



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

## OPERATIONS UPDATE

March 8, 2016

**MEDIA CONTACT:**

**Randy Smith**

South Florida Water Management District

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

[www.sfwmd.gov/news](http://www.sfwmd.gov/news)

follow us on 

### **SFWMD Holding Additional Water in Kissimmee Basin**

To ease pressure on Lake Okeechobee and South Florida's coastal estuaries, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) will hold back water in the Upper Kissimmee Chain of Lakes for the next 30 to 60 days. This action is consistent with the SFWMD Governing Board's direction to reduce damaging freshwater releases from Lake Okeechobee to the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie estuaries.

The District typically lowers water levels in the Chain of Lakes at this time of year for flood protection and to benefit fish and wildlife in the Kissimmee River floodplain. This year, Lake Okeechobee has virtually no capacity to accept the additional river flows because record dry season rainfall has raised the lake level unusually high and inundated water storage areas. Water can flow into Lake Okeechobee from the Kissimmee River and other watersheds up to six times faster than it can be released.

- [See water levels in the Upper Kissimmee Chain of Lakes through March 6, 2016](#)

# # #

*The South Florida Water Management District is a regional governmental agency that manages 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 protect South Florida's water resources by balancing and improving flood control, water supply, water quality and natural systems.*