs to continue its aggressive schedule of construction.

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- The District received the required U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) permit needed to build the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) Reservoir. A groundbreaking celebration is scheduled for August 2. The EAA Reservoir will be constructed on a 16,700-acre parcel in western Palm Beach County, just west of US 27, and will have a storage capacity of 190,000 acre-feet of water, or 62 billion gallons. This reservoir is critical as it provides alternative storage for Lake Okeechobee water, giving the Corps options other than the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee estuaries. It will also serve as an important opportunity to help the Corps maintain the lake at lower stages, which will prevent all of this water from being held behind the Herbert Hoover Dike. The importance of this project to all of Florida is evidenced by the wide variety of statements issued in response to the permit being received. Lee County Chairwoman Tammy Hall said, "We strongly support any project that will provide additional storage opportunities for Lake Okeechobee water. We depend on the estuaries for our environmental and economic health." Across the State, Martin County Commission Vice Chairman Mike DiTerlizzi said, "Granting this permit is a vital step forward for restoring and protecting our estuaries. These waterways are the lifeblood of our communities." The significance of this permit was probably best captured by the comments of Florida DEP Secretary Colleen Castille who said, "By acquiring this permit and beginning construction, Florida is keeping its promise to restore the famed *River of Grass* and protect Florida's estuaries. Water storage is a key element to the restoration process, not only for controlling water releases but also for flood protection and wildlife habitat restoration."
- The District purchased 321.95 acres, which was the last tract of privately-owned land that was needed for the C-111 Spreader Canal CERP Project.
- The District's Palm Beach Service Center is holding an open house on August 9 from 9 to 11 a.m. The location of the new office, situated on the first floor of the District's B-2 Building on the headquarters campus, right across from the IBM Credit Union. This is one of the first available stops for the general public doing business with the District on Palm Beach County issues. The office location offers a welcoming spirit to the public in facilitating their questions and needs.

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.