



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

## NEWS RELEASE

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**MEDIA CONTACT:**

**Randy Smith**

South Florida Water Management District

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

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### **SFWMD Awards Contract for Caloosahatchee Reservoir Construction** *Work will help achieve early water storage benefits for estuary*

**Fort Myers, FL** – The South Florida Water Management District today approved a contract authorizing the start of early construction on the massive Caloosahatchee River (C-43) West Basin Storage Reservoir project. The work is a precursor for achieving water storage benefits before the entire reservoir is complete.

“While just the first step in construction of the reservoir, this work is crucial to making tangible improvements in the health of the Caloosahatchee River and Estuary,” said SFWMD Governing Board Chairman Daniel O’Keefe. “This is yet another example of the recent progress that is being made on restoration projects throughout our region.”

The \$10.8 million contract awarded to Blue Goose Construction, LLC, begins the first phase of work on the reservoir. The contract includes:

- Demolishing existing agricultural features such as buried pipes, culverts, irrigation pump stations and above-ground facilities across the 10,000-acre reservoir site
- Construction of 7 compacted, above-ground earthfill mounds reaching 56 feet high at select locations to help compact the ground to support future structures
- Moving approximately 1.8 million cubic yards of fill for the mounds, enough to fill 1 acre of land to a height of 1,100 feet, or 120 feet higher than the Eiffel Tower
- Preparation of the foundation for construction of the 16-mile dam that will surround the reservoir

The work is the first step for the SFWMD to undertake expediting construction of the facility as part of Governor Rick Scott’s commitment to South Florida ecosystem restoration. The project as a whole is a joint effort between the District and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers under the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP).

Today’s action follows a June vote by the SFWMD Governing Board that authorized entering into an agreement designed to help the District receive federal cost credit for expediting construction.

### **C-43 Project Overview**

The C-43 reservoir project was authorized 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 capture and store excess stormwater and regulatory releases from Lake Okeechobee, helping to prevent excessive freshwater flows to the estuary.

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

### **Words of Support for Early Construction on the C-43 Reservoir**

“As the Lee County Board of County Commissioner liaison, I am honored to be a part of this process and improving water quality in the Caloosahatchee and the surrounding waterways. I look forward to continuing working with the SFWMD and state and federal officials to continue our efforts to preserve Florida’s natural resources.”

*Cecil Pendergrass  
Commissioner, Lee County Board of County Commissioners*

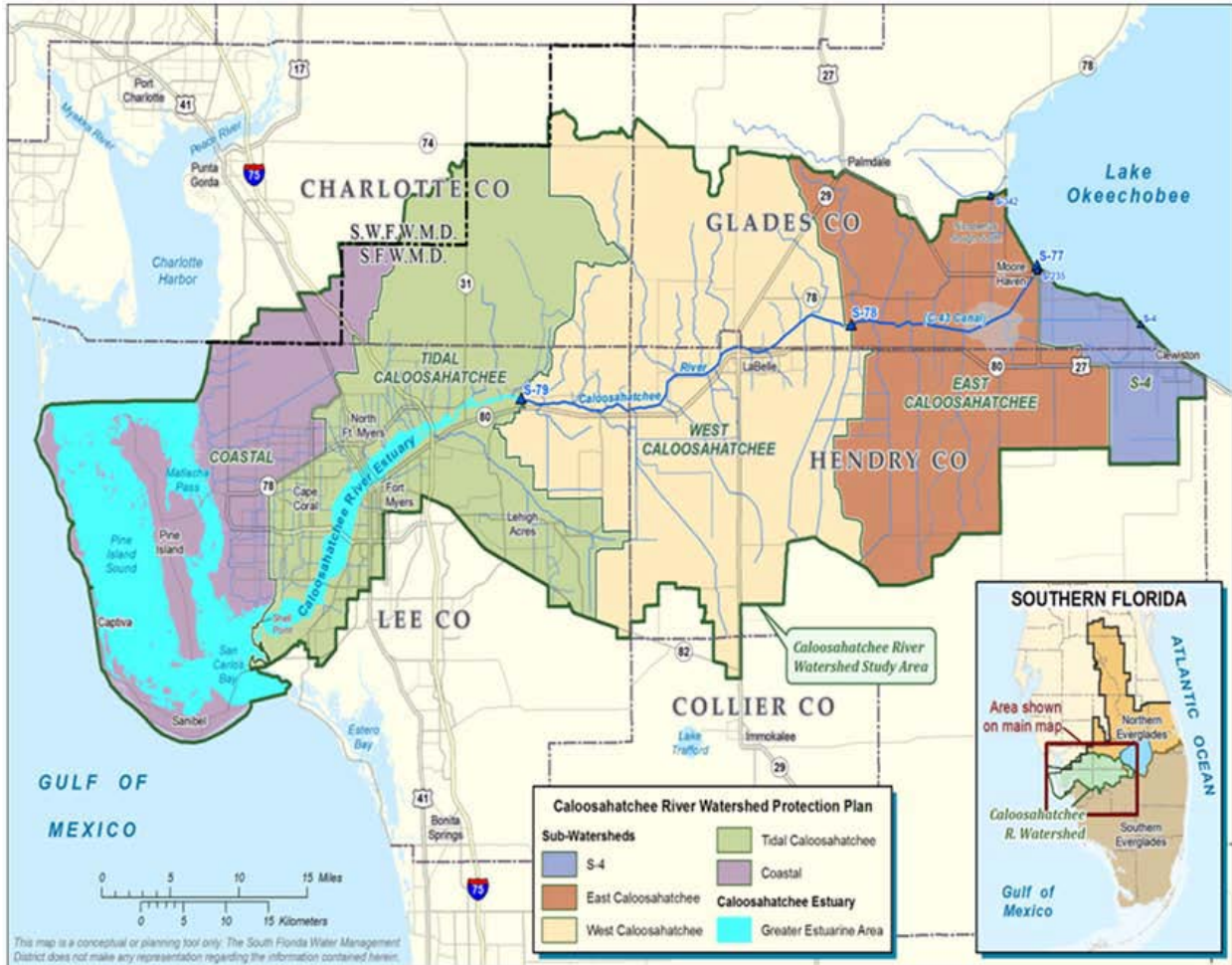
“We are very pleased that the District awarded the first contract for early construction of the C-43 Reservoir Project. This will be the first step towards getting the critical water storage that we need within the Caloosahatchee basin.”

*Kevin Ruane  
Mayor, Sanibel*

“As a resident of Hendry County, I am happy to see this project taking another tangible step to becoming a reality and a game changer in dealing with the needs of the estuary during dry and wet times of the year. This project will reach far beyond the boundaries of Hendry and Glades counties with meaningful impact on all of Southwest Florida, from employment to environment.”

*Karson Turner  
Chair, Hendry County Board of County Commissioners*

For more information on projects to protect and improve the Caloosahatchee River and Estuary, visit [www.sfwmd.gov/caloosahatchee](http://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.