

# Everglades Agricultural Area Reservoir Water Reservation Q&A

## Reservation Rule Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. Question: What is the difference between an MFL and a Water Reservation?

**Answer:** *Minimum Flows and Minimum Water Levels (MFLs) are flows or levels at which the water resources or the ecology of the area would experience significant harm from further withdrawals.*

*A Water Reservation sets aside water for the protection of fish and wildlife or public health and safety [Section 373.223(4), Florida Statutes]. Reserved water is unavailable for allocation to consumptive uses. The conceptual relationship between the two are in the Figure 1 below. A Water Reservation protects water needed to aid restoration and is set at the “no harm” standard, whereas MFLs are set at the point at which significant harm occurs.*

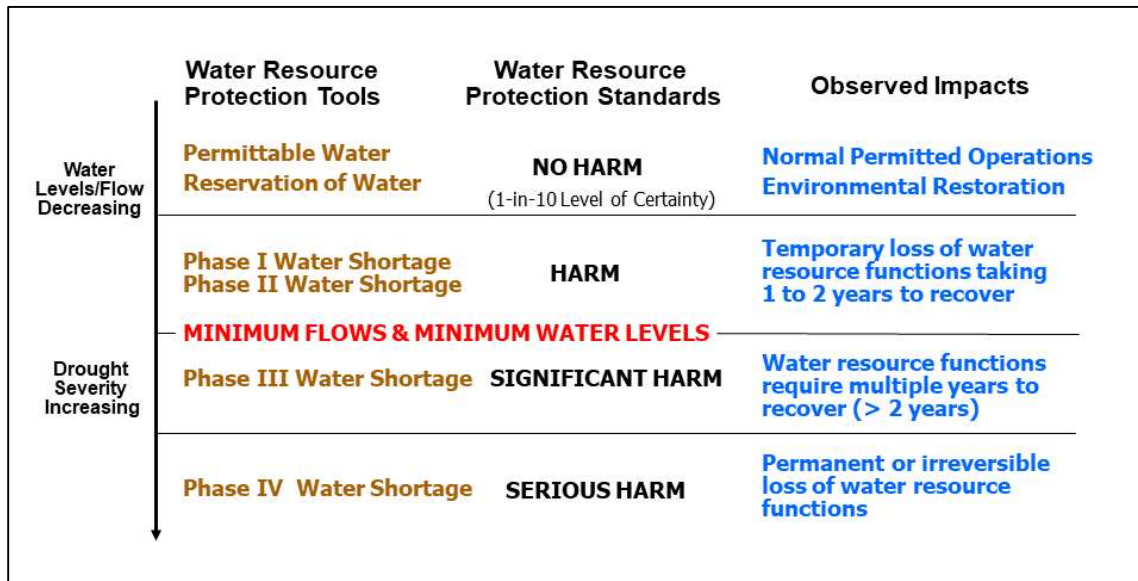


Figure 1. Conceptual Relationship among Harm, Significant Harm and Serious Harm.

### 2. Question: How does the reservation rule protect water for the Everglades?

**Answer:** *The rule prevents consumptive use permit applicants from withdrawing water conveyed through the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) Reservoir’s S-624, S-625, and S-626 structures to the Central Everglades. By preventing consumptive use of water discharged by the reservoir through specified structures, the water remains available for Everglades restoration. The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD or District) Governing Board has directed staff to initiate reservation rule development for the EAA Reservoir. The draft rule will be based on information and analysis for the reservoir captured in the Technical Document (SFWMD 2020), Post Authorization Change Report (PACR; SFWMD 2018), and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS; United States Army Corps of Engineers [USACE] 2020).*

*Multipurpose operation of the EAA Reservoir also will enhance regional water supplies to supplement irrigation in the EAA basin, which increases the water available for Everglades*

*restoration and further reduces harmful estuary discharges. Water to enhance regional water supplies is released through the reservoir's S-628 structure.*

**3. Question: How does the reservation rule capture the multipurpose operation of the reservoir?**

**Answer:** *The reservation rule prevents consumptive use permit applicants from withdrawing water from the EAA Reservoir and the water conveyed through the reservoir's S-624, S-625, and S-626 structures. The Draft Project Operating Manual included in the PACR captured these operations. The operating manual will be updated during construction of the reservoir. This is a joint responsibility of the USACE and SFWMD. The reservation rule and operating manual will be based on information and analyses captured in the Technical Document (SFWMD 2020), PACR (SFWMD 2018), and EIS (USACE 2020).*

**4. Question: How much water will the reservation rule protect?**

**Answer:** *The reservation rule will protect all surface water released from the EAA Reservoir directed to the Lower East Coast Everglades waterbodies through the S-624, S-625, and S-626 structures (Figure 2). Model simulations of the EAA Reservoir, together with existing and planned infrastructure and a modified Lake Okeechobee schedule, indicates the EAA Reservoir could convey 825,000 acre-feet of surface water on an average annual basis. The volume of water the EAA Reservoir conveys to the natural system will vary due to rainfall and stages within the reservoir and the adjacent facilities, such as the A-2 STA, A-1 Flow Equalization Basin (FEB), STA-2, STA-3/4, and Water Conservation Area 3A (WCA-3A). The project will provide an average annual 370,000 ac-ft of additional water beyond the previously authorized Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP) in 2016 to be delivered to the Central Everglades to maximize benefits for fish and wildlife. Once the EAA Reservoir is constructed and tested, the SFWMD will review the Water Reservation. The rules will be revised, as necessary, to account for the actual water made available (compared to what was anticipated in the PACR) once the reservoir is declared operational by the SFWMD Governing Board.*

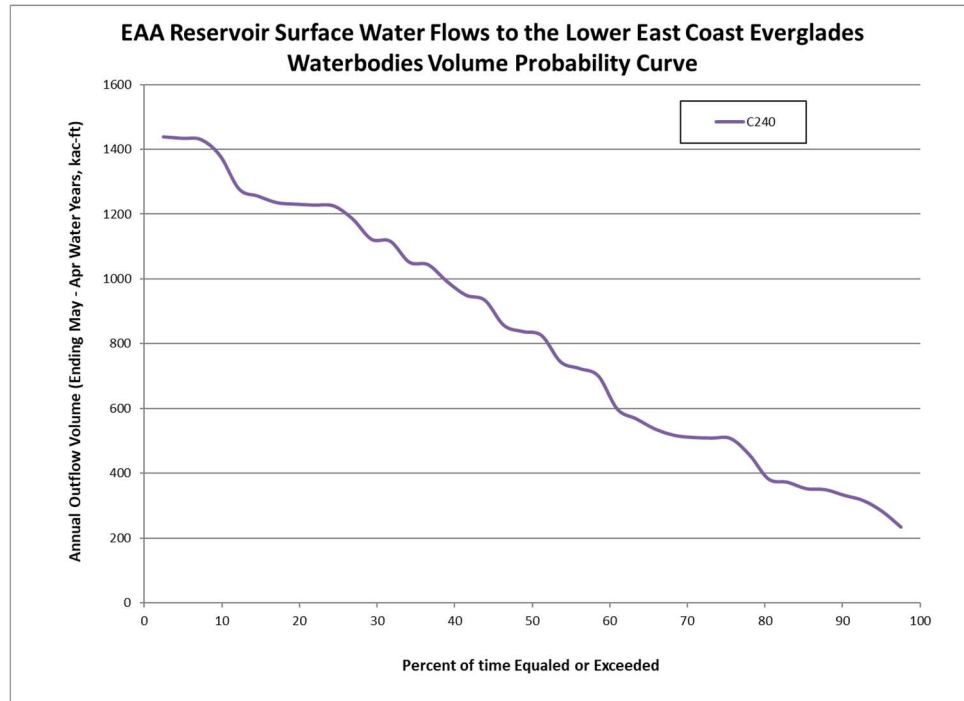


Figure 2. Everglades Agricultural Area Reservoir outflow volume probability curve to the Lower East Coast Everglades waterbodies from the Alternative C240 model simulation (From: SFWMD 2020).

**5. Question: Does this Water Reservation meet the Savings Clause, Section 601(h)(1) of the Water Resources Development Act of 2000?**

**Answer:** *The Water Reservation will not impede or help meet the Savings Clause. The authorized purpose from the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) is for the restoration, preservation, and protection of the South Florida ecosystem while providing for other water-related needs of the region, including water supply and flood protection. The Savings Clause analysis protects users of existing legal sources of water supply and levels of flood protection. The water supply level of service for the Lake Okeechobee Service Area (LOSA) will be preserved by the project and will not be changed by the reservation. There was an increase in the volume delivered to LOSA from Lake Okeechobee during water shortage events in the model simulation. Over the entire period simulated, the average annual volume delivered to LOSA during dry events increased by 6,000 ac-ft with inclusion of the reservoir. By virtue of water being stored in EAA Reservoir, under certain conditions, additional water will reach existing legal water users in the EAA basin.*

**6. Question: How does this Water Reservation rule align with the SFWMD's core mission?**

**Answer:** *One of the SFWMD's missions is restoration of the Everglades. CERP is the road map for restoration of the Everglades. Congress approved CERP in the Water Resources Development Act of 2000. The Act and Section 373.470, Florida Statutes, require the SFWMD to legally protect the water generated by CERP projects before executing a construction cost-share agreement between the USACE and SFWMD. However, any unreserved volumes of water made available by CERP projects may be available to enhance water supplies. The provision of water to existing and future reasonable-beneficial uses also is a core District mission.*

7. **Question:** What methods were used to complete the analyses required by the Water Resources Development Act of 2000 and Florida state law for project assurances and the Savings Clause?

**Answer:** For project assurances, the quantity, timing, and distribution of water provided by the project for the natural system is identified. Like all CERP projects, a probabilistic approach was selected during planning and is consistent with the CERP draft guidance memoranda. This approach used a volume probability curve based on the period of record (1965 to 2005) simulated with the hydrologic Regional Simulation Model. This curve shows the annual outflow volumes from the reservoir that are conveyed to the Lower East Coast Everglades waterbodies with the Alternative C240 model simulation. This process is documented in Annex B of the Project Implementation Report (USACE and SFWMD 2014) and PACR (SFWMD 2018).

8. **Question:** Why is a reservation rule being developed for the EAA Reservoir and not for the A-2 STA?

**Answer:** The purpose of the reservation rule is to protect the water needed for fish and wildlife from future consumptive uses. The EAA Reservoir is a restoration project designed to enhance the hydroperiod of the Central Everglades, thereby increasing the abundance and diversity of fish and wildlife. Stormwater treatment areas (STAs) are water quality projects designed to help meet state water quality standards. Water stored in the reservoir provides the SFWMD with operational flexibility to ensure the STAs do not lose their treatment capabilities.

## **Operational Questions**

9. **Question:** How does the SFWMD envision operation of the reservoir through the outflow structures that provide water for fish and wildlife and for water supply? What stages determine water for fish and wildlife versus that for water supply to the EAA?

10. **Answer:** A Draft Project Operating Manual was included in the PACR (SFWMD 2018). According to that draft, only when the water stage in the EAA Reservoir is above 8.2 feet deep and the Miami and/or North New River canal stages are below the maintenance stages can water stored in the EAA Reservoir be used for water supply deliveries to meet EAA irrigation needs. The Draft Project Operating Manual also specified that water stored in the EAA Reservoir below 8.2 feet in depth would be used only to meet CERP restoration flows. **Question:** What is the process for developing a final project operating manual in the future?

**Answer:** Once USACE completes construction, the USACE will begin the operational and testing phase. This phase will take 1-2 years to complete to ensure the pumping facilities are tested and working correctly. During this time frame, the SFWMD will work directly with the USACE to develop a final project operating manual.

**11. Question: Why does the EAA Reservoir return water to the EAA basin?**

**Answer:** *The modeling evaluations completed in the PACR (SFWMD 2018) show that the full suite of environmental benefits to downstream fish and wildlife occurs when the EAA Reservoir is filled and emptied multiple times throughout the year. Discharges through the S-628 structure provide more operational flexibility to store water in the reservoir, which enables 370,000 ac-ft of additional water on average annually beyond the previously authorized CEPP in 2016 to be delivered to the Central Everglades to maximize benefits for fish and wildlife. If water is not moved out of the reservoir using any available structure, then the volume of water discharged to the northern estuaries could be increased and the volume delivered to the Everglades could be reduced, along with benefits to fish and wildlife. In addition, during water supply operations, the full inflow/outflow canal conveyance capacity is not being used. The reservoir could continue to be filled using Lake Okeechobee water that otherwise would be discharged to the northern estuaries.*

**12. Question: Why not discharge all the surface water within the EAA Reservoir to the environment to benefit fish and wildlife?**

**Answer:** *The original congressional authorization of the EAA Reservoir has multipurpose CERP benefits to the environment and water supply needs of the region (USACE and SFWMD 1999). The EAA Reservoir combines new and existing storage to provide operational flexibility and efficient use of the available storage. Planning studies and modeling efforts demonstrate that multipurpose water storage facilities operated in an integrated manner result in more benefits than single-purpose facilities operating in isolation. The EAA Reservoir provides water for environmental and other water-related needs of the system consistent with CERP's Component G. The PACR (SFWMD 2018) supplements existing legal sources of water while providing a new source of water to the Everglades. The water supplied, and benefits accrued to the Central Everglades, depend on conveying water from the reservoir to both the Central Everglades and EAA basin in order to reduce regulatory releases from Lake Okeechobee.*

**13. Question: How will the ongoing process to revise the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule affect future operations of the EAA Reservoir and the Water Reservation?**

**Answer:** *The EAA Reservoir will not be included in the current Lake Okeechobee System Operating Manual (LOSOM) effort. The PACR (SFWMD 2018) recognized that once the EAA Reservoir is in service, the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule would need to be revised to achieve the full benefits of the reservoir.*

*Section 373.223(4), Florida Statutes, states that reservations shall be subject to periodic review and revision in the light of changed conditions. If the revised lake schedule affects the Water Reservation in the future, the SFWMD can review and revise the reservation rule to address changed conditions.*

- 14. Question: CERP indicates the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule will be modified to take advantage of additional storage facilities identified in the construction features. Is this being done as part of the LOSOM effort?**

*Answer: No, the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule will be revised at some point during construction of the EAA Reservoir, after the USACE completes LOSOM.*

- 15. Question: What happens when the environment is experiencing extremes in water years (i.e., prolonged dry periods and wet periods)? How does this impact the Water Reservation?**

*Answer: The water reserved from allocation is based on operations to deliver water for natural systems restoration. The operations simulated a period of 41 years, including extreme dry and extreme wet conditions. The volume of water the EAA Reservoir conveys to the natural system will vary due to rainfall and stages within the reservoir and the adjacent facilities, such as the A-2 STA, A-1 Flow Equalization Basin (FEB), STA-2, STA-3/4, and Water Conservation Area 3A (WCA-3A). The stages within these facilities and WCA-3A will dictate the actual volumes delivered to the natural system. As presently drafted, the proposed reservation rule accounts for this variability by reserving all water delivered to the Central Everglades for the protection of fish and wildlife.*

- 16. Question: Is there a priority in distribution from the Water Reservation? What happens when there is a shortage during the dry season?**

*Answer: The reservation rule will not speak to operational decisions, which will be contained in the operating manual associated with the finished project. Restoration projects and associated reservation rules are not designed to drought-proof the natural system. Natural systems need variability, including times of stress, to ensure healthy and sustainable fish and wildlife populations. However, to meet the restoration goals identified in the PACR (SFWMD 2018), all water discharged from the EAA Reservoir via the S-624, S-625, and S-626 structures is protected from consumptive use (Figure 2). Model simulations of the EAA Reservoir, together with existing and planned infrastructure and a modified Lake Okeechobee schedule, indicates the EAA Reservoir could convey 825,000 acre-feet of surface water on an average annual basis. The volume of water the EAA Reservoir conveys to the natural system will vary due to rainfall and stages within the reservoir and the adjacent facilities, such as the A-2 STA, A-1 Flow Equalization Basin (FEB), STA-2, STA-3/4, and Water Conservation Area 3A (WCA-3A)*

- 17. Question: The Integrated Delivery Schedule shows the A-2 STA will be completed prior to the EAA Reservoir. How will the A-2 STA be operated in the interim without the reservoir?**

*Answer: Operation of the A-2 STA, independent of the EAA Reservoir, is under development. The prospective water reservation rule focuses on the EAA Reservoir. The reservoir stores and conveys water to the adjacent STA-3/4, STA-2, and A-2 STA for treatment and then discharges the treated water to the Everglades Protection Area, where the target fish and wildlife reside.*

## Water Supply Questions

### 18. Question: How do Water Reservations affect the SFWMD's water use planning?

**Answer:** Section 373.709, Florida Statutes, requires water management districts to ensure sufficient water will be available for all current and future reasonable-beneficial uses and the natural systems. Water supply planning recognizes the Water Reservations developed by the SFWMD for the protection of fish and wildlife. The reservations ensure there will be sufficient water to meet the needs of the natural system under the restoration target set in the PACR.

### 19. Question: Under what conditions will the EAA Reservoir return water to the EAA canals via the inflow/outflow canal?

**Answer:** A Draft Project Operating Manual was included in the PACR (SFWMD 2018). Discharges may be made from the EAA Reservoir through the S-628 structure to the Miami and/or North New River canals via the reservoir's inflow/outflow canal (Figure 3). According to the Draft Project Operating Manual, only when the water stage in the EAA Reservoir is above 8.2 feet in depth and the Miami and/or North New River canal stages are below the maintenance stages can water stored in the EAA Reservoir be used for water supply deliveries to meet EAA irrigation needs. Based on the additional water stored in the EAA Reservoir and the Draft Project Operating Manual, 82,000 ac-ft of water on average annually could be conveyed through the S-628 structure to the Miami and/or North New River basins to maintain canal stages.

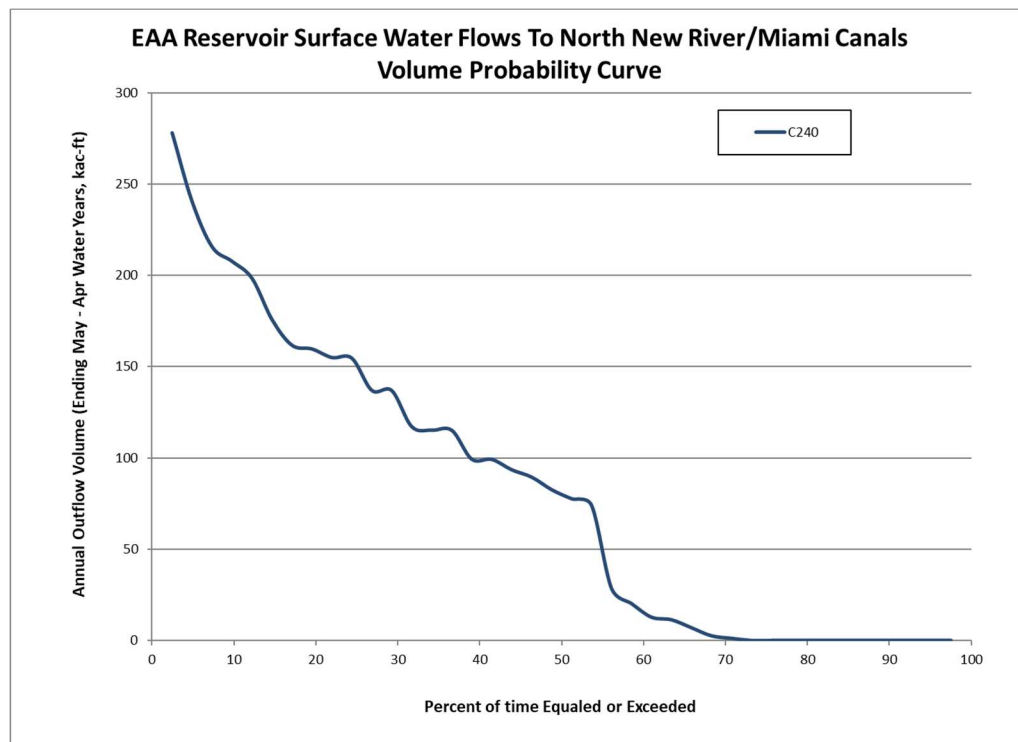


Figure 3. Everglades Agricultural Area Reservoir outflow volume probability curve to the EAA basin from the Alternative C240 model simulation.

**20. Question: Will the reservoir restore a 1-in-10 drought level of certainty to users in the EAA?**

**Answer:** *No, operations of the reservoir will not achieve a 1-in-10 drought level of certainty to existing legal users within the EAA. Water stored in the EAA canals would be available to existing permitted users in LOSA, including the EAA, in addition to water stored in Lake Okeechobee. Discharges may be made from the EAA Reservoir through the S-628 structure to the Miami and/or North New River canals via the reservoir's inflow/outflow canal (Figure 3).*

**21. Question: One of the purposes of the EAA Reservoir is to meet EAA irrigation demands. How will this be done when water is being reserved and sent to the Everglades?**

**Answer:** *The EAA Reservoir Water Reservation reserves from allocation all surface water released from the EAA Reservoir that is directed to the Lower East Coast Everglades waterbodies through the S-624, S-625, and S-626 structures. This volume of water is for the protection of fish and wildlife. The Draft Project Operating Manual contained in the PACR (SFWMD 2018) provides an increase of approximately 370,000 ac-ft in average annual flow to the Central Everglades beyond what was previously authorized in CEPP in 2016 to be delivered. The EAA Reservoir also enhances regional water supplies to supplement irrigation, which increases the water available to meet environmental needs. Water to enhance regional water supplies will be released through the S-628 structure.*

**22. Question: STAs provide habitat for fish and wildlife and vegetation in the STAs provides a critical water quality improvement function. Does the Water Reservation include protecting water for the STAs so they do not dry out?**

**Answer:** *The statutory authority for Water Reservations is limited to the volume necessary to protect fish and wildlife as well as public health and safety. STAs do not provide water needed for fish and wildlife but do support meeting an important water quality goal. Water will continue to be available from the A-1 FEB and Lake Okeechobee to prevent the existing STAs from drying out. The EAA Reservoir will be another source of water to prevent the A-2 STA, STA-3/4, and STA-2 from drying out, and this volume within the EAA Reservoir is reserved.*

**23. Question: If water captured in the EAA Reservoir is used to supplement EAA irrigation, is that a source shift?**

**Answer:** *No, the source of all water captured in the EAA Reservoir is Lake Okeechobee or EAA basin runoff, which are the same sources available today and will continue to be available to existing legal users in the EAA basin.*

**24. Question: Did CEPP provide additional water for water supply to the Lower East Coast Service Area?**

**Answer:** *The Project Implementation Report (USACE and SFWMD 2014) states "[t]he project also increases the amount of water available for agricultural, municipal and industrial use in Lower East Coast Service Area (LECSA) 2 (Broward County) and LECSA 3 (Miami-Dade County) and maintains existing water supply performance for agricultural users in the Lake Okeechobee Service Area (LOSA) and the Seminole Tribe of Florida." When the CEPP components that make this volume of water available to LECSAs 2 and 3 are constructed and the features are deemed operational by*



the SFWMD Governing Board, the Governing Board may certify this water as available for allocation.

## **Regulatory Questions**

- 25. Question: What regulatory measures are in place to ensure the water discharged from the EAA Reservoir to the Miami and North New River canals will be available for water supply?**

**Answer:** Permittees in the EAA rely on Lake Okeechobee and runoff captured in the EAA canals as their sources for supplemental irrigation water and will continue to do so in the future. LOSA currently is subject to a Restricted Allocation Area rule that limits increased withdrawals from Lake Okeechobee and connected canals in the EAA, such as the Miami and North New River canals. The Restricted Allocation Area rule prevents new consumptive uses to withdraw water from canals and other waterbodies. If the Lake Okeechobee regulation schedule is modified such that the LOSA Restricted Allocation Area rule must also be modified, the SFWMD will review the rule and make any necessary changes in light of the changed conditions.

- 26. Question: How does a reservation rule impact existing and future consumptive uses or permittees? How does this affect tribal communities, agricultural use, and the public?**

**Answer:** The Water Reservation does not negatively impact existing consumptive use permit holders. Future consumptive use permit applicants must provide an impact assessment that demonstrates the user will not withdraw reserved water. The Water Reservation does not affect tribal communities or the public at large. The SFWMD will continue to meet its obligations to the Seminole Tribe of Florida established by the Water Rights Compact. Additionally, the SFWMD will operate the A-2 STA to ensure the water quality-based effluent limit is met.

- 27. Question: How will existing legal users within the footprint of the project be affected once construction begins?**

**Answer:** Existing legal users may continue to use water until project construction begins as long as they hold valid leases and consumptive use permits. When existing activities on the land are terminated/reduced and the SFWMD takes control of a parcel, the consumptive use permit will be cancelled or modified, as appropriate.

## **Water Quality Questions**

- 28. Question: The EAA Reservoir will receive water from Lake Okeechobee and runoff from the EAA. What assurances are there that toxic blue-green algae will not develop in the reservoir? Why is a treatment system to reduce nutrients and algae not being investigated like what is being done for the C-43 Reservoir?**

**Answer:** The STA facilities adjacent to the reservoir are designed to provide critical water quality treatment to prevent algal blooms and reduce phosphorus levels before discharging water into the natural system. There is an ongoing effort to evaluate water quality technologies for operation of the C-43 Reservoir, a deep storage facility similar to the EAA Reservoir. The SFWMD and other agencies are evaluating proposals for innovative technologies to reduce phosphorus levels in water entering Lake Okeechobee. Additionally, the USACE and other agencies are testing

technologies to remove blue-green algae (e.g., flocculation/dissolved air floatation, ozone nano-bubble injection). When the EAA Reservoir is completed, these technologies could be proven and may be incorporated into a treatment system for the reservoir's incoming water.

**29. Question: How will the SFWMD ensure water being reserved and sent to the Everglades will achieve the water quality-based effluent limit and avoid overloading the STAs?**

**Answer:** The PACR (SFWMD 2018) used the Dynamic Model for Stormwater Treatment Areas in the planning study. The model is a long-term, planning-level tool most suited for sizing STAs and simulating expected outflow nutrient concentrations. This modeling of treatment facilities, in combination with established operational regimes, predicts a long-term average outflow total phosphorus flow-weighted mean concentration of 13 parts per billion or less from each STA. Not exceeding this modeling threshold metric is the best predictor that each STA will meet the water quality-based effluent limit. Proposed operations of the A-2 STA and EAA Reservoir will efficiently integrate with the existing state facilities (i.e., the A-1 FEB, STA-2, and STA-3/4) and meet the water quality-based effluent limit.

Operational decisions regarding the volume of EAA Reservoir discharges sent to STA-3/4, STA-2, and the A-2 STA will consider the vegetative health of the receiving treatment cells as well as their maximum monthly and annual limitations. Harmful over loadings, damaging flows, and detrimentally high water (combination of depth and duration) can affect vegetative health in the STAs.

**30. Question: What changes in water quality conditions are expected to occur in WCA-1 and WCA-2 with the additional flows provided by the EAA Reservoir?**

**Answer:** Water quality conditions in WCA-1 are not expected to be significantly changed by construction and operation of the EAA Reservoir and A-2 STA. Neither facility has features that influence flow and treatment within the eastern flow path. Nutrient and sulfate loading conditions in WCA-2 should improve somewhat given the reduction in hydrologic load.

**31. Question: How would a potential increase in total phosphorus loading from enhanced surface water volumes affect water quality in the Central Everglades?**

**Answer:** While surface water volumes will increase, the concentration of phosphorus delivered to the Everglades Protection Area will continue to meet water quality standards. Increased flow volumes and new flow patterns may result in water quality changes at some measuring stations in the short term due to changed conditions. However, backfilling of the northern portion of the Miami Canal will result in a more balanced ecosystem in northern WCA-3A, as described in the CEPP Project Implementation Report (USACE and SFWMD 2014). Reduced incidence of dryout throughout northern WCA-3 and Everglades National Park should limit peat oxidation and nutrient remobilization, which will lead to peat soil accretion and nutrient sequestration. Long term, surface water redistribution over the marsh and improved hydroperiod should result in improvements.

## **Environmental Questions**

- 32. Question: Florida Bay suffers from lack of fresh water. How much water will be reserved and protected for Florida Bay?**

**Answer:** *The EAA Reservoir Water Reservation increases average annual surface water flows from southeastern Everglades National Park towards Florida Bay by 12,000 ac-ft compared to today, which will lead to a small reduction (0.5 to 3.7 parts per thousand) in annual average salinities across the bay. This improvement provides minor but long-term increases in freshwater flows to Florida Bay. Lowering salinity levels to better encompass the seagrass salinity tolerance range could result in greater abundance and diversity of seagrasses and other estuarine plant and animal species.*

- 33. Question: Given South Florida has a tropical climate with dry and wet seasons, why is a drydown event a concern?**

**Answer:** *The winter-spring “drydown” is typical in South Florida, where a discrete dry season is essential in maintaining the mosaic of vegetation types needed by a variety of wetland fauna. However, the temporal (duration, period) and spatial extents of drydown events are increasing due to the existing water management system, removing natural connectivity, creating preferential flow ways, and diverting upstream inflow. For example, levees on the southern edges of WCAs cause “ponding” as southward-flowing water piles up, while other areas become shallow and dry. Compared to pre-drainage conditions, the Everglades is drier by 4 to 10 months, and its depth range is lower by 0.3 to 0.6 meter. Drydown can expose organic topsoil to microbial oxidation and extensive peat fires, which would lead to a loss of soil elevation.*

- 34. Question: What kind of metrics does the SFWMD use to assess hydrologic conditions?**

**Answer:** *To assess hydrologic conditions, the SFWMD uses three primary metrics: hydroperiod, stage, and hydropattern. The hydroperiod is the duration and frequency of inundation in a wetland area. The hydroperiod represents an important seasonal hydrological pulse that determines variability in soil moisture and drives wetland vegetation diversity and productivity.*

*Stage (water level) is the height of the water surface above a point of reference (datum). Stages in a water body are influenced by the size of the contributing drainage basin, the amount of rainfall in the basin, and the balance between inflow and outflow from surface water and groundwater.*

*The hydropattern is the duration, timing, and distribution of flooding (i.e., the time series of water levels) in a wetland. A consistent hydropattern is critical for maintaining a ridge and slough landscape and various ecological communities in wetlands.*

- 35. Question: What is the ridge and slough landscape? Will the resumption of sheetflow and seasonal hydroperiod patterns help restore the complex mosaic of vegetation communities in the ridge and slough landscape?**

**Answer:** *The Everglades ridge and slough landscape is a patterned peatland with parallel drainage topography created as a result of water flow, sediment dynamics, and differential production and decomposition. The response of a vegetation community to improving hydrologic conditions*

*depends on the nature, magnitude, and consistency of hydrologic alterations. Conceptual and numerical studies suggest restoration of water depth, duration, and flow in an area with topographic heterogeneity likely produces a stable ridge and slough landscape.*

**36. Question: How does construction of the EAA Reservoir and A-2 STA affect mammals that depend on upland habitat in the Central Everglades?**

*Answer: Over-drained areas are anticipated to be rehydrated, triggering a vegetation transition from upland to wetland habitat. High water is a concern for deer and other upland wildlife species, although they are mobile and can move in response to high water conditions. Habitat quality in higher ground, such as levees, generally is less desirable for mammals, and predation is more of a threat, resulting in increased mortality.*

**37. Question: Does the SFWMD expect CEPP and the additional flows provided by the EAA Reservoir to meet the CERP restoration goals/targets?**

*Answer: The hydrological target for CERP is 300,000 ac-ft of additional “new” water. The EAA Reservoir will deliver 370,000 ac-ft. However, this new water does not get distributed to every Everglades region equally. CEPP is expected to provide substantial hydrological and ecological benefits, primarily in WCA-3 and Shark River Slough. The northern Everglades (i.e., WCA- 1 and WCA-2A) and coastal ecotones of Everglades National Park are expected to receive relatively less hydrological improvement and fewer ecological benefits. Surface water beyond that provided by CERP may be needed to realize the full suite of Everglades restoration expectations.*

## **Recreation Question**

**38. Question: Will boats be allowed in the reservoir? Will recreational fishing and duck hunting be allowed in the EAA Reservoir and/or STAs?**

*Answer: The following activities will be permitted in the project area and are well-suited to the environmental purposes of the project: bicycle riding, horseback riding, nature study, wildlife viewing, hiking/walking, motor boating, canoeing/kayaking, sailing, fishing, and hunting.*

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