



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

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SFWMD Begins Pumping Water at Vast New Storage Area *Nicodemus Slough project holds Lake Okeechobee freshwater releases*



(Click on the pictures for larger versions.)

West Palm Beach, FL – To increase storage of freshwater releases from Lake Okeechobee and help protect the Caloosahatchee Estuary, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) has begun full-capacity pumping into the new Nicodemus Slough water storage area in Glades County.

“Working in concert with efforts to capture water on public and private lands and move water south, Nicodemus Slough provides some relief now to the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie estuaries,” said SFWMD Executive Director Blake Guillory. “The project also adds to our critical storage options in the interim while regional projects now under construction – and making progress – are completed.”

With Lake Okeechobee’s level at 14.74 feet NGVD today – about a foot higher than this time last year – the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has been releasing water out of the lake to both estuaries. In response, the District worked to accelerate construction and testing operations in order to begin full-capacity pumping several weeks early onto the Nicodemus Slough site.

To send water onto the 16,000-acre project area, four pumps are each moving 30,000 gallons of water per minute. It may take approximately six weeks of round-the-clock

operations to fill the vast site. The project can store an annual average of 34,000 acre-feet of water, or about 11 billion gallons.

Located south of Fisheating Creek on the western bank of the lake, the Nicodemus Slough project is intended to provide interim water storage until projects such as the Caloosahatchee River (C-43) West Basin Storage Reservoir are completed. In a cooperative agreement with Lykes Brothers, the District is leasing the property for an investment of \$2 million a year for 8 years, with an option to extend the agreement.

This project is one of multiple actions the SFWMD is taking to expand water storage opportunities. Since 2005, the District and a variety of partners worked together to enhance water storage opportunities on private and public lands through the agency's Dispersed Water Management Program.

Approximately 87,000 acre-feet of water retention and storage has been made available in the greater Everglades system through the program, with the majority located in the Lake Okeechobee watershed. Nearly 100,000 acre-feet of additional storage, including six new projects approved in December 2014, are under development.

For More Information:

- [Water Storage Strategies](#)
- Interactive "Moving Water South" map: www.sfwmd.gov/movingwatersouth

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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.