



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

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From Savings to Supply: New SFWMD Storage Area Shows Dual Benefit
Nicodemus Slough begins supplying needed water to the Caloosahatchee River



(Click on the pictures for larger versions.)

Ft. Myers, FL – The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) has begun supplying water for the first time from the Nicodemus Slough water storage area in Glades County to benefit the health of the Caloosahatchee River and Estuary and local agricultural fields.

“Nicodemus Slough successfully provided some relief from high discharges to the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie estuaries when there was too much water earlier this year,” said Jeff Kivett, SFWMD Director of the Operations, Engineering and Construction Division. “Now, the project is proving its potential to also provide water supply to the regional system, including flows needed to maintain healthy salinity levels in one of the region’s vital waterways.”

Water Supply

With Lake Okeechobee’s level falling, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which manages the lake, announced last week it was following its federal guidelines by reducing flows from the lake to the Caloosahatchee River and Estuary.

District engineers, in coordination with the Corps, determined water could be moved from Nicodemus Slough to the river to replace some of the decreased, but needed water.

Water is currently moving by gravity through gates at the site at about 1.3 million gallons-an-hour, with potential to increase the water deliveries. From there, it follows a route through the C-19 Canal and into Lake Hicpochee, which will see some rehydration benefits, and into the river.

Operations at Nicodemus Slough will continue until it's no longer environmentally desirable or the water can no longer be delivered via gravity.

Water Storage

Located south of Fisheating Creek on the western bank of the lake, the Nicodemus Slough project was 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.

The project can store an annual average of 34,000 acre-feet of water, or about 11 billion gallons.

In response to high water levels in Lake Okeechobee in January, the SFWMD began operation of Nicodemus Slough to capture some of the water being released by the Corps from the lake before it reached the river and estuary.

Full-capacity pumping sent water onto the 16,000-acre project area, utilizing four pumps moving more than 30,000 gallons of water each per minute.

Nicodemus Slough is one of multiple actions the SFWMD has taken 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.