

Weekly Update: January 18, 2006



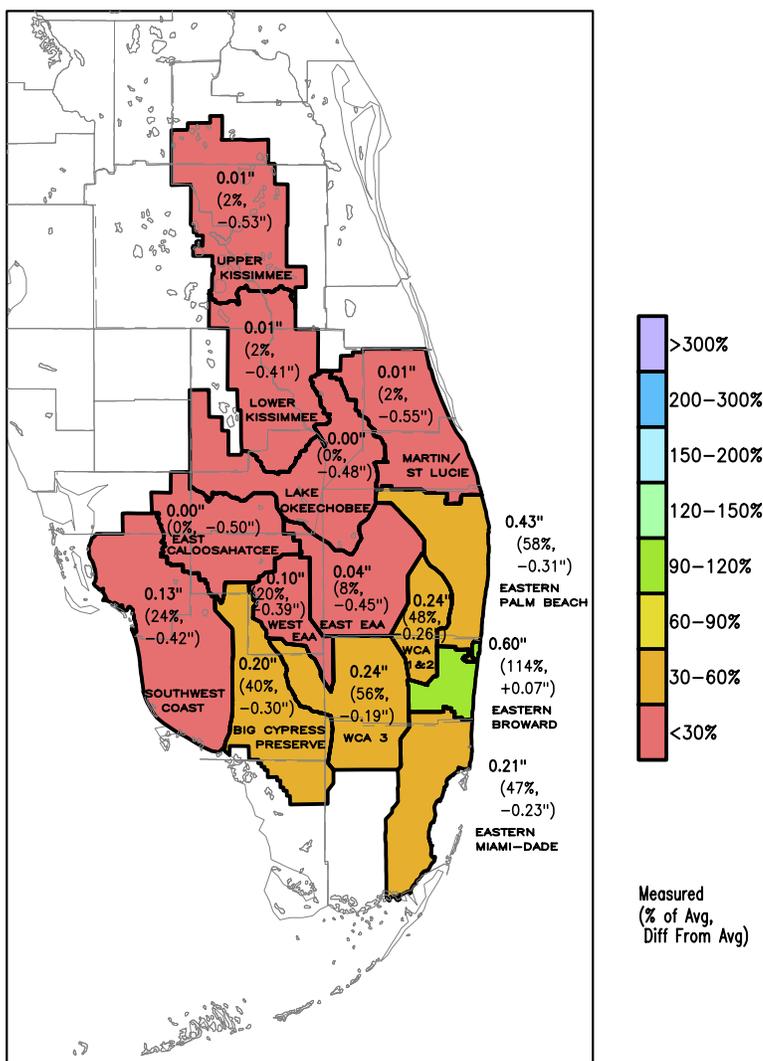
State of the Water Management System

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.

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.

SFWM District Rainfall
11-JAN-2006 to 17-JAN-2006



DISTRICT-WIDE: 0.12" (24%, -0.38")

GRADS: COLA/IGES

2006-01-17-16:02

Rainfall overview:

- District-wide rainfall for the past week was negligible.
- The rainfall outlook for the next 7 days is for below average conditions.



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: January 18, 2006 (page 2)

System-wide overview:

District recommendations to the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers supported continued southward Lake Okeechobee releases up to a maximum of 1,000 cubic feet per second, to be sent through STA 3/4 and into WCA 3A, alternating between flow-ways 1 and 2 on a weekly basis. District staff will reconsider additional releases to the south on a weekly basis.*

Overall Lake Okeechobee ecological conditions continue to be very poor and every effort should be made to continue lowering lake levels whenever it can be done without causing ecological damage to downstream ecosystems.

Lake Okeechobee — Lake level is at 15.37 ft NGVD, down 0.09 ft since last week. The lake is now 0.08 ft lower than it was on this date last year. January submerged aquatic vegetation transect surveys have been completed. Extremely sparse submerged aquatic vegetation was encountered at five relatively sheltered sites. The sediment surface in most of the potential submerged aquatic vegetation growing region of the lake continues to receive insufficient light to support any substantial plant growth.

Upper Chain of Lakes/Kissimmee Basin — Stages in the upper basin lakes are at or slightly below regulation schedule. There continues to be water on the restored floodplain.

St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee Estuaries — No water has been released at S-80 over the past week. All St. Lucie Estuary readings are in the preferred range, and water quality will be measured this week. There has been no discharge at S-79 over the past five days. Salinity has increased throughout the Caloosahatchee Estuary. Salinity conditions in both estuaries are good.

Water Conservation Areas — Some regions of the WCA saw 0.5" of rain for the past week, but most regions received between 0.1 and 0.25" of rain. The average water depth in WCA 1 is 1.32 ft and has changed very little over the last three months. WCA 2A water depths were not reported correctly for the last two weeks due to errors associated with the USGS web site. The USGS site has been repaired, and it now appears that water levels have declined considerably this past week in WCA 2A. Although marsh stage remains above schedule (currently at 11.85 ft), the 0.75 ft water depth in 2A is now the lowest of any WCA. Despite the excellent recession rates seen in WCA 2B of 0.11 ft, the depth of 3.6 ft is still very high and not expected to support healthy tree islands or wading bird foraging. WCA 3A water depths continue to decline slightly. The average recession was 0.08 ft for the past week. However, the water depth in the north-east region of WCA 3A (1.87 ft) is significantly greater than the depths in the north-west region, where a depth of 0.97 ft is approaching suitability for wading bird foraging. Depths in the central and southern regions of WCA 3A are over 2 ft and are not expected to become suitable foraging habitat for another few months. Water depths in WCA 3B declined 0.08 ft, same as last week, to 1.43 ft. Wood storks are expected to be foraging in this region in another month.

* *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: January 18, 2006 (page 3)

Everglades National Park — Rainfall was patchy across the Park. The water depth at the Park's Northeast Shark River Slough station declined very slightly to 1.30 ft. Water levels continue to drop in the ENP wetlands, though the decline has slowed at some stations compared to recession rates described last week. The water level at the Audubon Taylor River station is at 6.2", which is close to the 5.0" optimum for spoonbill foraging.

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 — Rainfall was patchy across Florida Bay. Salinity remains seasonably low across much of Florida Bay. Many of the stations in the Bay proper remain offline, making wider trends difficult to discern.

Other District News and Happenings — During the past week, the District staff presented a \$5 million check to the Palm Beach County Commission for the Lake Region Water Treatment Plant project.

The District's Operations and Maintenance staff also worked to help clear and adjust the City of South Bay's water intake system that bring water into the city's potable water treatment plant from Lake Okeechobee.

A selection committee was appointed by the Governing Board to review and recommend a contractor to complete the construction of the Everglades Agricultural Area reservoir. Proposals for this first major 16,700-acre reservoir are scheduled to be submitted on Jan. 23 with recommendations for selection of a contractor going to the Governing Board in February and an anticipated ground breaking in late April or early May.