


 splash!

quick facts on...

Lake Okeechobee Fast-Track Projects

NOVEMBER 2006

The South Florida Water Management District is a regional, governmental agency that oversees the water resources in the southern half of the state. It is the oldest and largest of the state's five water management districts.

Our Mission is to manage and protect water resources of the region by balancing and improving water quality, flood control, natural systems, and water supply.

The Lake Okeechobee & Estuary Recovery Plan (LOER) includes a series of five turn-dirt projects collectively called the Lake Okeechobee Fast-Track Projects (LOFT). The projects are located just north of Lake Okeechobee, in the Taylor Creek/Nubbin Slough Basin (see map). The five LOFT projects will capture and treat stormwater runoff, removing phosphorus to help improve Lake Okeechobee's water quality. Too much phosphorus damages Lake Okeechobee, causing undesirable effects such as the uncontrolled growth of algae and invasive vegetation, which can be detrimental to the lake's ecology.

Benefits of the Fast-Track Projects are 48,000 acre-feet of stormwater storage and 65-75 metric tons of phosphorus removal. (One metric ton is equal to approximately the weight of a small family car.) Canal modifications and new pump stations will help reroute the stormwater. The Fast-Track Projects will be completed by 2010, providing significant water quality improvements in just four years. Progress on each of the LOFT projects is described below.

• **Nubbin Slough Stormwater Treatment Area (STA) Expansion** – This 800-acre constructed wetland now treats stormwater runoff from surrounding land. It is being expanded by an additional 500 acres, allowing it to remove 22-24 metric tons of phosphorus per year from stormwater runoff before it enters the lake. Stormwater treatment areas (STAs) are large, constructed wetlands with inflow and outflow structures for controlling water movement. Aquatic plants in the wetland take up excess phosphorus found in the stormwater runoff. This natural process cleanses the water before it flows out of the STA and into Florida's protected water bodies. Project design is being finalized, and construction is set to begin in September 2006.

• **Taylor Creek Reservoir** – This reservoir will be built north of the City of Okeechobee and about 10 miles northwest of the Nubbin Slough Stormwater Treatment Area (STA). With a storage capacity of 32,000 acre-feet, this reservoir will capture stormwater runoff from Taylor Creek before it enters Lake Okeechobee. The reservoir is large enough to hold about 10.4 billion gallons of stormwater-enough water to fill an Olympic-sized swimming pool almost 16,000 times over!

Water in the reservoir will be treated at the Lakeside Ranch STA and the Nubbin Slough STA, two other LOFT Projects. The reservoir itself will remove 3-5 metric tons of phosphorus per year through the settling of sediments. A temporary test cell program is being designed to evaluate materials at the site and seepage control measures. Test cell construction will begin in March 2007. Reservoir completion is scheduled for September 2010.

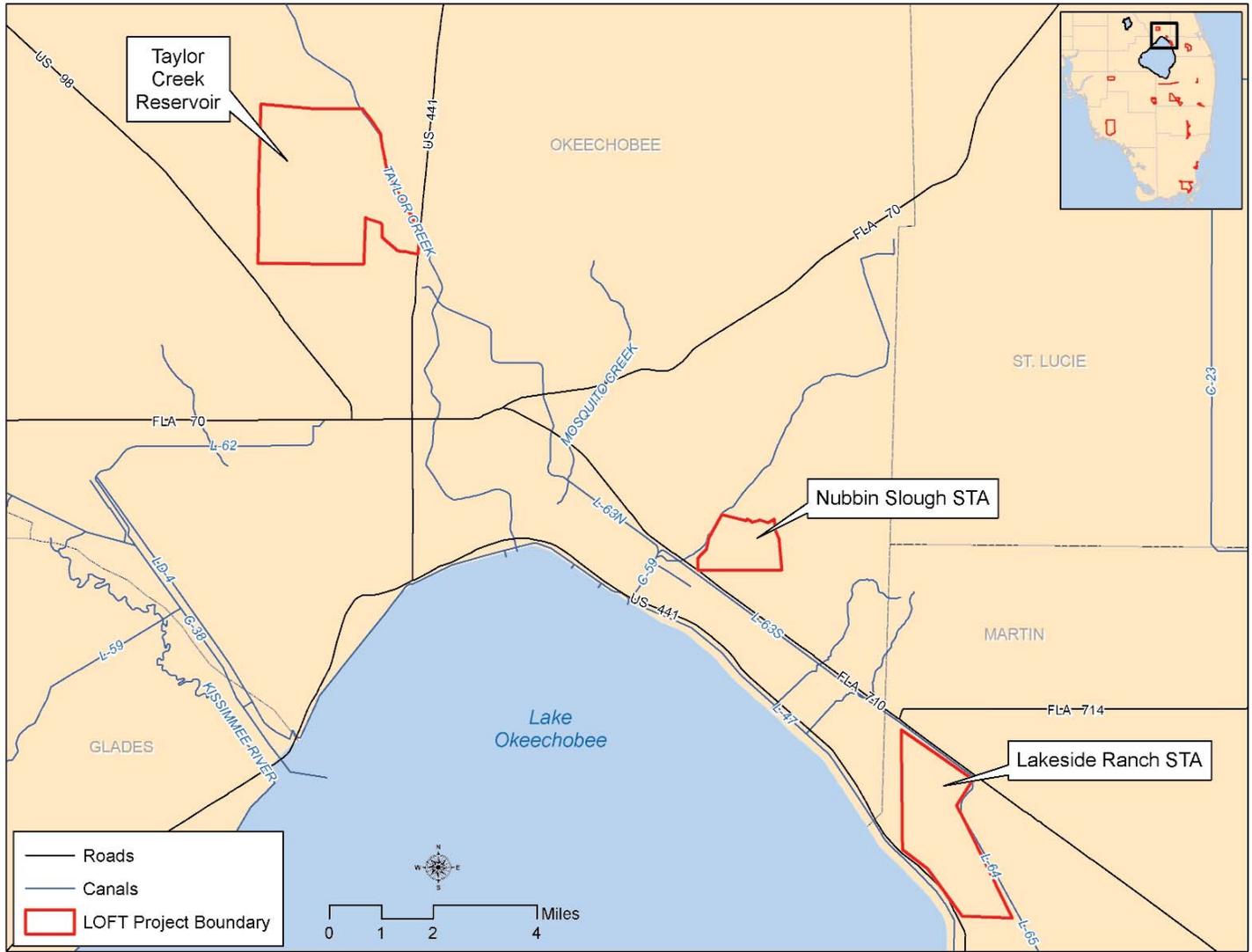
• **Lakeside Ranch Stormwater Treatment Area (STA)** – The Lakeside Ranch STA will be built in Martin County, south and east of Nubbin Slough and Taylor Creek. This 2,710-acre constructed wetland will serve as a large regional treatment facility to clean stormwater flowing in from a large area north of Lake Okeechobee and the Taylor Creek Reservoir. It will remove 39-48 metric tons of phosphorus per year from stormwater runoff before it enters the lake. Project design is under way. Construction is scheduled for completion by December 2009.

• Reroute Stormwater from the S-133 Basin –

The S-133 basin includes the City of Okeechobee and the immediate surrounding area. Through canal improvements and a new pump station, stormwater runoff that would normally enter Lake Okeechobee will be diverted to the Lakeside Ranch STA. Project design is under way. Construction is scheduled for completion by December 2009.

• Reroute Stormwater from the S-154 Basin –

The S-154 basin is north and west of the City of Okeechobee and the immediate surrounding area. Through canal improvements and a new pump station, stormwater runoff that would normally enter Lake Okeechobee can be diverted to the Lakeside Ranch STA. A conceptual study is currently under way to determine if this project is feasible. If so, detailed design work will commence in 2007.



JR11/28/06

sfwmd.gov
South Florida Water Management District
3301 Gun Club Road
West Palm Beach, Florida 33406
561-686-8800 • FL WATS 800-432-2045
www.sfwmd.gov
MAILING ADDRESS: P.O. Box 24680
West Palm Beach, FL 33416-4680

SERVICE CENTERS

Big Cypress Basin/Naples
 239-597-1505
 Broward
 954-713-3200
 Florida Keys (Plantation Key)
 305-853-3219 or 800-464-5067
 Lower West Coast
 239-338-2929 or 800-248-1201

Martin/St. Lucie
 772-223-2600 or 800-250-4100
 Miami-Dade
 305-377-7274 or 800-250-4300
 Okeechobee
 863-462-5260 or 800-250-4200
 Orlando
 407-858-6100 or 800-250-4250
 Palm Beach County
 561-682-2283 or 800-432-2045