

# Blue-Green Algae and the SFWMD

June 2016

**MYTH**

Versus

**FACT**

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MYTH</b></p> <p>✘ The South Florida Water Management District is not doing anything to help lessen lake releases or address blue-green algae concerns.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>FACT</b></p> <p>✓ The District is holding more water in the Upper Chain of Lakes north of Lake Okeechobee.</p> <p>✓ The District took extraordinary measures to decrease lake releases including storing billions of gallons of lake water in the A-1 Flow Equalization Basin.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MYTH</b></p> <p>✘ The South Florida Water Management District is responsible for managing blue-green algae blooms.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>FACT</b></p> <p>✓ The South Florida Water Management District samples water.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MYTH</b></p> <p>✘ The South Florida Water Management District is responsible for Lake Okeechobee releases.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>FACT</b></p> <p>✓ The District advises the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers but the Corps is solely responsible for authorizing and conducting lake releases to coastal estuaries for flood protection.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MYTH</b></p> <p>✘ Lake Okeechobee is the sole contributor to blue-green algae blooms.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>FACT</b></p> <p>✓ The nutrients and fresh water that can fuel growth of naturally occurring blue-green algae also comes from local stormwater runoff and septic tanks. <u>Algae blooms have occurred in past years when there were no lake releases.</u></p>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MYTH</b></p> <p>✘ Large blue-green algae blooms can be treated or removed from South Florida’s waterways.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>FACT</b></p> <p>✓ No effective large scale treatment method exists to remove blue-green algae blooms. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission does not recommend any form of treatment because it may release toxins.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MYTH</b></p> <p>✘ The algae bloom seen this summer in South Florida water bodies is an unusual occurrence.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>FACT</b></p> <p>✓ Blue-green algae naturally occurs in water bodies all over the world. Large blooms have also occurred in South Florida in the past.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MYTH</b></p> <p>✘ Blue-green algae has been proven to cause neurodegenerative disease.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>FACT</b></p> <p>✓ No proven connection has been found between cyanobacteria and neurodegenerative disease. For more information from the Florida Department of Health, visit <a href="http://www.floridahealth.gov/environmental-health/aquatic-toxins/documents/cyano-faqs-pio.pdf">http://www.floridahealth.gov/environmental-health/aquatic-toxins/documents/cyano-faqs-pio.pdf</a>.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MYTH</b></p> <p>✘ Purchasing thousands of acres of land in the Everglades Agricultural Area south of Lake Okeechobee and building a reservoir would have prevented this year’s bloom and will prevent future blooms.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>FACT</b></p> <p>✓ The proposed purchase of agricultural land for a reservoir would have taken billions of dollars away from needed restoration projects and was a bad deal.</p> <p>✓ Even if the land had been purchased, a reservoir could not have been built yet due to a ten year operating lease.</p> <p>✓ Any reservoir on that land would not have eliminated all need for lake releases and all possibility of algae blooms.</p> <p>✓ Other projects already in the works will store water, allow more water to be moved south and reduce lake releases.</p>