



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

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SFWMD Moves Forward with Project to Enhance Everglades Water Quality

Compartment C construction is next step in expanding treatment wetlands



West Palm Beach, FL – The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) Governing Board today approved an 4,656-acre expansion of treatment wetlands in southeastern Hendry County to further improve water quality flowing into the Florida Everglades. The construction of “Compartment C” will connect two existing Stormwater Treatment Areas (STAs) in the Everglades Agricultural Area and more than double water treatment capability at the site.

“It is rewarding for the Board to give a green light to Everglades construction projects that not only improve the environment but also provide economic stimulus for Florida businesses and the local communities,” said Eric Buermann, SFWMD Governing Board Chairman. “Putting more treatment wetlands in the ground is vital to water quality improvements, and construction of Compartment C means continued progress with

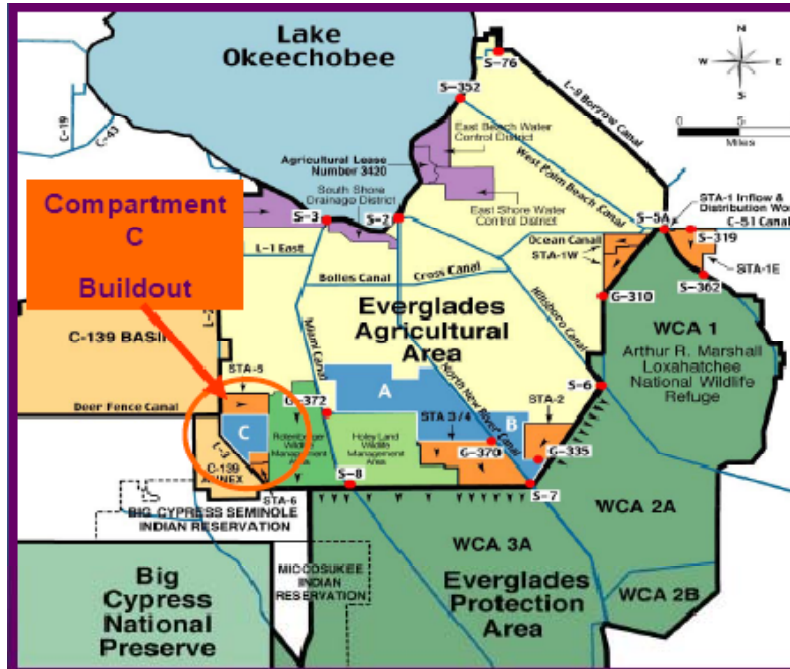
environmental restoration in South Florida.”

With design and permitting for the \$47.5-million project complete, Harry Pepper & Associates can now begin work. The Florida-based firm was selected in a state-regulated bidding process. As part of the contract, certified businesses in the District’s Small Business Enterprise (SBE) program will receive 25 percent of the work, totaling more than \$12 million. Additionally, 20 percent of the labor as well as 5 percent of sub-contracting dollars will go directly to vendors in western Palm Beach County. Several firms from the Glades area have already been sub-contracted to participate in the multi-year construction effort.

Stormwater Treatment Areas are the water-cleaning workhorses of Everglades restoration, naturally using plants to remove phosphorus from water flowing into the Everglades. Construction of Compartment C expands on earlier District projects to build, operate, expand and enhance six Stormwater Treatment Areas south of Lake Okeechobee. These wetlands are components of the Long-Term Plan for Achieving Water Quality Goals, a legislatively approved blueprint to improve water quality in the Everglades.

Since 1994, the six STAs – with a combined area of more than 52,000 acres – have retained more than 1,000 metric tons of total phosphorus that would have otherwise entered the Everglades. Overall, Florida has invested more than \$1.8 billion to improve Everglades water quality, making significant and well-documented progress. See [*Just the Facts: Progress in Everglades Water Quality Improvements*](#) for further details.

Along with construction of Compartment C, the District is also currently renovating Stormwater Treatment Area 5, which is adjacent to the wetland build-out. The renovations are enhancing plant growth and water movement through the treatment marsh. Dry weather in early 2009 presented an opportunity to improve STA-5’s bottom contours, which were impacting STA performance. In 32 days, District crews moved nearly 170,000 cubic yards, or 8,500 truckloads, of soil in STA-5, filling deeper areas so that more vegetation can take root and improve the wetland’s ability to remove phosphorus from Everglades-bound waters.



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About the South Florida Water Management District – [Celebrating 60 Years \(1949-2009\)](#)

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.