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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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For more information on this subject, scan this QR code using a barcode reader app on your smartphone.



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SFWMD Taking Action to Store Water Headed to Lake Okeechobee and Coastal Estuaries

Dispersed water management, other strategies being used

With Lake Okeechobee's water level continuing to rise from months of above-average rainfall, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) is taking action to capture and store water throughout the system. In addition to utilizing regional public projects to store excess water, the District is working with property owners to retain water on their land rather than drain it, to accept and detain regional runoff, or do both. Holding water on these lands is one tool to help reduce the amount of water flowing into Lake Okeechobee and/or discharged to the coastal estuaries during the current high water conditions throughout South Florida.

Employing Dispersed Water Management and Regional Projects

- Since 2005, through a combination of Dispersed Water Management public and private projects, approximately 61,300 acre-feet of water retention/storage has been made available through cooperative agreements, interim lands projects, or environmental services projects.
- An additional 72,000 acre-feet of storage has been created through other regional public facilities, including reservoirs, restoration projects and stormwater treatment areas.
- Based on available capacity, water is being actively held at all locations where Dispersed Water Management and regional projects are in place.

Creating Additional Temporary Storage

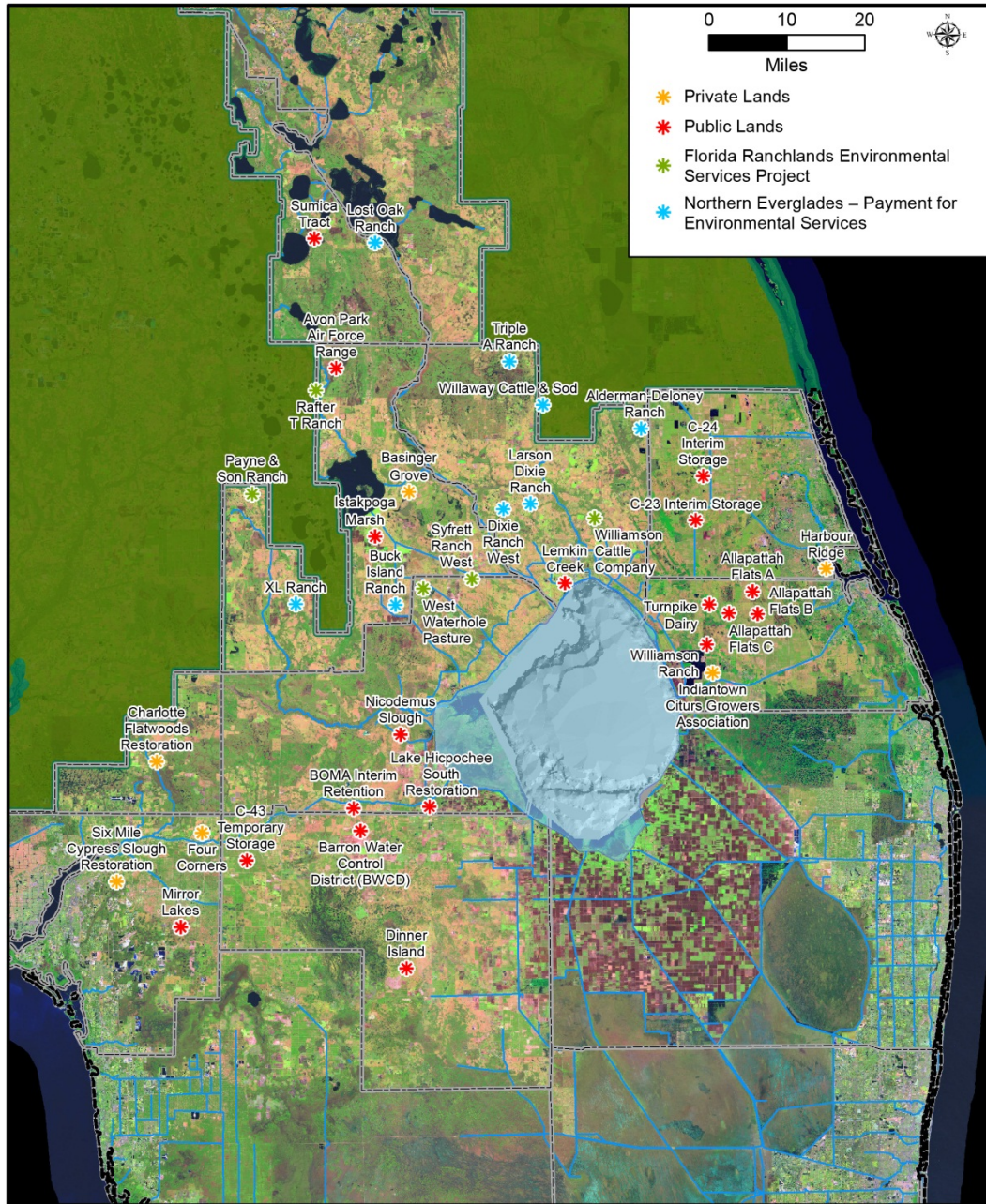
- The District is also storing water on pre-construction project lands where possible. For example, water is being pumped onto 3,200 acres at the site of the Caloosahatchee River (C-43) West Basin Storage Reservoir, a future Everglades restoration project in Hendry County. This site has been used previously for storage under similar high water conditions.
- A temporary pump was added to the District's BOMA Property, located along the Caloosahatchee River, to discharge additional water from the river to on-site storage areas. This pump enhances the capacity of the existing pumps being used at the existing Dispersed Water Management project.
- The District continues to pursue agreements with landowners to pump water from the watershed onto their lands in exchange for reimbursement of direct costs.
- Other landowners and local drainage districts in the Northern Everglades, including the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie River basins, have been contacted to see if they are able to retain/store water by temporarily modifying their permitted water control structures to limit discharge. While these landowners and drainage districts are cooperating wherever possible, viable opportunities are limited as most of the system is already saturated.
- South of the lake, farmers in the Everglades Agricultural Area and local drainage districts are voluntarily attempting to hold water back and store it when they can.

(more)

Operating the Regional System

- For more than 30 days, the District has been maximizing all flood control discharges throughout the system. With daily rainfall, all coastal structures are continuing to discharge local basin runoff. The District continues to make maximum discharges from all the Water Conservation Areas (WCAs), which remain above schedule.

For more details and photos on how the District is maximizing available water storage, visit www.sfwmd.gov/storage.



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Dispersed Water Management Projects

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