

Weekly Update: August 2, 2006



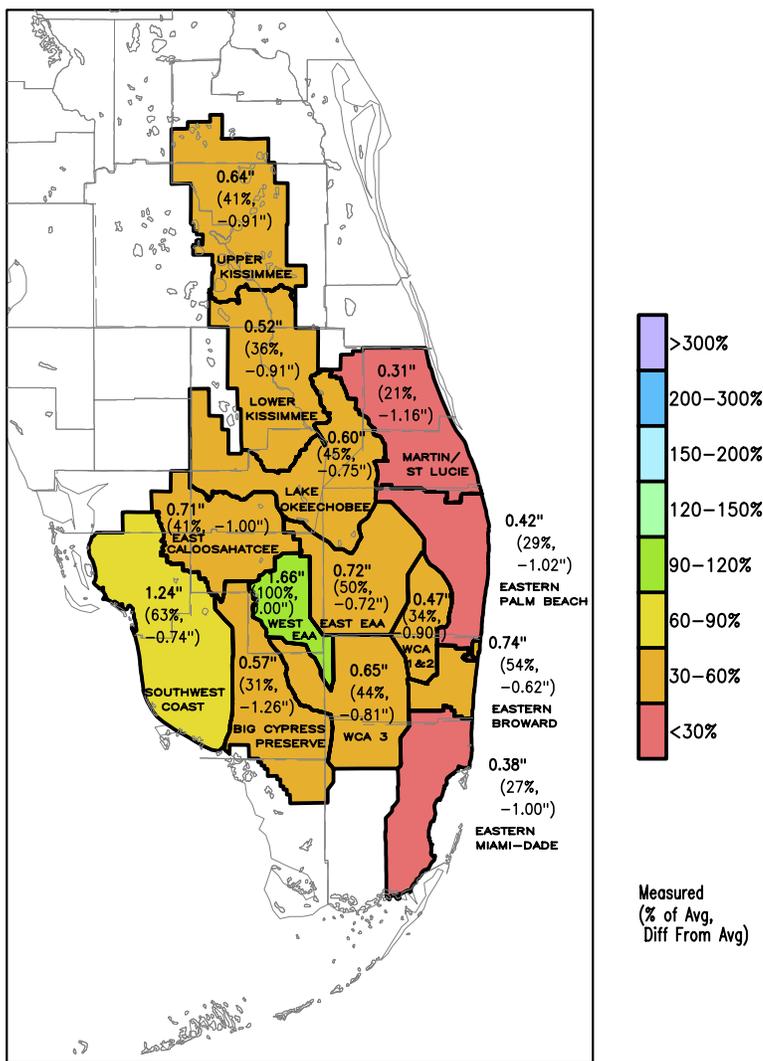
just the
FACTS

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
26-JUL-2006 to 01-AUG-2006



DISTRICT-WIDE: 0.69" (45%, -0.85")

GrADS: COLA/IGES

2006-08-01-15:02

Rainfall overview:

- District-wide rainfall for the past week was less than ¾ of an inch.
- 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:

Rainfall last week was below average, and most of it fell in the west and southwest parts of the District. The first seven months of this year were the driest in 25 years.

Lake Okeechobee — The lake stage is approximately 12.28 feet NGVD 29 (10.98 feet NAVD 88), up 0.01 feet since last week and 3.94 feet lower than this date last year.* Sufficient light is reaching the lake bottom to stimulate plant re-growth, and comprehensive mapping of submerged aquatic vegetation along the entire near-shore region began on Tuesday. The lake stage remains at a good level for potential regeneration of aquatic vegetation.

Upper Chain of Lakes/Kissimmee Basin — During the last 7 days, 0.64 inches of rainfall fell over the upper basin and 0.52 inches fell over the lower basin. In the last week, there was little change in stage for the upper basin lakes. Snail kite nesting continues in Lake Toho. Discharge at S-65 was approximately 450 cubic feet per second to maintain flow for the Kissimmee River Restoration Project. Concentration of dissolved oxygen in the restored river channel remains above thresholds of concern. Water levels in the Kissimmee River continue to be low and exhibited minor fluctuation in the last week.

St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee Estuaries — In the St. Lucie Estuary, all flow through the S-80 structure was from runoff from the C-44 basin; there has been no discharge this past week from Lake Okeechobee into the estuary. Salinity conditions in the St. Lucie are good. Both oysters and sea grasses were monitored in July. Live oysters continue to be found in the middle estuary and some very light spat recruitment was also recorded. In the Indian River Lagoon, sea grass coverage continues to improve at sites north and south of the St. Lucie Inlet. In the Caloosahatchee Estuary, discharge at S-79 decreased during the past week, averaging 945 cubic feet per second. The 30-day average discharge is 1,115 cubic feet per second but remains within the preferred range. Freshwater extends downstream to Ft. Myers. Tape grass beds in the upper estuary have experienced weekly average salinities within established tolerance limits. Weekly average salinity at Cape Coral is relatively low. This suggests that oysters near the Cape Coral Bridge and sea grasses in eastern San Carlos Bay are stressed by low salinity. Salinity conditions in the upper estuary are good, but fair in the lower estuary and San Carlos Bay.

Water Conservation Areas (WCAs) — Rainfall accumulations for the week across the Everglades were relatively light, ranging from .25 to .85 inches. Stage and depths declined across the system in comparison to this time last week due to a lack of rain. Only WCA-2B and the northeast section of WCA-3A saw good rehydration rates due to localized rainfall and water management. Despite these declines, water depths throughout the system are now more than 1 foot everywhere (too deep for wading bird foraging). WCA-1 is at regulation, WCA-2 is above regulation and WCA-3 is slightly below regulation

* *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 — With little rainfall and high temps fueling evaporation, it is not surprising that water levels dropped across the Park wetlands. The station P33 in Shark River Slough saw the most pronounced weekly decline in stage (>2 inches). Water level at Taylor Slough Bridge was down by over 1.25 inches for the week. In the panhandle, the drop was nearly 2 inches.

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 continued to decline at all stations, but the slope has leveled off compared to recent weeks. Some sites are measuring near freshwater concentrations.

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 Aug. 2 KBDI average for the District's 16 counties is 303 – an increase of 48 points since last week – with a minimum of 1 in Collier County and a maximum of 704 in Glades County.

Other District News and Happenings —

Governor Jeb Bush joined local, state and federal leaders to break ground on one of the most expansive reservoirs in the world as part of the massive effort to restore America's Everglades. When complete, the first component of the Everglades Agricultural Area Reservoir will cover 25 square miles and provide 190,000 acre-feet of water storage to better manage water released from Lake Okeechobee and to improve the timing and quality of water delivered to the famed River of Grass. The \$400 million reservoir is the flagship project of the *Acceler8* initiative to complete eight critical Everglades restoration projects ahead of schedule.

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.