SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

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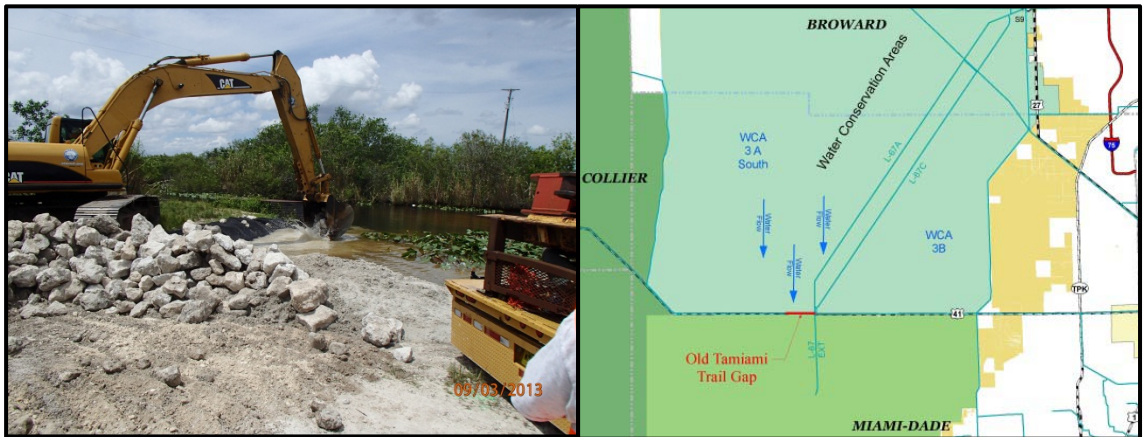
SFWMD Cuts Gap in Old Tamiami Trail to Improve Water Flow

The channel will help achieve healthier water levels for Everglades ecosystem



(Click on the picture or map for larger versions.)

Miami, FL — To help relieve critically high water levels impacting South Florida, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) this week deployed heavy equipment to excavate a flood control channel through the Old Tamiami Trail.

The emergency project will move additional water south from Water Conservation Area 3 (WCA-3) in Miami-Dade and Broward counties, where months of above-average regional rainfall have raised water levels and forced wildlife such as deer onto levees and tree islands.

"The Tamiami Trail channel project is one of several efforts the District is undertaking on an emergency basis to help relieve high water levels," said Tommy Strowd, SFWMD Assistant Executive Director of Operations, Maintenance and Construction. "We will continue to look for additional short-term solutions that will provide the most benefit as fast as possible."

Water levels in the 921-square-mile Water Conservation Area 3 have remained high following the wettest April-through-July period on record in South Florida since 1932.

Water flow south out of WCA-3 is constrained by several factors, including the barrier created by remnants of the Old Tamiami Trail, which ran from Miami to Naples.

By cutting a 35-foot gap in the old roadway about 30 miles west of Miami, District crews from the Okeechobee and Miami field stations were able to open a flow-way capable of moving approximately 800 to 1,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) of water from WCA-3 into the L-67 Extension Canal. This canal moves water into Everglades National Park, creating a previously unavailable option for moving water south.

SFWMD Emergency Projects

- **Everglades** Old Tamiami Trail Cut: moves up to 1,000 cfs south from WCA-3
- **Caloosahatchee River** C-43 Emergency Storage: 1,200 acre-feet has been pumped into the future Everglades restoration project since July 29
- **St. Lucie River** C-44 Caulkins Citrus: private land owner is storing approximately 200 acre-feet of water that would have otherwise gone to the St. Lucie Estuary
- **Regional** Pumping Agreements with Landowners: providing 1,030 acre-feet of storage

The project will work in conjunction with federal and state efforts to bridge portions of the Tamiami Trail to increase water flows to the south. The District is evaluating additional sites to create further flows south from the Water Conservation Areas.

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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.