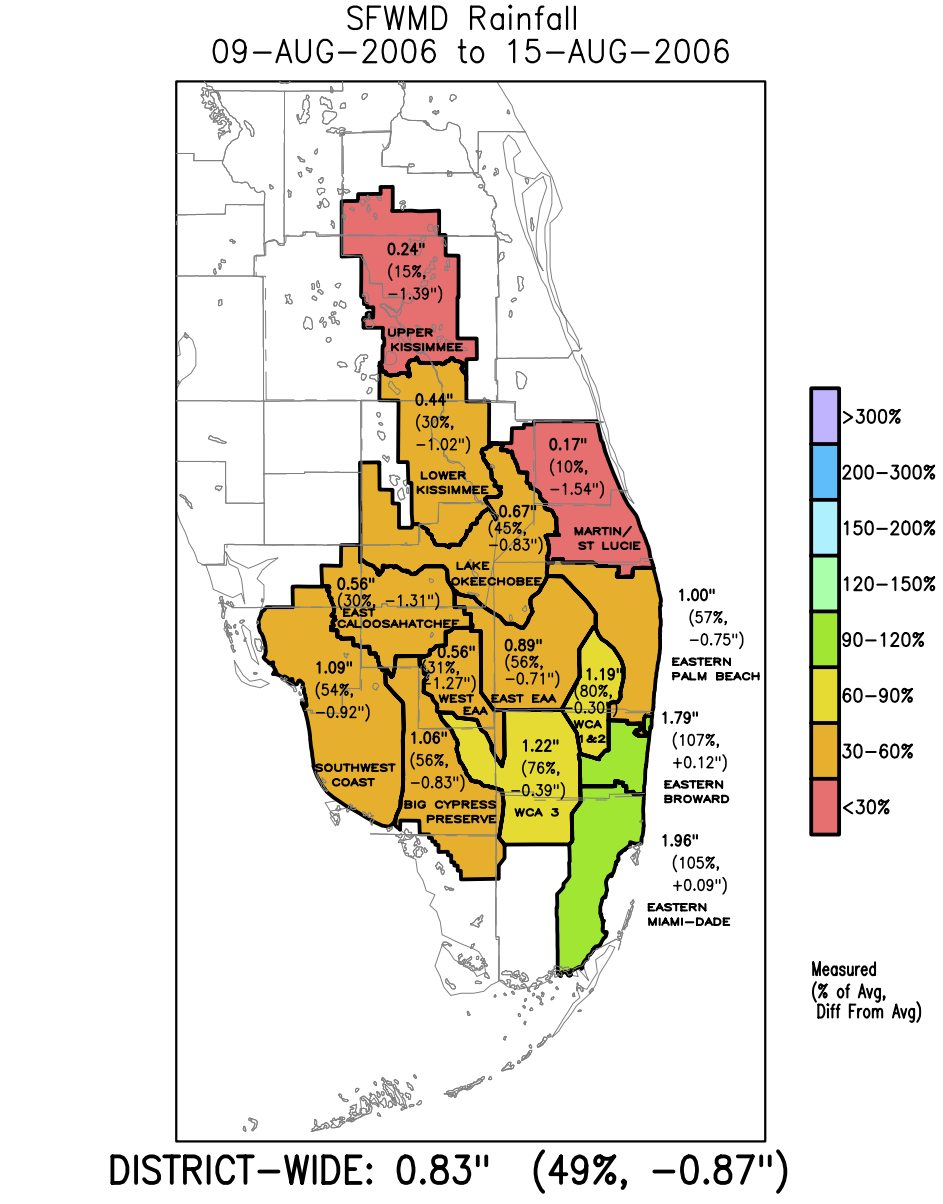
Weekly Update: August 16, 2006

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 less than one inch.
- The rainfall outlook for the next seven days is for below 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

Weekly Update: August 16, 2006 (page 2)

System-wide overview:

District-wide rainfall was approximately 0.9 inches, which is below average. For the past month, District-wide rainfall has been about 40 percent of normal. The forecast for the next 7-10 days is for well below normal rainfall north of Lake Okeechobee and slightly below normal in the southern portion of the District.

Lake Okeechobee — The lake stage is approximately 11.98 feet NGVD 29 (10.68 feet NAVD 88), down 0.3 feet since last week and 4.08 feet lower than this date last year.* Based on August submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) data, sufficient light to support plant growth is now reaching the bottom at 79 percent of the sites, as compared to 43 percent of sites in July, 29 percent of sites June and no sites in May 2006. Also, for the first time since June 2005, plants were found at one of the sites, providing additional evidence that recovery is beginning to occur. Preliminary results from our annual SAV mapping survey indicate that there are approximately 2,900 acres of SAV in the lake. This is a reduction of more than 70 percent since last August (pre-Hurricane Wilma) and clearly demonstrates the severe negative impacts of the storm and its resulting elevated lake stages and turbidity on the SAV community.

Upper Chain of Lakes/Kissimmee Basin — During the last seven days, the upper basin received 0.22 inches of rainfall to bring the 30-day total to 2.68 inches (39 percent of the long-term average for this time period). The lower basin received 0.53 inches to bring the 30-day total to 3.92 inches (63 percent of the long-term average). In the upper basin lakes, stages remain below the respective regulation schedules. Stages have either stabilized or continue to fall. Releases from Lake Toho and Lake Kissimmee continue to be matched, so that water from Lake Toho can be passed through Lake Kissimmee for the Kissimmee River Restoration Project. Because the stage in Lake Toho continues to decrease, discharges were reduced again on Friday to 200 cubic feet per second and again on Monday to 150 cubic feet per second. Snail kite nesting continues in Lake Toho. The concentration of dissolved oxygen in the restored river channel remains above thresholds of concern. Water levels in the Kissimmee River continue to drop.

St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee Estuaries — In the St. Lucie Estuary, discharge at S-80 last week was negligible. While salinity increased over the past week, average salinity at both monitoring sites was within the preferred range. The Florida Oceanographic Society reports that dissolved oxygen and water clarity are fair to good. In the Caloosahatchee Estuary, freshwater extends downstream to the I-75 Bridge. Due to rainfall, discharge at S-79 averaged 362 cubic feet per second over the past week. The 30-day average discharge at S-79 is 912 cubic feet per second and within the preferred range. Tape grass beds in the upper estuary have experienced weekly average salinities within established tolerance limits. Salinity conditions in both estuaries are good.

Water Conservation Areas (WCAs) — Rainfall accumulations for the week across the Everglades were significantly more than they were last week, when most regions only received about ½-inch. WCA-1 received about 1.7 inches, WCA-2 received about 0.9 inches, WCA-3A received 1.1 inches and WCA-3B received the most at 2.1 inches. Poor rehydration rates have now occurred for most of the system for a third consecutive week due to a lack of rain. WCA-1 is holding steady with 1.1 feet of water depth, but is below regulation. WCA-2A declined by 0.2 feet, has 0.6 feet of water depth, and is 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.*

State of the Water Management System

Weekly Update: August 16, 2006 (page 3)

Everglades National Park — With little rainfall (approximately 1.6 inches) and very high temps continuing to fuel evaporation, water levels dropped again this week across the Park wetlands. Water level at Taylor Slough Bridge showed another substantial decline, nearly 3.25 inches for the week. Both Shark River Slough and the panhandle saw a drop in stage of 0.25 inches and 0.6 inches, respectively. While these declines are less than last week's report, they are still unusual given this point in the wet season.

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 the bay were generally up for week. Salinity at Trout Creek showed a marked increase, as well as in Terrapin Bay and just upstream in McCormick Creek. In the Shark River Slough outflow at Tarpon Bay, salinity was up slightly. Salinity at the Taylor River mouth station fluctuated a good deal through the week, however, and was generally headed up. Salinity in the Taylor River ponds remained nearly the same for the past week.

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.flof.com/fire_weather/KBDI/. The Aug. 16 KBDI average for the District's 16 counties is 379 – an increase of 45 points since last week – with a minimum of 1 in Charlotte, Collier, Lee, Miami-Dade, Palm Beach and Monroe counties and a maximum of 734 in St. Lucie County.

Other District News and Happenings —

- At last week's meeting, the Governing Board members approved the Bond Resolution and Legal Documents for Series 2006 that authorize the sale of Certificates of Participation (COPs) in an aggregate principle amount not to exceed $600,000,000. This is the largest COPs issuance ever in Florida and the fifth largest ever in the country. This would be the first time COPs were being used for environmental restoration.

- The District's Small Business Enterprise Rule became effective August 3, and the District has received more than 100 applications for certification to date. A number of workshops have been scheduled throughout the District to share information on the program and increase participation. Look for more information in the coming weeks.

- A ceremony designating the Site 1 Impoundment Project as the Fran Reich Preserve, as authorized by 2006 Florida Legislature, is scheduled for August 30 at 10 a.m.

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 Jessica Morales at 800-432-2045 or 561-686-8800, ext. 6883.