



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

## NEWS RELEASE

October 10, 2013

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

**Randy Smith**

South Florida Water Management District

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

[www.sfwmd.gov/news](http://www.sfwmd.gov/news)

follow us on 

**Construction to Begin on Project to Improve Everglades Water Quality**  
*A-1 shallow-water reservoir is the second major effort underway in the Governor's Restoration Strategies plan*



*(Click on the picture for a larger version.)*

**West Palm Beach, FL** — The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) today approved a contract to start construction on a key project in the State's Restoration Strategies plan to clean water for America's Everglades.

"This is an important step for the Everglades, as science and planning become a working construction project for achieving water quality goals," said SFWMD Governing Board Chairman Daniel O'Keefe. "Building this expansive storage site will significantly improve our ability to remove nutrients and further improve Florida's famed *River of Grass*."

Design is complete and all necessary permits have been obtained so that Central Florida Equipment Rentals, the lowest responsive and responsible bidder, can begin construction work with today's approved investment of \$59.9 million.

**A-1: How it Works**

With the capacity to hold 60,000 acre-feet of water at a site west of U.S. 27, the A-1 Flow Equalization Basin (FEB) is designed to capture and store peak stormwater flows during

the wet season or heavy rainfall events. Along with providing significant storage, emergent vegetation such as bulrush and cattail planted within the site will help reduce the concentration of phosphorus in the water.

A system of 21 miles of earthen levees and 15 water control structures will allow water managers to move water south for treatment. This provides the steady flow necessary to optimize the performance of Stormwater Treatment Areas (STAs) 2 and 3/4 just to the south at the Palm Beach/Broward county line.

Stormwater Treatment Areas are constructed wetlands that serve as the water-cleaning workhorses of Everglades restoration, using both emergent and submerged aquatic vegetation such as hydrilla to naturally remove nutrients from the water that eventually flows to Everglades National Park.



*(Click the map for a larger version.)*

The District operates a network of five STAs south of Lake Okeechobee with an effective treatment area of 57,000 acres. Since 1994, the treatment areas have retained more than 1,707 metric tons of total phosphorus that would have otherwise entered the Everglades.

The A-1 FEB will utilize significant work already completed at the site for a reservoir originally planned to provide deep water storage, known as the EAA Reservoir. All of the material excavated for the reservoir will be utilized to build new levees, and existing canals have been incorporated into the new plan.

### **Restoration Strategies**

In June 2012, the State of Florida and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency reached a consensus on new strategies for improving water quality in America's Everglades.

Based on months of scientific and technical discussions, these strategies will expand water quality improvement projects to achieve the ultralow phosphorus water quality standard established for the Everglades.

Key features of the plan include:

- **Design and construction of 110,000 acre-feet of additional storage adjacent to existing Everglades STAs**, better controlling water flow into the treatment wetlands and thereby improving their performance. These storage areas, known as Flow Equalization Basins, will be designed to assist all five Everglades STAs.
- **Design and construction of the Stormwater Treatment Area 1 West expansion**, increasing by 50 percent the treatment capacity of water quality facilities

currently discharging into the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge.

- **Additional sub-regional source controls** in areas of the eastern EAA where phosphorus levels in runoff have been historically higher, building on the District's existing Best Management Practices (BMPs) Regulatory Program.

**For more information:**

- [Improving Water Quality](#)
- [Restoration Strategies for Clean Water for the Everglades](#)
- [BMPs and Source Controls](#)

# # #

**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.*