



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

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Construction Progress Continues on Project to Clean Everglades-Bound Water

Expanded stormwater treatment wetland project continues forward



(Click on the picture for a larger version.)

West Palm Beach, FL – The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) Governing Board recently approved a contract to build a key set of bridges necessary to add more water-cleaning capacity to the expanding network of stormwater treatment wetlands that are improving water quality in America’s Everglades.

The new bridges will allow public access to nearby properties and recreational opportunities at Stormwater Treatment Area 2 (STA-2) in southwest Palm Beach County. Last year, the Governing Board approved investing \$34.2 million to nearly double the size of STA-2 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 County to Hendry County.

Stuart-based Lucas Marine Construction, the lowest responsive and responsible bidder, will install the concrete bridges at the G-434 and G-435 pump stations in STA-2. The \$1.9 million project component is expected to be completed early next year.

“This project is already providing construction jobs to boost Florida’s economy and will help deliver cleaner water for the environment for many years to come,” said SFWMD Governing Board Chairman Eric Buermann.

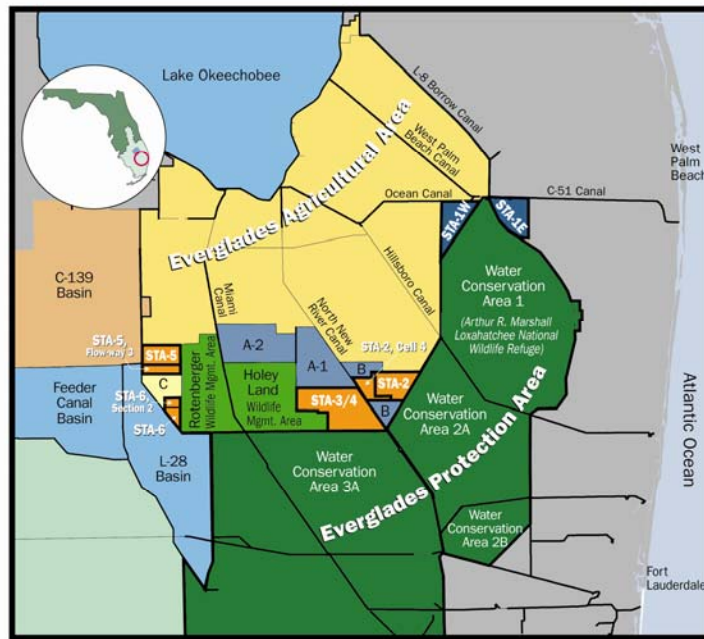
Stormwater Treatment Areas are the water-cleaning workhorses of Everglades restoration, using plants to naturally remove phosphorus from water flowing into the fabled *River of Grass*. STA-2 began operation in 2000 with 6,430 acres of treatment area to improve water quality entering Water Conservation Area 2, a part of the remnant Everglades. The new expansion, known as Compartment B, will enhance 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 1,200 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 other treatment wetlands to provide water quality improvement:

- Later this month, the SFWMD and its partners will celebrate construction progress on the Lakeside Ranch Project, the largest stormwater treatment area in the Northern Everglades to improve water quality flowing into Lake Okeechobee.
- A 4,656-acre expansion of treatment wetlands in southeast Hendry County is also under way to further improve water quality flowing into the Everglades. Construction of the wetland known as 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 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 website at: 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 the map for a larger version.)

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About the South Florida Water Management District

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.