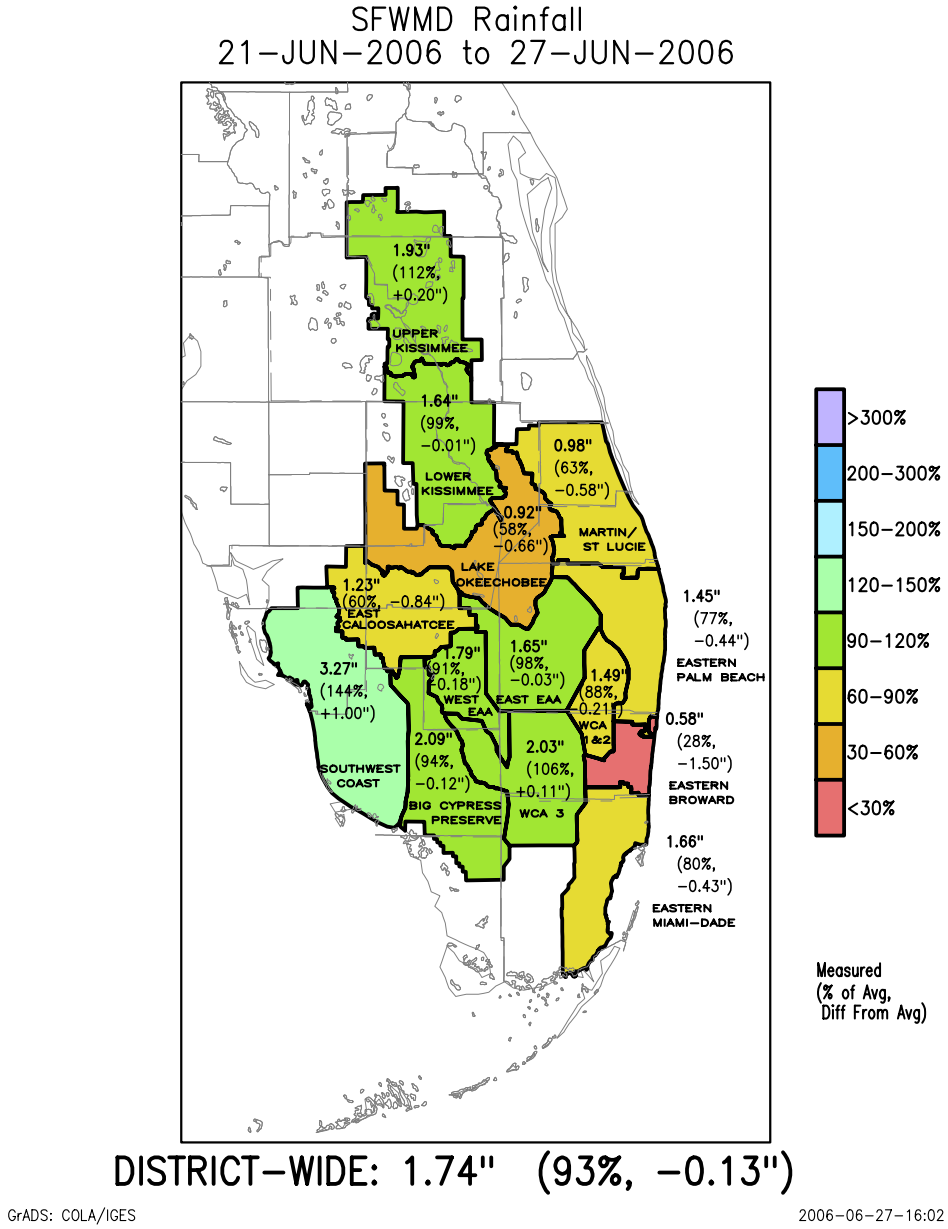
Weekly Update: June 28, 2006

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.



Rainfall overview:

- District-wide rainfall for the past week was approximately 1 ¾ inches.
- The rainfall outlook for the next seven days is for average rainfall.

sfwmd.gov
South Florida Water Management District
3301 Gun Club Road
West Palm Beach, Florida 33406
561-686-8800 FL WATS 1-800-432-2045
www.sfwmd.gov
MAILING ADDRESS P.O. Box 24680
West Palm Beach, FL 33416-4680

State of the Water Management System

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System-wide overview:

Rainfall for the past week was approximately 1.75 inches District-wide, with the heaviest rain on the west coast. To date, June rainfall is approximately 70% of normal. Rainfall is expected to be below average for the next couple of days, and average rainfall for the next 10 days.

Lake Okeechobee — The Lake stage is approximately 11.97 feet NGVD 29 (10.67 feet NAVD 88), down 0.12 feet since this day last week and 3.65 feet lower than on this date last year.* The lake is now 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.

Upper Chain of Lakes/Kissimmee Basin — Rainfall over the Kissimmee upper basin was 1.14 inches for the past week, which brings the 30-day total to 5.46 inches (81% of the 30-year average). The lower basin received 0.98 inches over the last seven days to bring the 30-day total to 4.18 inches (64% of the 30 year-average). While stage has started to increase in most lakes in the upper basin, stages are still well-below regulation schedule. Though the wet season has begun, conditions are still dry throughout the basin. Snail kite nesting continues on Lake Tohopekaliga (Toho) and East Lake Toho. Discharge at S-65 was approximately 400 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 — There were no discharges from S-80 during the past week. Salinity increased in the St. Lucie Estuary and salinity conditions remain good. Tape grass beds in the upper Caloosahatchee Estuary between Ft. Myers and the I-75 Bridge have experienced weekly salinity averages within established tolerance limits, and conditions elsewhere in the estuary remain good.

Water Conservation Areas (WCAs) — Rainfall accumulations for the week across the Everglades ranged from 0.75 inches in WCA-1 to 3 inches in the region of Thousand Islands of Everglades National Park. Rain in WCA-2A, which has been extremely dry, was about 1 inch. Now that wading bird nesting season is coming to an end, the environmental focus is on rehydration rates and the prevention of peat fires. There were only a few places in the WCAs where precipitation did not keep pace with evapotranspiration. These included WCA-2B, gauge-64 in central WCA-3A and the northern region of WCA-3B. The average stage change in the WCA was about 0.1 feet. Water depths are still very low in WCA-2A, the northern region of WCA-3, and northeast Shark River Slough. Stages are below regulation in all three WCAs.

Everglades National Park — Rainfall across the Park and Florida Bay was substantial for the past week, with many areas receiving 2-4 inches over the seven-day period. Despite these high totals, water levels were up only slightly. This is likely a result of high evaporation rates.

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

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** 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.*

State of the Water Management System

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Florida Bay — Salinity concentrations in Florida Bay showed a mixed trend for another week. Salinity was up at Trout Creek and remains high at the coastal stations of Highway Creek and Long Sound. Salinity in north central Florida Bay also remained high in Terrapin Bay and in McCormick Creek for much of the week. However, a few miles up into the Taylor River ponds, the salinity decline continued. Salinity also declined to the west in the upstream reaches of Shark River in Tarpon Bay. These salinity patterns indicate that the Everglades is getting rehydrated, and a reliable decrease in salinity should be discerned soon if rainfall rates are maintained.

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://www.fl-dof.com/fire_weather/KBDI/. The June 27 KBDI average for the District's 16 counties is 567 with a minimum of 49 in Collier County and a maximum of 754 in Hendry County.

Other District News and Happenings —

- The Acceler8 C-44 Test Cells are complete and are holding 92 acre-feet or 30 million gallons of water! Tours will be offered on July 7 from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Media, local governments, neighbors and communities are all invited to attend. Telephone or email RSVPs by July 5 to Gardenia Long (772) 223-2600, ext. 3617 or glong@sfwmd.gov.

- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the District will celebrate the Lake Okeechobee Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) Pilot Project groundbreaking scheduled for Thursday, June 29 at 10 a.m. in the Okeechobee area. These ASR wells are able to store as much as five million gallons per day as part of the Everglades restoration project.

- To help control the Tropical Soda Apple, 900 adult South American Leaf Beetles were released on June 22 at Micco Landing in the lower basin. This species has been approved by federal and state authorities as a biocontrol agent for Tropical Soda Apple in the state of Florida. About 1,000 adult beetles will be released each week through the summer at various locations of Tropical Soda Apple infestation along the river.

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.