

December 2013



## *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.



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



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## SFWMD 2013 Accomplishment Highlights

### Improving Water Quality and Protecting Natural Systems

- Everglades Stormwater Treatment Areas (STAs) treated 1.16 million acre-feet of water, the equivalent of 378 billion gallons. These highly effective wetlands retained 84 percent of phosphorus, preventing excess amounts of this nutrient from reaching Everglades ecosystems.
- Improved farming practices in the Everglades Agricultural Area achieved a 41 percent phosphorus reduction in 2013; to the west of this area, the C-139 Basin also reduced phosphorus discharges to historic levels.
- To further clean water for the Everglades, 7 of 10 Restoration Strategies projects are underway, including two Flow Equalization Basins and STA expansions.
- A key piece of property was acquired in Palm Beach County to help provide vital freshwater flows to the federally designated "Wild and Scenic" Loxahatchee River.
- The Governing Board supported release of the Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP) draft report for public and agency review by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. This step signaled the District's continued partnership with the Corps in developing plans for key restoration projects that will direct more water south into the heart of the Everglades.

### Managing Water During a Record Wet Period

- South Florida experienced the wettest April-through-July period on record since 1932 and the wettest July since 2001. District pump stations moved a combined 1.5 trillion gallons of water in 2013.
- Emergency actions were taken to capture, store and improve water flow throughout the regional water management system to help reduce the amount of water flowing into Lake Okeechobee and/or discharged to the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie estuaries.
- Water was successfully stored on regional public project sites. The District also worked with private property owners to retain water on their land. The first water farming pilot project to store water on fallow citrus land was approved and served as an emergency storage location.
- Strategic operational changes sent more water south to the Everglades and to tide by maximizing flows through the system. District field crews also cut an emergency flood control channel through the Old Tamiami Trail to help improve water flowing south.

### Ensuring Land Resources Meet Public Needs

- A comprehensive assessment of 750,000 acres of District fee-owned land was completed, with more than 97 percent of the acreage determined to directly support the agency core mission. Approximately 21,000 acres were identified for possible exchange or surplus.
- New public access facilities opened at STA-5/6 in Hendry County including parking, trailheads and picnic shelters. Expanded partnerships with local Audubon chapters now provide guided bird-watching tours at STA-5/6, STA-1 East and the Lakeside Ranch STA.

**Addressing Future Water Demands Through Collaborative Water Supply Planning**

- A draft Central Florida Water Initiative (CFWI) Water Supply Plan was made available for public review and comment in late 2013. CFWI is a collaboration of the St. Johns River, South Florida and Southwest Florida water management districts to address near- and long-term water supply needs in Central Florida, where all three agencies have jurisdiction. This area includes Orange, Osceola, Polk, Seminole and southern Lake counties. The CFWI is working to provide a uniform approach to water management in Central Florida and a collaborative water supply planning effort.
- In conjunction with extensive stakeholder involvement, the District's 2013 Lower East Coast (LEC) Water Supply Plan Update was completed and approved by the Governing Board. The planning area includes Palm Beach, Broward, Miami-Dade and parts of Monroe, Collier and Hendry counties. This update assessed projected water demands and potential sources of water for the period from 2010 to 2030. The plan will be used by local governments, water users and utilities to update and modify local comprehensive plans, facility work plans and ordinances.

**Coordinating and Streamlining Regulatory Rules/Processes**

- In collaboration with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the state's four other water management districts and public involvement, rulemaking was completed on a new statewide Environmental Resource Permit rule and fee schedule. The new rule standardizes processing procedures, definitions, forms and fees without lowering or changing environmental standards to protect the state's surface waters and wetlands.
- A similar collaborative and open rulemaking effort is near completion regarding streamlining and consistency in statewide Consumptive Use Permit rules.
- Launched by DEP and all five water management districts, a new online water permitting portal now provides one-stop access to all water resource permitting information. The partner agencies have integrated existing online services with the portal, providing one place for residents and businesses to go to determine what permits may be needed and from which agency.

*For more information on these and other South Florida Water Management District programs and initiatives, visit [www.sfwmd.gov](http://www.sfwmd.gov).*