



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

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SFWMD Approves Work to Boost Caloosahatchee Water Storage

Early start of construction on a major reservoir will provide storage benefits sooner

West Palm Beach, FL — With funding support from the Florida Legislature, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) Governing Board today approved a contract to begin early construction on the site of a future Everglades restoration reservoir near the Caloosahatchee River. The work will provide critical water storage in the Caloosahatchee basin and help to protect the downstream estuary.

"This work allows us to deliver some of the key benefits of the Caloosahatchee River (C-43) West Basin Storage Reservoir before it is fully funded and constructed," said SFWMD Governing Board Chairman Daniel O'Keefe. "Every step we take to increase water storage means increased benefits to the river and estuary — and to the residents who depend on this vital ecosystem."

The C-43 reservoir project, a component of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan, was authorized last year by Congress in the Water Resources and Reform Development Act (WRRDA) of 2014. It will one day hold approximately 170,000 acre-feet of water to be used during dry periods to help maintain a desirable minimum flow of fresh water to the Caloosahatchee Estuary. During the rainy season, the reservoir will store excess stormwater and regulatory releases from Lake Okeechobee, helping to prevent excessive fresh water flows to the estuary.

Since 2012, the SFWMD put the reservoir property to use with emergency water storage of summertime rainfall. Temporary pumps and levee improvements helped to capture approximately 4.2 billion gallons of water that would have otherwise flowed to the river.

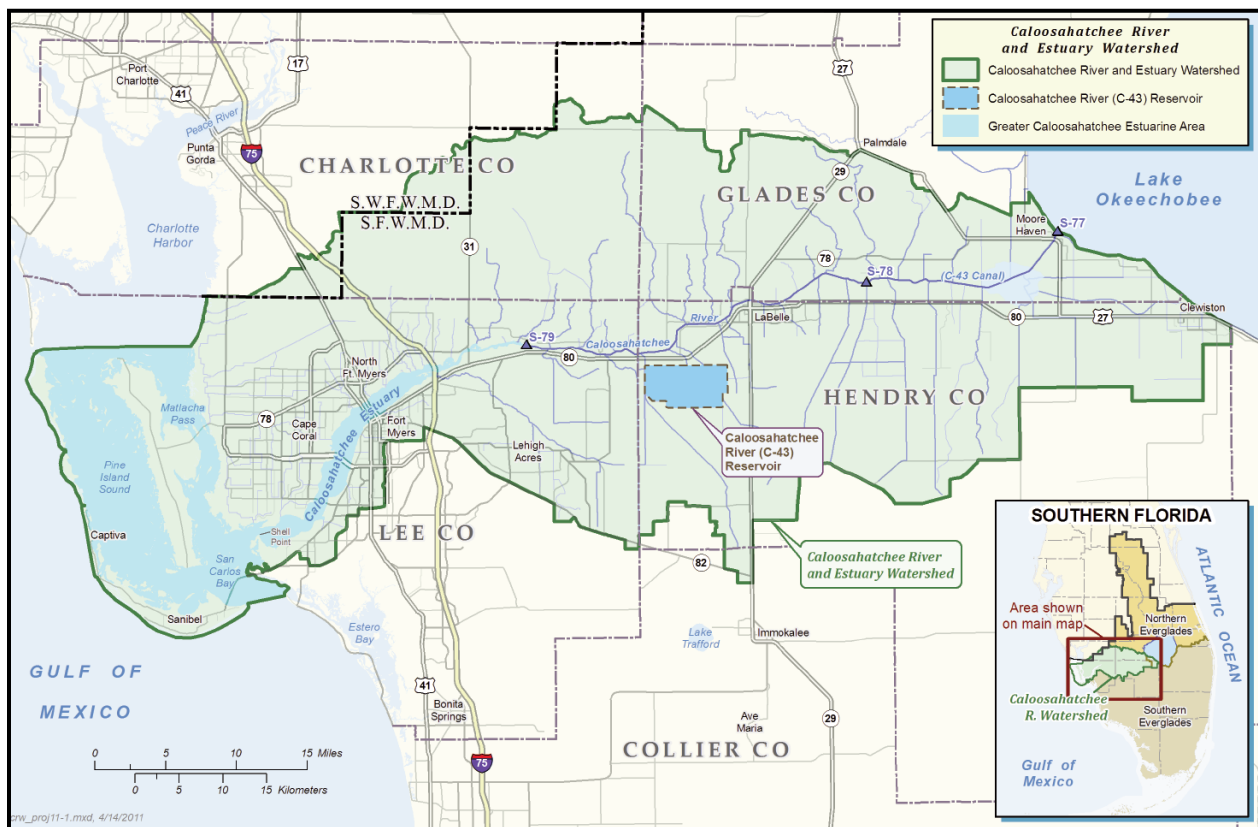
Following this effort, engineers determined that early construction work on key features at the C-43 reservoir site could create up to 5,000 acre-feet of semi-permanent storage for the region, or the equivalent of 2,500 Olympic-sized swimming pools. Eventually, this storage site will be integrated into the full-scale reservoir project.

Today's contract award is the first of three construction contracts that will be issued using an \$18 million investment from the Florida Legislature to complete significant work on the project.

The first step, an approximately \$2 million contract with Mitchell & Stark Construction Co., Inc., includes:

- Demolishing existing features such as buried pipes, culverts and above-ground facilities at the storage site, a 3,500-acre impoundment approximately 15,000 feet long and 10,000 feet wide.
- Construction of a berm, approximately 3 miles in length, to provide the northern boundary for the impoundment. The height of the berm will range between 3 and 8 feet and provide a maximum storage depth of 4 feet.

For more information on projects to protect and improve the Caloosahatchee River and Estuary, visit www.sfwmd.gov/caloosahatchee or click on the map below:



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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.