

Weekly Update: September 28, 2005



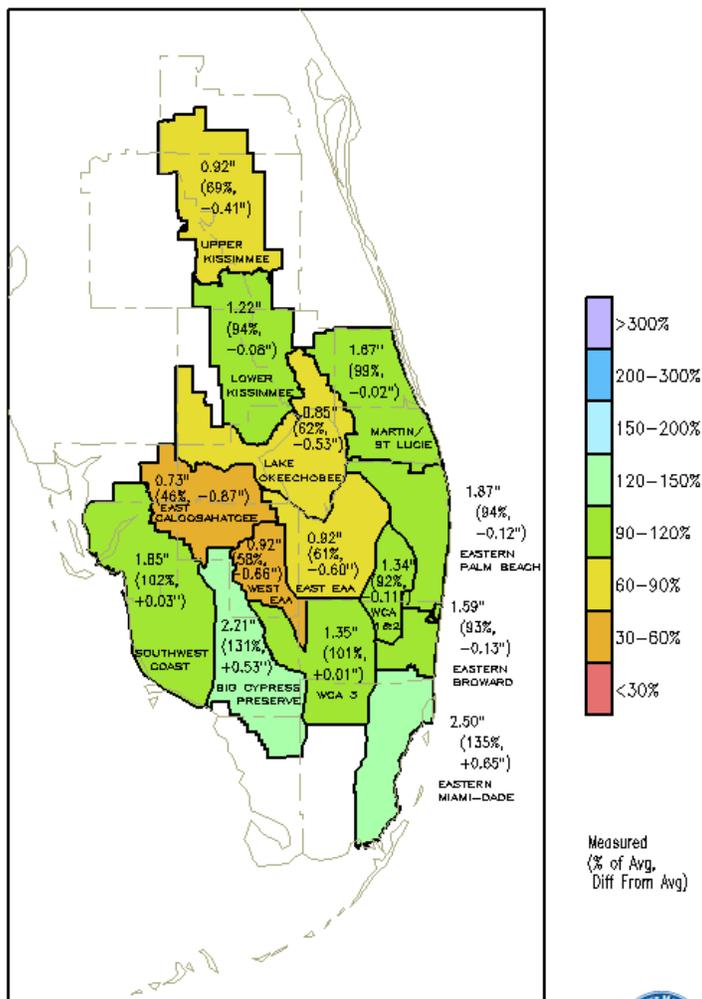
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**FACTS**

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  
20-SEP-2005 to 26-SEP-2005



DISTRICT-WIDE: 1.42" (91%, -0.14")

GRADS: COLA/IGES

Measured  
(% of Avg,  
Diff From Avg)



**Rainfall overview:**

- District-wide rainfall for the past week was less than 1½ ”.
- Rainfall outlook for the next 7 days is above average south of Lake Okeechobee and average rainfall north of Lake Okeechobee.
- Outlook for the remainder of the wet season is for an increased likelihood of above average rainfall.



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## State of the Water Management System

Weekly Update: September 28, 2005 (page 2)

### System-wide overview:

The South Dade County and Big Cypress Basin areas received the most rainfall last week, totaling approximately 2.5". For the month to date, the District has received approximately 4.0" of rain, which is well below average. Low-level releases continue from Lake Okeechobee.

**Lake Okeechobee** — Lake level is at 15.53 ft NGVD, down 0.11 ft since last week.\* Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission staff are currently conducting the autumn largemouth bass survey. Bloom monitoring and monthly vegetation surveys will be conducted during the weeks of September 25 and October 2, respectively.

**Upper Chain of Lakes/Kissimmee Basin** — Stage for upper basin lakes are at regulation schedule except for lakes Kissimmee, Cypress and Hatchineha, which are approximately 1 ft below regulation schedule. Water depths are 0.5 – 1.0 ft across much of the Kissimmee floodplain (restoration project area). Large numbers of birds are using the floodplain: widespread flocks of wading birds forage during the day, more than a hundred shorebirds are found in shallow areas, and a roseate spoonbill has been reported, along with many mottled ducks and a few teal. Vegetation management activities continue in the upper basin for hydrilla and floating plants and along the river for floating plants.

**St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee Estuaries** — Salinity in the St. Lucie decreased over the past week at the A1A Bridge. The Florida Oceanographic Society reports that dissolved oxygen concentrations in the St. Lucie are poor to good, while water clarity ranges from fair to poor. Salinity conditions have improved in the Caloosahatchee Estuary during the past week, and dissolved oxygen concentrations are good. Conditions in both estuaries are poor.

**Water Conservation Areas** — Water depths continue to be high except in WCA-1. WCA-2A levels have lowered and are now at regulation schedule, while levels in WCA-3 remain above regulation schedule. Prolonged deep water may stress trees in these areas.

**Everglades National Park** — Rainfall during the past week ranged from 3" to 5". Water levels increased across the park due to the large amounts of rain from Hurricane Rita. In eastern areas of the park, the level increased by nearly 0.5 ft.

*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

**Weekly Update:** September 28, 2005 (page 3)

**Florida Bay** — Salinity continues to decline across Florida Bay. The north-central bay has experienced the most substantial declines over the past month as a result of increased freshwater flow from the north. Concentrations also dropped significantly at the Little Madeira Bay mouth.

**Algae Update** — Increased monitoring continues on blue-green algae in Lake Okeechobee, St. Lucie River/Estuary, Caloosahatchee River, Kissimmee River/Upper Kissimmee Chain of Lakes and the District's eastern canals at 41 fixed monitoring sites. Field reports indicate that visible, floating mats of blue-green algae are much less common this week throughout the District. This species (*Mycrocystis*) is not typically toxic but can form toxic strains.

Toxicity results, which are updated regularly, as well as frequently asked questions and related links, can be found on the District's blue-green algae web site at <http://www.sfwmd.gov/site/index.php?id=611>. The World Health Organization guidance level for drinking water is 1.0 ppb; no recreational exposure standards exist. Current drinking water treatment plants have the capability to treat for these algae.