



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **SFWMD Advances Canal Upgrade to Improve Water Movement Flexibility** *Work will boost flood protection, water supply south of Lake Okeechobee*



*(Click on the map of western Palm Beach County for the project location.)*

**West Palm Beach, FL** – The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) approved a construction contract this week that will increase flexibility to provide flood control and move water in a key region that supplies water to farmlands and wetlands that clean Everglades-bound water.

“Expanding our management options is critical to meeting water supply and water quality improvement goals,” said SFWMD Governing Board member Jim Moran. “This project component will have significant benefits for the environment and the agricultural community, while helping to reduce the potential need for emergency pumping of excess stormwater into Lake Okeechobee.”

The agreement between the SFWMD and landowner A. Duda & Sons calls for a 50/50 split of the \$2.2 million cost of constructing a new, two-lane bridge to replace a culvert that limits flow in the Bolles East Canal.

The bridge is a crucial component of the SFWMD’s overall project to increase capacity in the canal, which runs east/west in the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA). The

SFWMD Governing Board approved an investment of \$3.8 million to construct Phase 1 of the project in August 2015.

When complete, the canal upgrade south of Lake Okeechobee will improve the flow of water to the newly operational A-1 Flow Equalization Basin and existing Stormwater Treatment Areas (STAs), which use aquatic vegetation to remove excess nutrients in the water before it reaches the Everglades.

The STAs are an integral part of the Governor's Restoration Strategies plan to improve Everglades water quality.

Work that includes expanding the canal bottom width to 40 feet will improve water flow across the EAA. The canal provides a link between the Hillsboro and the North New River canals, serving adjacent agricultural landowners by supplying irrigation and drainage. The canal expansion will also allow more flexibility in water management to balance flows and loads into the STA complexes.

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*The South Florida Water Management District is a regional governmental agency that manages the water resources in the southern part of the state. It is the oldest and largest of the state's five water management districts.*

*Our mission is to manage and protect water resources of the region by balancing and improving flood control, water supply, water quality and natural systems.*