

Weekly Update: February 8, 2006



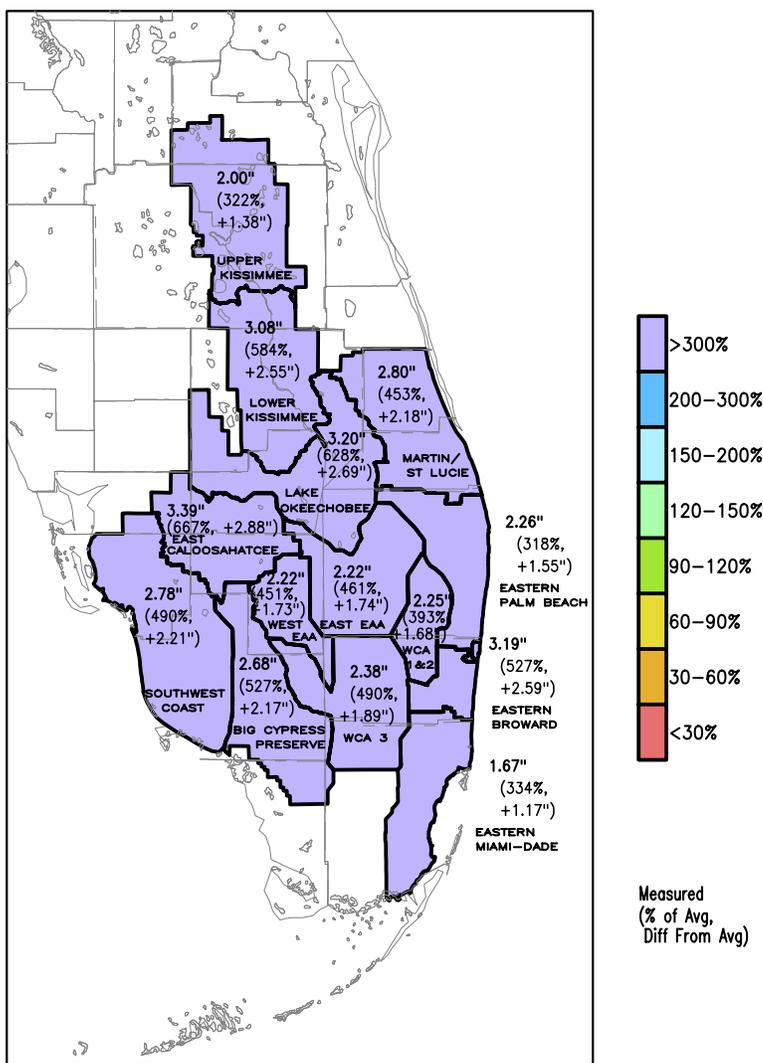
*just the*  
**FACTs**

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  
01-FEB-2006 to 07-FEB-2006



**DISTRICT-WIDE: 2.62" (484%, +2.08")**

GRADS: COLA/IGES

2006-02-07-12:03

### Rainfall overview:

- District-wide rainfall for the past week was slightly less than 2 ¾".
- The rainfall outlook for the next 7 days is for dry conditions.



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## State of the Water Management System

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### System-wide overview:

Rainfall occurring on Feb. 3 and 4 averaged 2.62" District-wide. This is more than the long-term average for the entire month of February. There are two fronts expected to move across the District within the next week. Very little rain is predicted and conditions should be dry over the next two weeks.

Overall, ecological conditions in Lake Okeechobee remain poor and efforts made by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to lower lake levels continue whenever possible without causing ecological damage to downstream ecosystems.\*

**Lake Okeechobee** — Heavy rains this past week resulted in a reversal in the direction of stage level change for Lake Okeechobee. Lake level is 15.53 ft NGVD today, up 0.31 ft since this date last week. This month's submerged aquatic vegetation transect sampling found no plants at any of the southern and western zone sites. Results for the northern zone will be available next week. Turbidity continues to be very high.

**Upper Chain of Lakes/Kissimmee Basin** — In the last seven days, the upper basin received 2.1" of rainfall to bring the 30-day total to 2.6", which is 108% of normal. The lower basin received 3.1", which brings the 30-day total to 3.5" or 183% of normal. Most of the upper basin lakes have stages that approximate their respective regulation schedules. Lake Kissimmee is approximately 1 ft below schedule. Discharges at S-57 and S-62 have been increased to allow stage in Lakes Myrtle, Joel and Preston to decrease with the regulation schedule. Releases are not being made from other lakes, with the exception of Lake Kissimmee.

**St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee Estuaries** — Discharge this past week at S-80 (St. Lucie) and S-79 (Caloosahatchee) was rainfall-driven. Salinity conditions in both estuaries are good.

**Water Conservation Areas** — Average rainfall in the WCAs was 2.0-2.5".

- The average water depth in WCA-1 is 1.32 ft and has increased by 0.14 ft over the last week.
- WCA-2A water depths have increased by 0.14 ft this past week. The water depth is 0.59 ft, and the region is now above the regulation schedule.
- The stage in WCA-2B, like the entire Everglades, increased due to rainfall over the weekend and is now at 10.36 ft or a very high depth of 3.56 ft.
- Stages in WCA-3A and 3B increased by 0.21 ft, and depths now range from a low of 0.9 ft in the northern regions to a high of 2.95 ft in the southern regions.

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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

**Weekly Update:** February 8, 2006 (page 3)

**Everglades National Park** — Rainfall accumulations this week were considerably higher than those seen in recent weeks across the entire Everglades. Average rainfall was approximately 1.0-1.5” in the Park. For most of the week, water levels dropped consistently across much of the Park, hitting their low points on Friday. Rainfall on Saturday caused an overall increase since last week. Downstream conditions at the Taylor River spoonbill foraging site were markedly different than those in the freshwater wetlands. Here water levels increased throughout much of last week due to strong southerly winds that pushed bay water far up into the ponds. Coupled with the significant rainfall, the result was a nearly 4” increase in water levels for the week. However, data from Sunday indicates that these water levels are dropping quickly, as the winds have since shifted from the north.

*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 across the bay this week was stable in some regions and highly variable in others. The higher concentrations are already declining as a result of the weekend’s front, which brought rain and a change in wind direction.

### Other District News and Happenings —

- This week, the District’s Governing Board authorized entering into negotiations with WhiTtec JV to construct the Everglades Agricultural Area Reservoir – an Acceler8 Everglades Restoration project. The Board also approved a contract with Barnard Construction Company, Inc., for the construction of the C-44 Reservoir/STA Project Test Cell Program.
- The Governing Board authorized rule development to develop supplemental water quality criteria for Environmental Resource Permits (ERP) in the Basin. The Lake Okeechobee Protection Act currently requires activities that result in a “land use change” to demonstrate that they will not increase the current phosphorus load discharging off-site. Initiation of this rulemaking provides an opportunity to improve upon the existing condition. Through the use of Best Management Practices and stormwater management systems a net 25-50% reduction in the current phosphorus load discharging off of a parcel is anticipated to have a measurable improvement downstream and will be one of the provisions of the revised ERP criteria.
- The District will hold a job fair on Feb. 11 from 9 a.m. to noon. The fair will be held at the LaBelle Chamber of Commerce located at 125 East Hickpochee Ave. in LaBelle (corner of Highway 80 & 29), and information will be presented in both English and Spanish. The fair is recruiting individuals to work on the C-43 West Reservoir project to be built along the Caloosahatchee River.