



NEWS RELEASE

August 8, 2016

Program to Improve Everglades Water Quality Succeeds Amid Record Rainfall

Everglades Agricultural Area consistently achieves phosphorus reduction goals

West Palm Beach, FL - A program to improve Everglades water quality once again ensured water flowing from farmlands in the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) met phosphorus reductions required by law, even amid a declared state of emergency following high water levels from record rainfall.

In a year that saw the wettest January since recordkeeping began in 1932, continued use of improved farming techniques, known as Best Management Practices (BMPs), produced a 27-percent phosphorus reduction in the 470,000-acre EAA farming region south of Lake Okeechobee for the Water Year 2016 monitoring period (May 1, 2015 - April 30, 2016). Florida's Everglades Forever Act requires that the amount of phosphorus leaving the EAA must be 25 percent less than before reduction efforts began.

"Meeting and even going beyond the required reduction in phosphorus despite unprecedented rainfall is an astounding accomplishment by the EAA agricultural community," said South Florida Water Management District Governing Board member Melanie Peterson. "More important, this achievement is a testament to the long-term effectiveness of the BMP program in cleaning water flowing to the Everglades."

South Florida's water, especially water moved into Everglades National Park by SFWMD, is cleaner than it has been in generations and meets stringent water quality requirements.

SFWMD issues this required annual report comparing the current Water Year for which BMPs are in place to a baseline period before the BMP program began to determine whether the EAA has met the requirement of the law. It is not a year-to-year comparison. A scientific model is used to compute the reductions and make adjustments to account for the influences of rainfall.

Average rainfall in January is about 2 inches District-wide. January 2016 saw:

- More than 9 inches of rain fell District-wide.
- January 27 was the wettest dry-season day in 25 years.
- November through January, the first half of the dry season, was the wettest for this period since record keeping began in 1932.

Examples of BMPs include refined stormwater management practices, on-farm erosion controls and more precise fertilizer application methods. These and other management practices by agricultural growers reduce the amount of phosphorus transported in stormwater runoff that reaches the Everglades and its connected water bodies.

BMP Program Results

When measured in actual mass, 51 metric tons of phosphorus were prevented from leaving the EAA and entering the regional canal system, which sends water into the Everglades, during the Water Year 2016 monitoring period. Since WY1996, the BMP program has prevented 3,055 metric tons of phosphorus from leaving the EAA.

Just west of the EAA, in the 170,000-acre C-139 Basin, a BMP program has been in place since 2002. In November 2010, the program requirements were enhanced to better control the nutrient runoff. For the Water Year 2016 monitoring period, data show the actual mass of phosphorus discharged from the basin during that time was 43 metric tons. Ongoing work continues to focus on improving phosphorus reductions in this basin, which historically has reported elevated nutrient levels in its runoff.

For more information:

- [BMPs and Source Controls](#)
- [Improving Water Quality](#)
- [Restoration Strategies for Clean Water for the Everglades](#)

Media Contact:

Randy Smith | rrsmith@sfwmd.gov | Office: 561-682-2800 | Cell: 561-389-3386

The South Florida Water Management District is a regional governmental agency that manages the water resources in the southern part of the state. It is the oldest and largest of the state's five water management districts. Our mission is to protect South Florida's water resources by balancing and improving flood control, water supply, water quality and natural systems.

STAY CONNECTED

Follow us on  **twitter**

 **Forward to a Friend**

SFWMD Newsroom

South Florida Water Management District, 3301 Gun Club Road, West Palm
Beach, FL 33406

[SafeUnsubscribe™ {recipient's email}](#)

[Forward this email](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [About our service provider](#)

Sent by waternews@sfwmd.gov in collaboration with



Try it free today