



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

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CONTACT:

Randy Smith

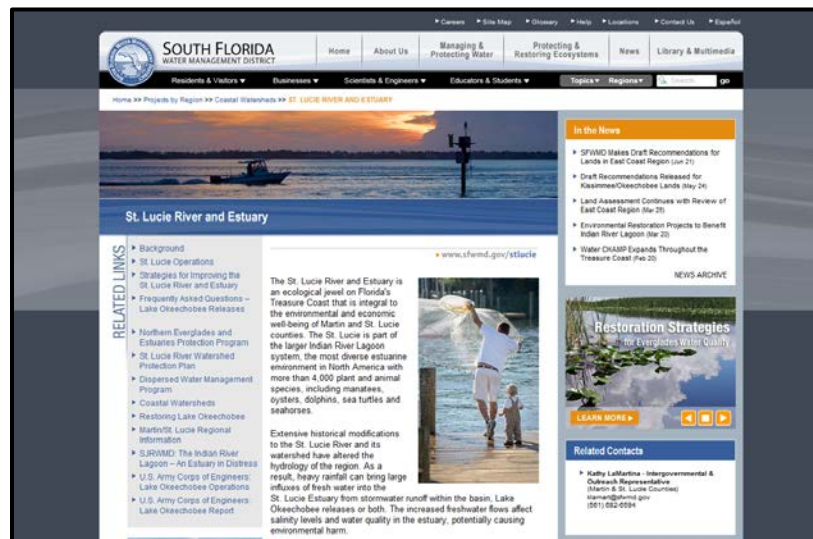
South Florida Water Management District

Office: (561) 682-2800 or Cellular: (561) 389-3386

www.sfwmd.gov/news

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SFWMD Launches Webpage Dedicated to St. Lucie River and Estuary
www.sfwmd.gov/stlucie contains array of information for Martin and St. Lucie residents



(Click on the image to visit www.sfwmd.gov/stlucie.)

West Palm Beach, FL – Recognizing the ecological and economic significance of the St. Lucie River and Estuary, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) has launched a new webpage (www.sfwmd.gov/stlucie) to keep residents in Martin and St. Lucie counties updated on information about the river and estuary.

The webpage features a wide range of resources and current data on the St. Lucie River and Estuary, including:

- Weekly operational reports that include water quality monitoring and environmental conditions such as salinity levels, recommendations for Lake Okeechobee water control structure operations and rainfall outlook models
- Real-time water levels in lakes, canals and waterways and the current status of water control structures
- An extensive environmental database known as DBHYDRO with historical and up-to-date surface and groundwater information, as well as meteorological, hydrogeological and water quality data

- An overview of roles and responsibilities in the management of Lake Okeechobee and operations in the St. Lucie watershed
- Short- and long-term strategies by the District and its federal, state and local partners to improve the health of the St. Lucie Estuary. These include:
 - The C-44 Reservoir, a component of the Indian River Lagoon – South project in the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) designed to store more fresh water in the St. Lucie watershed
 - The St. Lucie River Watershed Protection Plan developed as part of the State of Florida’s Lake Okeechobee Protection Act
 - A new Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP) adopted by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to improve water quality in the St. Lucie River and Estuary
 - Local “ready-to-go” projects identified for implementation by the St. Lucie River Issues Team, a coalition of federal, state and local governments, as well as agricultural and environmental organizations
- Answers to frequently asked questions about coastal releases from Lake Okeechobee
- Links to St. Lucie-related information on partner websites including the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Johns River Water Management District and Florida Atlantic University’s Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute

The St. Lucie Estuary is part of the larger Indian River Lagoon system, which stretches 156 miles along Florida’s east coast from Ponce de Leon Inlet in Volusia County to Jupiter Inlet in Palm Beach County. The lagoon is the most diverse estuarine environment in North America with more than 4,000 plant and animal species, including manatees, oysters, dolphins, sea turtles and seahorses. Together, the estuary and lagoon support a multitude of industries and activities, from fishing and recreation to tourism and agriculture.

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About the South Florida Water Management District

The South Florida Water Management District is a regional, governmental agency that oversees the water resources in the southern half of the state – 16 counties from Orlando to the Keys. It is the oldest and largest of the state’s five water management districts. The agency mission is to manage and protect water resources of the region by balancing and improving water quality, flood control, natural systems and water supply. A key initiative is cleanup and restoration of the Everglades.