



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

## NEWS RELEASE

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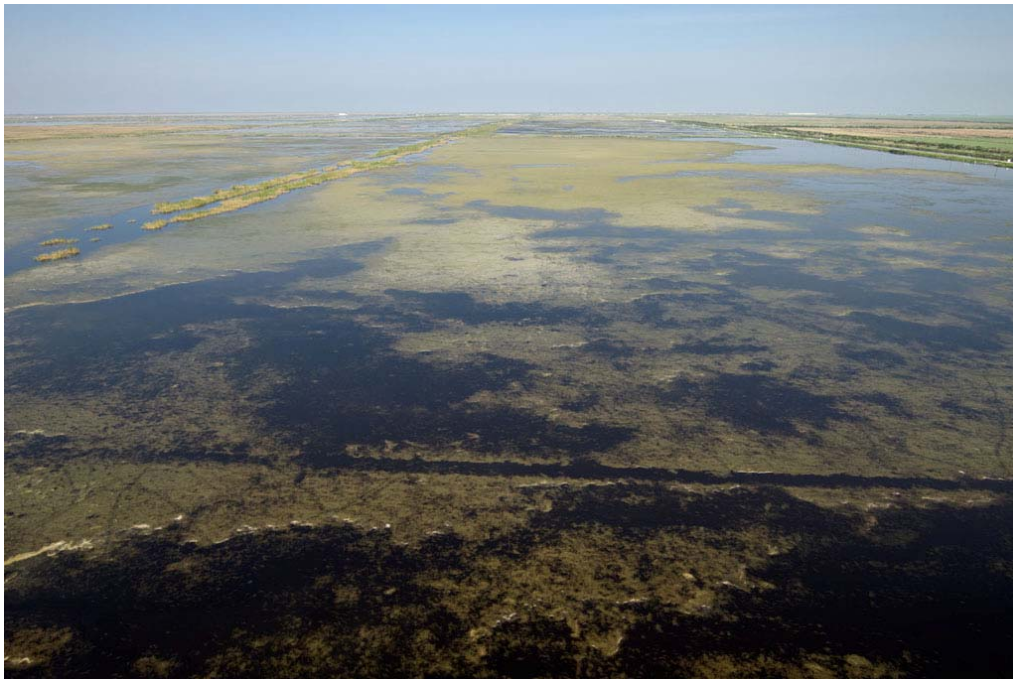
South Florida Water Management District

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### **Expansion of Everglades Water Treatment Areas Moves Forward** *SFWMD awards construction contracts for continued water quality improvements*



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*Stormwater Treatment Areas are the water-cleaning workhorses of Everglades restoration. Stormwater Treatment Area 2 (STA-2) is located in southwest Palm Beach County.*

**West Palm Beach, FL** - The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) Governing Board has awarded contracts to begin construction on four pump stations needed to expand the network of stormwater treatment wetlands, significantly advancing efforts to improve Everglades water quality.

"Stormwater Treatment Areas continue to demonstrate considerable effectiveness as tools to clean water flowing to the Everglades," said SFWMD Governing Board Chair

Eric Buermann. "Expanding these wetlands is a major step forward in our continuing efforts to improve water quality, protect our environment and strengthen Florida's economy."

The District's Governing Board awarded contracts to begin construction on four pump stations that will move water through 11,473 acres of new treatment wetlands, representing an investment of approximately \$97 million to further improve Everglades water quality. Overall, Florida has invested more than \$1.8 billion to improve Everglades water quality.

Two Florida-based firms, Close Construction Inc. and Harry Pepper & Associates, 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 participate in approximately 35 percent of the overall work. Additionally, 20 percent of the labor as well as 5 percent of sub-contracting dollars will go directly to vendors in the Tri-Cities of South Bay, Pahokee and Belle Glade, or Hendry or Glades counties.

When finished, the 6,817 acres of new treatment wetlands at Stormwater Treatment Area 2 (STA-2) in Palm Beach County and the 4,656 acres of new treatment wetlands in Stormwater Treatment Area 5/6 in Hendry County will complete a nearly 117,000-acre swath of continuous, publicly owned water treatment, storage and wildlife management lands south of Lake Okeechobee.

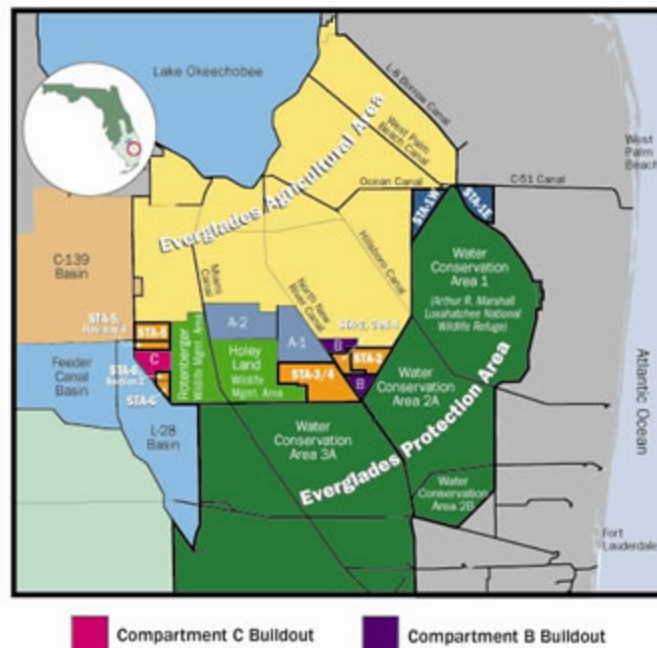
Stormwater Treatment Areas are the water-cleaning workhorses of Everglades restoration, naturally using plants to remove phosphorus from water flowing into the fabled River of Grass. The District operates a network of six STAs south of Lake Okeechobee with a combined area of more than 52,000 acres. Since 1994, the treatment areas have retained more than 1,200 metric tons of total phosphorus that would have otherwise entered the Everglades.

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.
- Construction of "Compartment B" will nearly double the size of Stormwater Treatment Area 2 (STA-2) in southwest Palm Beach County to 15,140 acres.
- 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.

- Renovation underway at Stormwater Treatment Area 5 in Hendry County is enhancing plant growth and water movement through the 8,000-acre treatment marsh. District crews moved 407,270 cubic yards of soil in STA-5, shaping the land surface more evenly so that a larger area of wetland vegetation can improve the treatment area's ability to remove phosphorus from Everglades-bound waters.

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



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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.*