

Weekly Update: March 29, 2006



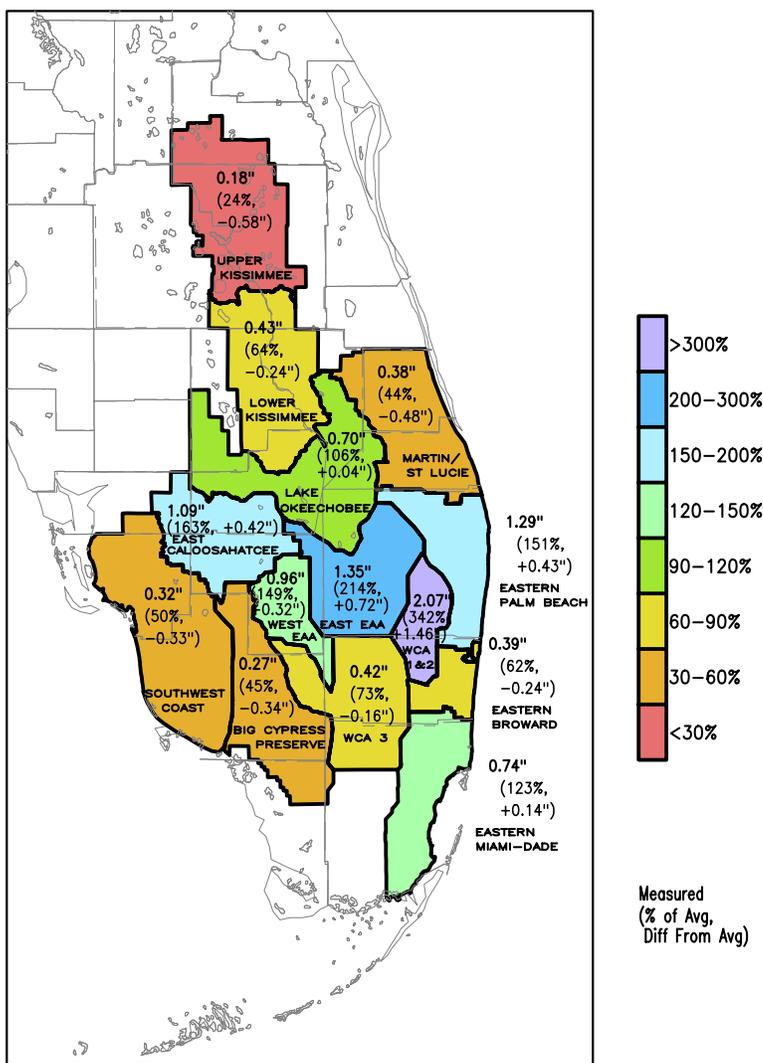
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FACTs

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.

SFWM District Rainfall
22-MAR-2006 to 28-MAR-2006



DISTRICT-WIDE: 0.65" (96%, -0.03")

GRADS: COLA/IGES

2006-03-28-15:03

Rainfall overview:

- District-wide rainfall for the past week was less than 3/4 of an inch.
- The rainfall outlook for the next seven days is for below average rainfall.



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State of the Water Management System

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System-wide overview:

Last Thursday's rain event produced 0.65 inches of rain, District-wide. The heaviest rain was focused over the central agricultural area, with the upper Kissimmee valley receiving the least amount. The forecast for the next 15 days is for below average rainfall.

Lake Okeechobee — The Lake stage is approximately 14.64 feet NGVD, down 0.14 feet since this day last week and 0.83 feet lower than on this date last year.* Researchers at Florida Atlantic University reported a large increase in wading bird use of the Moore Haven Marsh this month. The increase coincided with water levels reaching 15.10 feet NGVD, which allowed the smaller species to begin using large areas of the marsh.

Upper Chain of Lakes/Kissimmee Basin — In the last seven days, the upper basin received 0.18 inches of rainfall resulting in a 30-day total of 0.30 inches, which is 9% of normal. The lower basin received 0.44 inches during this same period, which resulted in a 30-day total of 0.59 inches or 21% of normal. The spring recession for the upper basin lakes continues.

St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee Estuaries — Pulse releases to both estuaries ended on Mar. 23. Surface salinities in the St. Lucie Estuary were within the preferred range at both monitoring sites during the past week. Two sea grass sites in the Indian River Lagoon were sampled on Mar. 22. Although sea grass coverage remains extremely low at these sites as a result of Hurricane Wilma, there are signs of recovery. Salinity conditions in the St. Lucie are good. Salinity data for the Caloosahatchee Estuary was not available at the time of printing this report.

Water Conservation Areas — Last week, significant rainfall occurred throughout most of the Everglades. Up to 3 inches of rain fell in the Everglades, with the heaviest concentrations in WCA 2, portions of WCA 1, 3B and northern 3A. Little to no rain fell in the more western areas of WCA 3. Stages in WCAs 1 and 3 are at and below regulation depths, respectively, while WCA 2A is above regulation. Depths in the Everglades regions used for foraging by wading birds at this time of year range from a low of 0.49 feet in WCA 2 to a high of 1.97 feet in the southern region of WCA 3A. Ibis and egrets have begun nesting in WCA 1, WCA 3 and Everglades National Park.

Everglades National Park — Most stations in the Park received between 0.10-0.75 inches of rain as this latest front pushed through the area. Since last week's report, water levels showed varied response to this precipitation. There was a modest increase in the Park panhandle, nearly 0.75 inches, with water levels up to 0.10 feet. In Shark River Slough, the water level dropped to 1.18 feet. The greatest decline occurred at Taylor Slough Bridge, where water levels receded by nearly 2.5 inches.

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

* 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

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Florida Bay — Salinity in the bay continued to rise during the past week. Bay water finally made its way well up into the Taylor River ponds and increased salinity levels. Salinity in these ponds rises each year when bay water makes its way north during periods when there is little to no flow coming off the Everglades, typically between February and May.

Other District News and Happenings —

- Staff participated in the kick-off meeting for the C-51 dredging project last week. The District, Palm Beach County and the City of West Palm Beach executed an agreement in January for this project, which will result in cleaner water entering the Lake Worth Lagoon by removing approximately 130,000 cubic yards of organic sediment.
- The District, along with Senator Ken Pruitt, DEP Secretary Colleen Castille and Martin County, broke ground on the C-44 Reservoir test cell construction project. This 12,000-acre project will allow for significant additional water storage from the St. Lucie basin and water quality treatment through an on-site storm water treatment area.