

December 2009



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.

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South Florida Water Management District *2009 Accomplishment Highlights*

Ecosystem Restoration / Water Quality Improvements

- Entered into a contract to acquire an initial 73,000 acres of strategic lands south of Lake Okeechobee for Everglades Restoration. The pending purchase will be financed with Certificates of Participation, and the *River of Grass* public planning process to develop restoration configurations is under way.
- Signed the Master Agreement with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to establish uniform terms and conditions for all construction, maintenance and operation of future Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) projects.
- Achieved the 60-percent mark, 232,767 acres, in acquiring land for CERP.
- Treated more than 1.1 million acre-feet of runoff water and removed more than 395,000 pounds of phosphorus in Stormwater Treatment Areas (STAs) in Water Year 2009.
- Initiated construction on another 12,000 acres of treatment marsh (Compartments B & C buildouts). More than 52,000 acres of land south of Lake Okeechobee have already been converted to Stormwater Treatment Areas yielding 45,000 acres of treatment wetlands. Since 1994, STAs and agricultural “Best Management Practices” have together prevented more than 3,200 metric tons of phosphorus from entering the Everglades.
- Completed the STA-5 rehabilitation project, placing more than 400,000 cubic yards of fill in remnant slough in Cell 1A. Constructed diversion canal and removed approximately 1,000 cubic yards of vegetation at STA-1E.
- Implemented Avian Protection Plan for STAs in cooperation with U.S. Fish Wildlife Service.
- Observed more than 77,500 wading bird nests – a record – in the Everglades.
- Completed designs for the C-111 Spreader Canal Phase I, Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands Phase I, Lakeside Ranch STA Phase I, Acme Basin B Phase II and Lake Trafford Dredging.
- Commenced Phase 1 construction on Lakeside Ranch STA. Phase 2 design is under way.
- Approved Project Partnership Agreement with USACE to allow the Corps to begin construction in Picayune Strand; certified 30,731 acres of Picayune Strand to the USACE for the Merritt Canal Construction Phase.
- Continued extensive monitoring efforts for Kissimmee River Restoration as the Corps of Engineers completed backfilling of 3 additional miles of the C-38 Canal – reconnecting 6 more miles of the historic river channel.
- Completed installation of 16 new hydrologic monitoring sites for Kissimmee River Restoration evaluation.
- Completed and peer-reviewed the Technical Document to Support Water Reservations for the Kissimmee River and Chain of Lakes.



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- Completed the Florida Apple Snail Aquaculture Feasibility Study and initiated pilot stock enhancement study in Lake Okeechobee, releasing more than 5,000 snails.
- Treated 7,500 acres of exotic vegetation in Lake Okeechobee.
- Observed a 40-percent increase in submerged aquatic vegetation in Lake Okeechobee compared with 2008.
- Observed a 60-percent to 90-percent reduction in phosphorus concentrations at four Hybrid Wetland Treatment Technology pilot sites.
- Completed the St. Lucie River and Caloosahatchee River Watershed Protection Plans.
- Completed technical support and documentation of the St. Lucie River Water Reservation.
- Completed 57 local government cooperative agreements for restoration, habitat and/or water quality improvement projects benefiting coastal watersheds; executed 37 new or amended cooperative agreements.
- Completed 28 applied research, mapping and modeling initiatives for coastal watersheds.

Flood Control Operations / Public Lands

- Expanded hunting and recreation opportunities to an additional 21,000 acres of District lands.
- Opened a duck-hunting and bird-watching blind at STA-5 that meets Americans with Disabilities Act standards.
- Opened an equestrian trailhead and 5 miles of trails at Allapattah Flats in Martin County.
- Treated more than 50,000 acres of exotic vegetation.
- Removed the 300th Burmese python captured on District lands.
- Moved more than 25 million acre-feet of water through District structures.
- Completed inspections of 94 structures, 18 bridges and 130 water control facilities.
- Inspected 108 miles of critical levees in the Central and South Florida Project and cleared more than 22 miles of canal banks in the Big Cypress Basin.
- Developed a 5-year capital improvement program, identifying 161 projects.
- Met all air quality standards at the 64 pump stations monitored.
- Utilized 14 forward pumps at Lake Okeechobee in response to water shortage conditions.
- Installed 2,000 linear feet of rip-rap for bank stabilization at S-49.
- Completed the G-211 automation, S-25B gate overhaul, G-420 keel cooler replacement and L-36 levee seepage projects.
- Inspected more than 1,900 miles of canal rights of way.
- Installed 74 new electronic communication sites, expanding the 24-hour monitoring and remote operation capabilities from District headquarters.

Water Supply / Regulation

- Continued managing the water shortage in South Florida.
- Began implementing the District's Comprehensive Water Conservation Program.
- Continued rule development for year-round landscape irrigation measures.
- Funded 38 Alternative Water Supply projects that will produce 27 million gallons of additional water a day.
- Funded 44 WaterSIP grant projects that will produce 457 million gallons of water a year.
- Launched a pilot Water Conservation Hotel and Motel Program (Water CHAMP) initiative in the Florida Keys, enrolling 14 hotels.

- Reviewed and commented on 119 proposed comprehensive plan amendments; provided extensive technical assistance regarding draft water supply facility work plans from local governments.
- Implemented provisions of Senate Bill 2080 that delegated some permit application approvals to the Executive Director. Established monthly noticing and meeting process; enhanced public opportunities to comment on pending permit applications.
- Expanded the ePermitting database and increased online public access to historic permit documents. More than 9.1 million documents were converted into electronic format.

Public Affairs / Mission Support

- Initial launch of redesigned and re-engineered www.sfwmd.gov Web site that features advanced technology to help keep the public better informed.
- Secured \$58.9M in State appropriations during a fiscally challenging year.
- Fulfilled more than 600 public records requests.
- Continued identifying and implementing belt-tightening efforts, including shifting some contract work to full-time employees, a \$1.9 million savings. An additional \$547,000 was saved in aviation fuel and purchasing expenses. Off-site training expenses were reduced by 30 percent and staff travel was reduced by 33 percent.
- Completed energy/water efficiency building improvement projects that saved more than 760,000 gallons of water and 419,000 KWH of energy; received a \$20,000 FPL rebate for installing energy-efficient roofing.
- Implemented new electronic application and tracking system for people seeking careers with the District.
- Completed customer service training classes that were attended by 100 percent of District employees. Conducted additional in-house training in areas such as project management, supervisory and information technology.
- Recognized by the Government Finance Officers Association for excellence in financial reporting and distinguished budget presentation, and by the National Purchasing Institute for excellence in procurement.