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quick facts on...

Everglades Restoration Progress

SEPTEMBER 2006

The South Florida Water Management District *is a regional, governmental agency that oversees the water resources in the southern half of the state. It is the oldest and largest of the state's five water management districts.*

Our Mission is to manage and protect water resources of the region by balancing and improving water quality, flood control, natural systems, and water supply.

The Florida Legislature, Florida Governor Jeb Bush and the South Florida Water Management District Governing Board have committed ***$3.2 billion*** *toward the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP),* ***$1.8 billion*** *toward the Acceler8 fast-track Everglades Restoration projects,* ***$2 billion*** *toward Everglades water quality improvements and* ***$200 million*** *toward the Lake Okeechobee & Estuary Recovery Plan (LOER). Also, through prior year appropriations, the State has provided* ***$80 million*** *for the Lake Okeechobee Protection Program.*

Water Quality Improvements

- The State of Florida has already invested more than $1 billion in water-quality improvements aimed at lowering phosphorus levels in Everglades-bound waters. This is being accomplished through the implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs) and Stormwater Treatment Areas (STAs).
- At present, more than 41,000 acres of land south of Lake Okeechobee have been converted to STAs. One of them, at almost 17,000 acres, is the largest constructed wetland in the world. More are being added: 18,000 additional acres of treatment wetlands will be constructed by 2009.
- Everglades Agricultural Area landowners continue to exceed the goal for BMPs of 25-percent phosphorus reduction. Last year saw a 44-percent reduction, more than double the requirement in Florida's Everglades Forever Act. To date, BMPs and STAs combined have prevented more that 2,485 metric tons of phosphorus from entering the Everglades.
- A decade ago, phosphorus concentrations leaving the EAA averaged 170 ppb. Today, through the implementation of these BMPs and STAs, they average about 40 ppb and are as low as 12 ppb, repeatedly surpassing the predictions for what could be achieved.

Land Acquisition for Restoration

- To date, more than half – 55 percent, or 210,597 acres – of lands needed to implement the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) are in state ownership.
- Aggressive land acquisition has averaged 23,000 acres per year. At this pace, all remaining CERP lands will be acquired within 8½ years.

Acceler8: Eight Fast-Tracked Projects

- **Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands Phase 1** project will restore natural water flows to Biscayne Bay and Biscayne National Park, and the **C-111 Spreader Canal** project to restore wetland and estuarine ecosystems – The *Acceler8* team has begun the design phase for both projects. Preliminary design of Biscayne Bay is underway, and the Basis of Design Report for the C-111 Spreader Canal is under review.
- **Water Preserve Areas** project will improve water availability and flow in the Everglades – Initial planning is complete for the C-9 and C-11 Impoundments and WCA 3A/3B Seepage Management. The Draft Basis of Design Report for the Fran Reich Preserve (Site 1 Impoundment) is complete and under review. Construction of the initial phase of Acme Basin B Discharge is underway with the remaining phase under design. This project will provide water to the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge and other parts of the Everglades.
- **Everglades Agricultural Area Reservoir A-1** project will capture, move and store regulatory releases from Lake Okeechobee, reducing harmful discharges to the estuaries – Test cell construction, investigations and water flow modeling are complete. Construction of the seepage canal is under way with design of the pump station and embankment progressing.
- **Everglades Agricultural Area Stormwater Treatment Area Expansion** project will further reduce phosphorus levels and help achieve state water quality standards for the Everglades – Construction of the Initial Expansion Projects is under way, expanding STA-2 in Compartment B and STA-5 and STA-6 in Compartment C. Basis of Design Reports are under development for the Build-out Projects, which complete the STA construction and result in 18,000 acres of additional treatment wetlands.

- **C-43 West (Caloosahatchee River) Reservoir and C-44 (St. Lucie Canal) Reservoir/STA** projects will improve the health of our estuaries – Test cell construction for both reservoirs is complete, with monitoring to continue through June 2007. Preliminary (30%) design for C-43 is under review. Intermediate (60%) design is underway for C-44.
- **Picayune Strand Restoration** project will reestablish natural sheet flow to enhance wetlands. Portions of the Prairie Canal have been filled in, and natural vegetation is returning to the area. Preliminary (30%) design of the pump stations is complete, and intermediate design is in progress. The Basis of Design Report is nearing completion for the levees. Final design for the initial phase of the road degrading component is complete, with construction to start in October 2006.

CERP/Critical Restoration Projects

- A significant portion of the **Western Tamiami Trail Culverts** critical restoration project construction was completed in May 2006. This work is included in the Picayune Strand Restoration Project Implementation Report which, once authorized by Congress, will make this work fully eligible for cost sharing.
- The **Indian River Lagoon – South Restoration** will create habitat and water quality improvements in the St. Lucie Estuary and the Indian River Lagoon. It is awaiting final authorization from Congress under the 2006 Water Resources Development Act and subsequent funding for construction. Topographic and geotechnical surveys have been completed, and several miles of drainage ditches have been filled, initiating wetland restoration in the Allapattah Natural Storage Area. One vital component, the C-44 Reservoir, has been funded and fast-tracked by the state in its *Acceler8* initiative.
- Construction of the **Western C-11 Water Quality Improvement** critical restoration project was completed in 2005. The S-9A Pump Station and S-381 structure on the C-11 canal have been turned over from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to the South Florida Water Management District for operation and maintenance. This project helps to improve the quality of water discharged from the C-11 basin into Water Conservation Area 3A.
- The South Florida Water Management District continues with the **Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) Pilot Projects**, which will investigate technology previously untried on the regional scale envisioned in the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan. The South Florida Water Management District initiated construction of the **Hillsboro ASR Pilot** project in mid-2006. Construction of the Kissimmee River ASR Pilot by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was also initiated. Cycle testing of those facilities will begin in 2007.
- Construction on the G-161 water control structure, a component of the **North Palm Beach County – Part 1** Project, is under way and will be completed in 2006. Construction is continuing for the L-8 Reservoir, and currently over 20,000 acre-feet of storage are available. When all components are complete, this project will increase water deliveries to the Grassy Waters Preserve, Loxahatchee Slough and the Northwest Fork of the Loxahatchee River and reduce high-volume discharges to the Lake Worth Lagoon.
- The **Southwest Florida and Florida Bay/Florida Keys Feasibility Studies** are investigating conceptual designs and making regional recommendations for meeting the future needs of agricultural, urban and environmental users. This includes determining the modifications needed to successfully restore and protect the water quality and ecological conditions of Florida Bay and the Florida Keys' reef tract.
- **Ten Mile Creek Water Preserve Area** critical restoration project construction was completed in April 2006. This project moderates high-volume freshwater flows and salinity fluctuations in the St. Lucie Estuary and reduces sediment and nutrient loads to benefit estuarine habitat.
- The **Lake Trafford Restoration** critical restoration project is 80% complete. This lake is vital to the Corkscrew Swamp ecosystem, which covers 11,000 acres. Approximately four million cubic yards of organic sediment are being dredged from the lake bottom to improve water quality. Completion is scheduled for November 2006.
- Completion of the **Lake Okeechobee Water Retention/ Phosphorus Remova**l critical restoration project was celebrated in April 2006. Consisting of two new Stormwater Treatment Areas (STAs) within the Taylor Creek/Nubbin Slough basin, this project will improve the quality of water flowing into Lake Okeechobee.

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