



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

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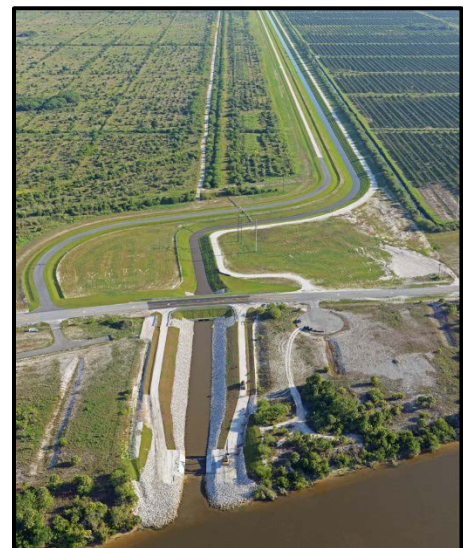
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SFWMD Advances Water-Cleaning Wetland Project for St. Lucie River
Agreement with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers allows construction to move forward

West Palm Beach, FL — With a goal of improving water quality in the St. Lucie River and Estuary, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) Governing Board today took steps necessary to begin construction of key stormwater treatment wetlands in Martin County.

As a part of the Indian River Lagoon-South Phase 1 Project, the C-44 Reservoir and Stormwater Treatment Areas (STAs) will help capture, store and clean local stormwater runoff before it reaches the river and estuary. All project components were originally planned to be built by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Governing Board approved an agreement today with the Corps that allows the District to expedite construction of the STAs, a pump station and a portion of the project discharge canal.

“With support and a commitment of approximately \$60 million from Gov. Rick Scott and the Florida Legislature, we can now begin construction work on critical components of this project,” said SFWMD Governing Board Chairman Daniel O’Keefe. “Expediting construction will provide benefits to the St. Lucie River and Estuary as well as the communities and families that depend on these waterways.”



This former citrus operation will become a wetland to clean water flowing to the St. Lucie River. (Click on the picture for a larger version.)

Under the agreement, construction on 6,300 acres of water-cleaning wetlands is planned to begin in October and be complete in 2017.

When the project is operational, water will be pumped into the STAs, which are treatment wetlands containing plants such as cattails, pickerel weed and bulrush. This

vegetation removes and stores nutrients, including phosphorus, from the water before it flows into the St. Lucie River and Estuary.

The STAs are critical components of the overall C-44 Reservoir Project, which will also include:

- A 3,400-acre reservoir capable of storing about 16 billion gallons of water
- A pump station capable of moving 1,100 cubic feet per second (cfs) of water, or about 717 million gallons a day, into the C-44 Reservoir

To date, the SFWMD has completed land acquisition and design for the STA treatment cells and the system discharge components. The Corps initiated the first phase of construction, which includes the project intake canal and access road, and will build the reservoir component. When the entire C-44 Reservoir and STA project is complete, stormwater runoff from the C-44 basin will be stored and cleaned before flowing to the river.

The St. Lucie River and Estuary is part of the larger Indian River Lagoon system, the most diverse estuarine environment in North America. It is home to more than 4,000 plant and animal species, including manatees, oysters, dolphins, sea turtles and seahorses.

For More Information:

- [Indian River Lagoon - South](#)
- [Improving Water Quality: Stormwater Treatment 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.