

Rainfall overview:

- District-wide rainfall for the past week was 0.28 inches.
- The rainfall outlook for the next seven days is for below average rainfall.

U.S. Drought Monitor:

The [Drought Monitor](#) focuses on broad-scale conditions and identifies general drought areas, labeling droughts by intensity. This week, areas of the District fall into two areas of intensity - severe and moderate drought.

System-wide overview:

Light rains are expected until the weekend, when no rain is anticipated. The rainfall outlook for the next seven days is for below average rainfall.

Lake Okeechobee:

Lake Okeechobee continues to decline and is 10.76 feet NGVD 29 (9.46 feet NAVD 88), 0.23 feet lower since this date last week and 0.61 feet lower than one month ago. As lake levels continue to decline, sampling programs are being scaled back or even suspended because either sites are no longer accessible by boat or boat ramps are no longer usable for launching.

Upper Chain of Lakes/Kissimmee Basin:

The upper Kissimmee Basin received 0.54 inches of rainfall over the last seven days, and the lower basin received 0.99 inches. Despite last week's rain, there has been almost no change in lake stages. Water releases ended at structure S-57 to lower lakes Myrtle, Preston and Joel because of falling water levels, and no other releases are being made in the system. No flow conditions in the Kissimmee River have existed for 132 days. Only slight increases in stage (0.1 feet) occurred within the area of Phase I of Kissimmee River Restoration Project following last week's rain.

St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee Estuaries:

In the St. Lucie Estuary, salinity conditions are good. No releases occurred at S-80 or S-308 over the past week. Seagrass samples taken last week indicated positive signs toward seagrass recovery to the north of the St. Lucie Inlet. Salinity conditions are poor in the upper Caloosahatchee Estuary and good in the Lower Estuary and San Carlos Bay. No discharge occurred at S-79 over the past week.

Water Conservation Areas (WCAs):

WCA rainfall ranged from 0.16 inches to 0.43 inches. Recession rates ranged from -0.04 feet to -0.30 feet, and water depths range from a low -0.41 feet to high of 1.55 feet. This discontinuity in depths did not occur last year because the volume of water available to drive flows was much greater. WCA-1 and WCA-3 continue to be below the regulation schedule, while WCA-2A is now approaching regulation.

Everglades National Park:

The Park received 0.35 inches of rain, and water levels dropped between 0.4 inches and 2.6 inches.

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

Florida Bay:

Salinity concentrations generally increased due to strong southerly winds pushing bay water north into the creeks and embayments.

Area Water Restrictions:

Eastern Palm Beach, Broward, Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties and Martin

and St. Lucie County Residential "C" Canal Users - Phase I Restrictions

Phase I mandatory water use restrictions went into effect March 22 in eastern Palm Beach, Broward, Miami-Dade and Monroe counties, as well as St. Lucie and Martin County homeowners using C-23, C-24 and C-25 canals for irrigation. Phase I water restrictions limit outdoor water use. Phase I restrictions allow lawn watering and car washing three days a week: Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays from 4 a.m. to 8 a.m. for addresses that end in an odd number; Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays from 4 a.m. to 8 a.m. for even-number addresses.

These and other actions are intended to produce a 15 percent reduction in overall demand on our water resources by all uses, including agricultural, industrial, commercial, golf course, landscaping and residential water users. The Phase I restrictions in eastern Palm Beach, Broward, Miami-Dade, Monroe and parts of Martin and St. Lucie counties apply to users who get their water from ALL sources including public utilities, private wells, canals, ponds and lakes, with a few exceptions such as firefighting and public health and safety.

A mandatory cease withdrawal restriction also goes into effect March 22 in the St. Lucie County Agricultural Area, impacting primarily permitted agricultural users who draw water directly from the C-23, C-24 and C-25 canals when canal levels drop below 14 feet.

Lake Okeechobee Service Area - Phase II Restrictions

Phase II mandatory water use restrictions went into effect March 22 in areas surrounding Lake Okeechobee, which impacts predominantly agricultural, industrial, commercial water users in the Everglades Agricultural Area, and parts of Hendry, Glades, Okeechobee, Palm Beach and Martin counties; withdrawals from the Caloosahatchee River; and a relatively small number of residential users whose water source is Lake Okeechobee or any of the surface water canals recharged by the lake.

Agricultural water users in these areas are required to reduce their consumption of surface water by 30 percent. These users have been notified of the specific nature of restrictions pertaining to this order and are encouraged to voluntarily exercise additional water conservation measures when possible. Residential users in the Lake Okeechobee Service Area are required to limit outdoor irrigation times to two days per week. Residents with odd home addresses will be allowed to water between 4 a.m. and 8 a.m. on Wednesdays and Saturdays, while residents with even home addresses will be allowed to water between 4 a.m. and 8 a.m. on Thursdays and Sundays. Car and boat washing are allowed only during the designated watering days and times.

The Phase II restrictions in the Lake Okeechobee Service Area apply to users who get their water from Lake Okeechobee, public utilities, canals, ponds and lakes. Groundwater sources (wells) are not restricted in the Lake Okeechobee Service Area because this source is not connected to Lake Okeechobee and is not threatened by the water shortage in this area. The use of water for firefighting, safety, sanitation, health, medical and other essential purposes is not restricted.

Residential water use restrictions are mandatory and will be enforced by local government through its law enforcement or zoning and code enforcement agencies. The District enforces the restrictions for consumptive water use permit holders.

In addition to the mandatory water use restrictions where applicable, residents in all areas of the District are encouraged to voluntarily save water both inside and outside the home. For additional information, residents can call the District's toll-free Water Conservation Hotline at (800) 662-8876 or contact their regional South Florida Water Management District Service Center.

Detailed water restriction information, TV and radio public service announcements and other helpful water conservation tips are available at www.sfwmd.gov/conserve.

In an effort to ensure compliance with the newly announced water restrictions, the District will host a series of water shortage compliance workshops for local government officials in Monroe, Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach Counties. Each time the SFWMD declares a water shortage, it requests, by statute, the enforcement assistance of all local governments. The workshops are designed to prepare local code enforcement, city/county/state attorneys, sheriff's offices and police departments for their role in assisting the SFWMD to enforce the water use restrictions. Workshop topics will include an overview of the Lower East Coast water shortage order, restrictions on specific use classes, violations forms and procedures, and reporting requirements.

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 Niki Spencer at 800-432-2045 or 561-686-8800, ext. 6004.

** 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.*