

Weekly Update: August 31, 2005



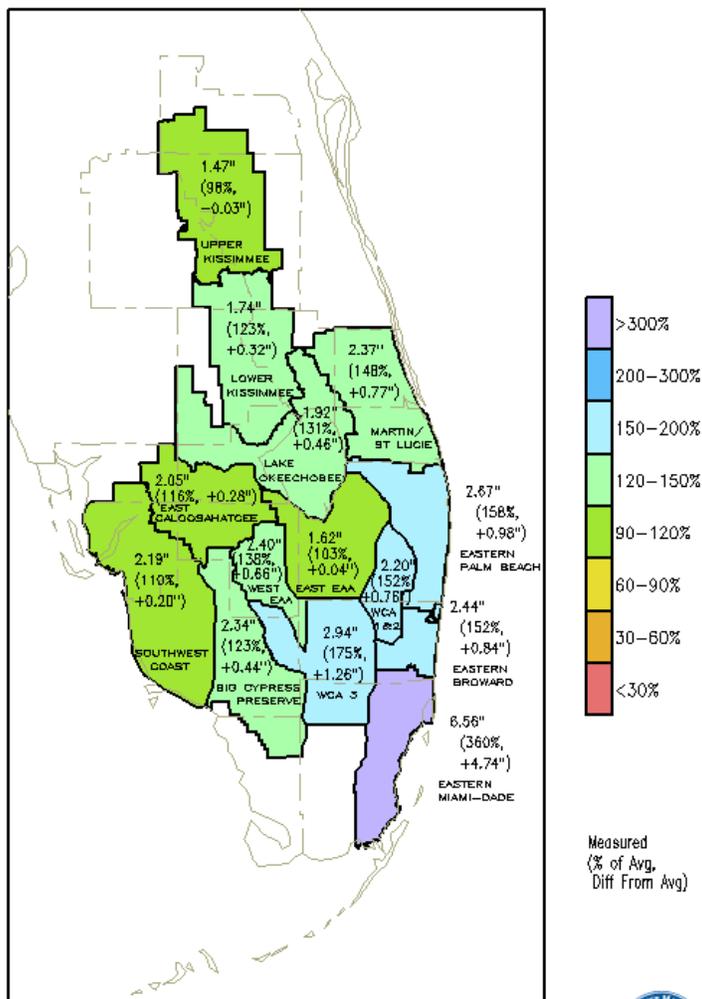
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**FACTS**

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.*

SFWMD Rainfall  
23-AUG-2005 to 29-AUG-2005



DISTRICT-WIDE: 2.40" (145%, +0.74")

GRADS: COLA/ICES



### Rainfall overview:

- District-wide average rainfall for the past week was 2.4".
- Rainfall total for August (to date) is 6.6", which is average.
- Due to Hurricane Katrina, Miami-Dade rainfall was 50% above average for the month. The storm brought 6-10" of rainfall there.
- At Homestead Air Force Base, 12.25" of rain fell in one six-hour period during the hurricane. Total rainfall in Homestead was 13.25" from Hurricane Katrina.



[sfwmd.gov](http://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/hurricane impacts:

- All coastal structures remain fully open to allow maximum recession of water in the Miami-Homestead-Florida City area. Forward pumps have continued to assist in moving water to the coast. The eastern waters are receding the quickest.
- There was no damage to the primary flood control system, and it is working at 100 percent capacity to remove the water from the land, through the canals and out to sea.
- No flooding was reported in the areas along the C-4 in west Miami-Dade. This can be attributed to the new flood control structures, pumping stations and C-4 detention basin added in the Sweetwater, West Miami and Flagami areas constructed over the last 18 months.
- The flood waters in the Homestead area and in the L-31N and C-111 canal areas near Everglades National Park continue to recede. Water levels in the western areas are beginning to decrease as well. It will be later this week before the water in the western urban and agricultural areas begins to noticeably dissipate.

**Lake Okeechobee** — Lake level is unchanged since last week, measuring 15.75 ft NGVD.\* Widespread surface algae blooms continue to be reported from a variety of locations around the lake. Field crews will be collecting samples of algae and other vegetation; results will be reported as soon as available. A small fish kill was reported at the Henry Creek lock.

**Upper Chain of Lakes/Kissimmee Basin** — Stages in the upper basin lakes are at or near regulation schedules. River temperature is still seasonally high, with a low concentration of dissolved oxygen. Treatment for floating plants is taking place in Pool C.

Relatively high numbers of wading birds are using the restored area. A breeding colony of cattle egrets (approximately 1,300 nests) discovered last month is still active. A large flock of several hundred waders (mostly white ibis) was foraging near Oak Creek.

**St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee Estuaries** — Basin drainage increased significantly this past week, approaching almost half of the total flow into the Caloosahatchee. Salinity increased somewhat in both estuaries, due in part to salt water being pushed up the estuary with the passing of Hurricane Katrina. However, estuary salinity conditions remain poor.

**Water Conservation Areas** — Water depths rose from 0.03 ft to 0.24 ft throughout the WCAs. Water levels continue to be above regulation schedule in WCA-2A and WCA-3A and below regulation schedule in WCA-1.

**Everglades National Park** — Rainfall amounts ranged from 1.5” to 4” in the park during the past week. Water levels rose dramatically in the eastern areas of the park, at Taylor Slough bridge (by more than 1 ft) and in the panhandle section (by 1 ft).

*Note: Rainfall information in the park is based on radar estimates, not rain gauge data. As a result, the map on page one does not include rainfall information for the park.*

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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:** August 31, 2005 (page 3)

**Florida Bay** — Hurricane Katrina had some notable effects on salinity. Strong southerly winds pushed higher salinity water into northeastern areas of the bay, temporarily increasing salinity concentrations there. The winds also moved lower salinity water from the south into the interior of the bay, where prolonged hypersalinity has been recorded. This and the combination of heavy rainfall there may end the hypersalinity condition.

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**Algae Update** — The effects of Hurricane Katrina on the blue-green algae appear minimal. Blooms continue to persist in Lake Okeechobee, the St. Lucie River/Estuary, the Caloosahatchee River and in the Upper Kissimmee Chain of Lakes. This species of blue-green algae (*Mycrocystis*) is not typically toxic but can form toxic strains.

The District continues to coordinate monitoring, evaluation and response efforts with state and local agencies. Preliminary testing results from the expanded blue-green toxin monitoring program are expected this week. Jerry Brooks, deputy director of the Water Resources Management division of Florida Department of Environmental Protection, joined the internal Blue-Green Algae Task Force, which meets weekly to coordinate activities and response.