



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

## NEWS RELEASE

May 14, 2009

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### **Water Managers to Enhance Water-Cleaning Power to Protect Everglades** *Network of water quality improvement projects continues to expand*



**West Palm Beach, FL** — The South Florida Water Management (SFWMD) is set to add more water-cleaning capacity to the expanding network of stormwater treatment wetlands, continuing the effort to improve water quality in America's Everglades.

The District's Governing Board today approved investing \$34.2 million to nearly double the size of Stormwater Treatment Area 2 (STA-2) in Southwest Palm Beach County to 15,140 acres. When finished, the 6,817 acres of new treatment wetlands at STA-2 — along with 4,656 acres of new treatment wetlands to the west — will complete a nearly 117,000-acre swath of continuous, publicly owned water treatment, storage and wildlife management lands stretching from Palm Beach to Hendry County.

“Constructing these new water-cleaning wetlands is yet another example of the significant strides being achieved for Everglades restoration,” said Eric Buermann, SFWMD Governing Board Chairman. “This project delivers cleaner water for the environment and provides construction jobs to boost Florida's economy at a critical

time.”

With design and permitting for the project complete, Triple R Paving Inc. and Lodge Construction Inc. can now begin construction work. The Florida-based firms were selected in a public bidding process. As part of the construction contracts, certified businesses in the District's Small Business Enterprise (SBE) program will receive approximately 30 percent of the overall work, totaling more than \$9.6 million. Local participation in the contracts requires that 20 percent of the labor as well as 5 percent of sub-contracting dollars go directly to vendors in the Tri-Cities of South Bay, Pahokee and Belle Glade, or Hendry or Glades counties. Several firms from the Glades area have already been subcontracted to participate in the multi-year construction effort.

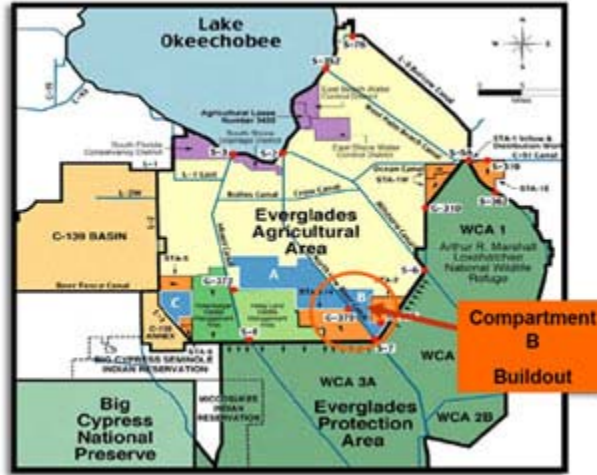
Stormwater Treatment Areas are the water-cleaning workhorses of Everglades restoration, naturally using plants to remove phosphorus from water flowing into the fabled *River of Grass*. STA-2 began operation in 2000 with 6,430 acres of treatment area to improve water quality entering Water Conservation Area 2, a part of the remnant Everglades. The new expansion, known as “Compartment B,” will assist the STA in achieving optimal performance.

The District operates a network of six STAs south of Lake Okeechobee with a combined area of more than 52,000 acres. Since 1994, the treatment areas 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.

The District is currently building, enhancing and expanding several water quality improvement projects:

- In March, the SFWMD awarded a construction contract for the Lakeside Ranch Project to start building the largest stormwater treatment area in the Northern Everglades to improve water quality flowing into Lake Okeechobee.
- At the same time, the SFWMD Governing Board approved an 4,656-acre expansion of treatment wetlands in southeast Hendry County to further improve water quality flowing into the Everglades. The construction of "Compartment C" will connect two existing Stormwater Treatment Areas (STA-5 and STA-6) in the Everglades Agricultural Area and more than double water treatment capability at the site.
- The renovation of Stormwater Treatment Area 5 in Hendry County is enhancing plant growth and water movement through the 8,000-acre treatment marsh. 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.

More information on Everglades restoration is available on the District's Web site at: [www.sfwmd.gov](http://www.sfwmd.gov). For more information on water quality improvements in the Everglades, read [\*\*\*Just the Facts: Progress in Everglades Water Quality Improvements.\*\*\*](#)



*Click on Map for Larger Version*

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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.*