

Weekly Update: July 13, 2005



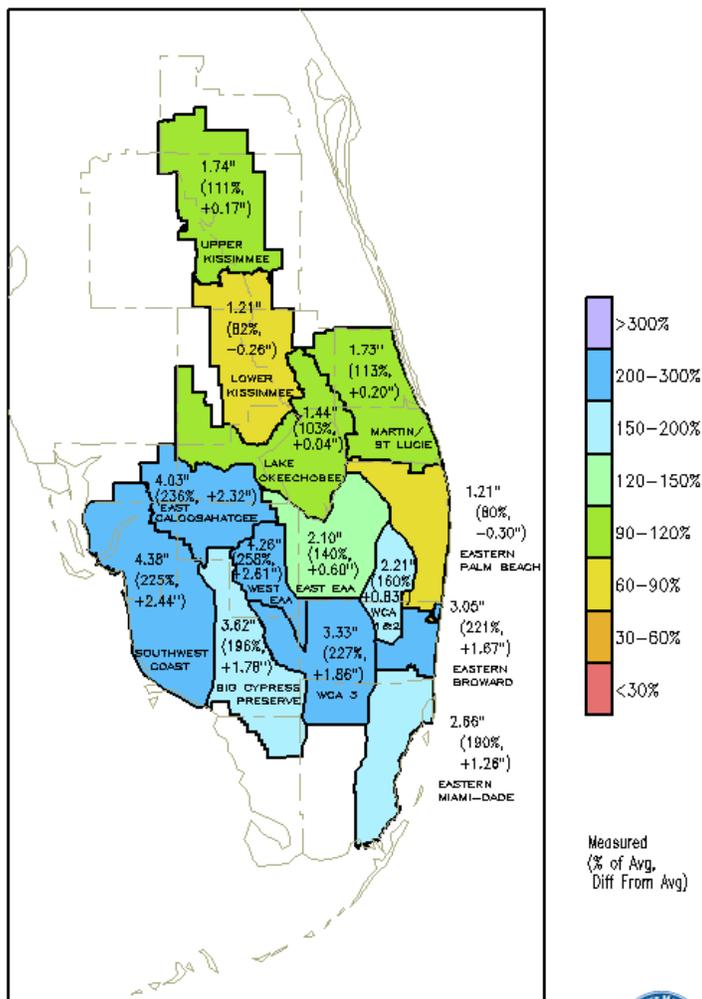
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**FACTs**

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  
05-JUL-2005 to 11-JUL-2005



DISTRICT-WIDE: 2.61" (166%, +1.03")

GRADS: COLA/IGES



### Rainfall overview:

- District-wide rainfall for the last week averaged 2.61"
- Most of this rain was in the southern and western parts of the District, with several areas receiving more than 4"
- Rainfall over the District from Hurricane Dennis averaged 2.41"
- Monthly rainfall total for July is 3.22"
- Rainfall for the next 1-4 days is expected to be average.



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## State of the Water Management System

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### System-wide overview:

The District continues to monitor all weather systems developing in the Atlantic and prepares, as needed, for approaching storms. The sea surface is the warmest on record for this time of year. The National Weather Service's Climate Prediction Center (CPC) forecast still calls for an increased chance of an above-normal wet season and a neutral dry season.

**Lake Okeechobee** — Lake level today was 16.57 ft NGVD, up 0.31 ft from last week and 4.77 ft higher than this time last year.

Conditions in the lake are still poor. Algae blooms are widespread. While water clarity is showing some improvement on the southern part of the lake (light is beginning to reach lake bottom), the western and northern areas have not improved. Plant growth, while sparse, was noted at 7 sites, an improvement on the 4 sites noted in June.

*Note: SFWMD water managers and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers work together to manage the lake. Water releases from the lake are dictated by a fixed regulation schedule based on many factors such as time of year, current water conditions, predicted rainfall and lake level.*

- Extremely heavy rainfall and associated stormwater runoff have resulted in the highest lake levels for this time of year since 1936. With current inflows to the lake from the Kissimmee River and other inflow points of about 18,000 cfs and outflows to the estuaries at about 10,000, the lake will continue to rise.
- The SFWMD and the USACE today jointly evaluated the advisability of increasing releases from Lake Okeechobee to the Caloosahatchee River and the St. Lucie canal. The goal of the releases is to get ahead of the inflow from runoff and a potential steep rise in lake level due to heavy rainfall, while avoiding downstream flood impacts.
- Any decision to increase discharges from the lake will take into account the impacts they will cause to the estuarine environments. Though impacts would occur, the intent of making any releases at this time would be to alleviate the need for larger increases in the future and to minimize current and future impacts to the estuaries. Such discharges would also help to mitigate the impact of increased water levels on the health of the lake.

**Upper Chain of Lakes/Kissimmee Basin** –The Upper Chain of Lakes in the Kissimmee Basin is seeing gradual improvement, although it remains above regulation schedule by at least 1 ft. Discharges from all lakes continue to be made. The Kissimmee region is very wet, and restoration areas are being impacted. Dissolved oxygen levels are good (above 2 mg/l).

**St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee Estuaries** – Constant outflows through both estuaries are high. Conditions in both estuaries are poor, and salinity is outside preferred ranges. Because of heavy rains on the west coast, a significant amount of flow in the Caloosahatchee is from basin runoff.

(more)

## State of the Water Management System

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**Water Conservation Areas** – All water conservation areas received rainfall and are above their regulation schedules. Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission may close conservations areas 2 and 3 to the public because of health risks due to high water levels.

**Everglades National Park** – All areas received rainfall in the past week, and water levels are increasing in most areas.

**Florida Bay** – Rainfall in the past week was 2–4”. Salinity levels continue to decline.



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