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## **DEP ISSUES EVERGLADES PERMIT FOR STORMWATER STORAGE AND FLOW**

**~Permit to South Florida Water Management District continues work on Everglades restoration~**

**PALM BEACH COUNTY**~ Today, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection issued a permit to the South Florida Water Management District to construct the L-8 Flow Equalization Basin, a structure designed to store 15 billion gallons of water so that it can be treated and moved south to the Everglades. It is one of three storage components of Governor Rick Scott's Everglades Water Quality Restoration Plan.

When construction is complete, stormwater - which at peak flow times is released to the ocean - will be safely held in a deep reservoir and later cleaned and redirected to the Everglades. It will allow water managers the flexibility to store stormwater that under certain peak flow scenarios may have been diverted to the ocean or water conservation areas -- and direct flows for treatment prior to entering the Everglades.

"The Department and the South Florida Water Management District continue to move forward with Everglades restoration projects with the support of Governor Scott," said DEP Secretary Herschel T. Vinyard Jr. "This project will allow for additional water storage and cleaner water moving south, which will ensure the proper nourishment of the River of Grass."

The L-8 flow equalization basin will use a 53-foot-deep reservoir capable of storing approximately 45,000 acre-feet of water, or the equivalent of 22,500 Olympic-sized swimming pools of water. The seven interconnected underground cells will be utilized to effectively manage basin stormwater. During storm events and other peak flow events, the reservoir will act as a storage feature. During dry periods, the reservoir will deliver flows for optimized treatment prior to those flows entering the Everglades.

The below-ground reservoir was a former rock mine site located in central Palm Beach County. The location's unique geology allows for deep, below-ground storage, reduces water loss through seepage and minimizes levee safety concerns. Construction of embankment protection features is currently underway. The permit authorizes construction of a permanent discharge pump station and inflow feature. Construction of

the pump station and inflow spillway is scheduled for November 2013 through April 2015.

"Moving forward with construction of the L-8 Flow Equalization Basin reflects yet another milestone in improving the quality of water flowing south into the Everglades," said South Florida Water Management District Executive Director Blake Guillory. "The District is committed to delivering this project on schedule in order to realize as soon as possible the important environmental benefits it will provide."

The project is a result of Governor Scott's direction to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the South Florida Water Management District to develop a plan to address water quality concerns associated with existing flows to the Everglades Protection Area. The plan was presented to United States Environmental Protection Agency in late 2011. After coordination with EPA, the final plan was finalized by the Department in September of 2012.

The Governor's landmark water quality plan includes:

- 6,500 acres of additional stormwater treatment areas, which are man-made managed wetlands that naturally remove phosphorus from water prior to the water being discharged into the Everglades.
- 110,000 acre-feet of water storage capabilities in flow equalization basins, or reservoirs that work with the proposed and existing stormwater treatment areas to regulate flows and optimize treatment efficiency.
- Other components of the plan include engineering projects in existing treatment areas and the modification of conveyance features necessary to move the water through the South Florida Water Management District's massive flood control and water delivery features.

#### **About the Florida Department of Environmental Protection**

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection is the state's principal environmental agency, created to protect, conserve and manage Florida's environment and natural resources. The Department enforces federal and state environmental laws, protects Florida's air and water quality, cleans up pollution, regulates solid waste management, promotes pollution prevention and acquires environmentally-sensitive lands for preservation. The agency also maintains a statewide system of parks, trails and aquatic preserves. To view the Department's website log on to [www.dep.state.fl.us](http://www.dep.state.fl.us).

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