



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

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Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands Restoration Receives Key Commitment *Construction progresses as SFWMD affirms support for federal project plan*



(Click on the picture for a larger version.)

West Palm Beach, FL – The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) Governing Board today affirmed support for the Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands restoration project, thereby allowing the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to seek congressional authorization and funding for construction. The project, which is part of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP), will help restore Biscayne Bay, enhance Biscayne National Park and improve the surrounding coastal wetlands.

“We are seeing significant progress so far, and the District is fully committed to seeing this important restoration project move forward,” said SFWMD Governing Board Chairman Joe Collins. “Getting the water right for Biscayne Bay provides major benefits for the entire Everglades ecosystem.”

Restoration goals will be accomplished by diverting water from a network of Miami

canals — designed in the early 1900s to empty stormwater into the bay — and spreading it across a large area of wetlands.

Since 2010, the District has been constructing the Deering Estate flow-way, a major component of the project, to rehydrate coastal wetlands and improve freshwater flows into the bay. The District has invested \$4.8 million to design and construct the Deering Estate component, which is scheduled for completion this year.

Improved distribution of freshwater flows will result in healthier coastal wetlands and a more natural overland flow of water that will mimic historical conditions. This will restore critical low-salinity habitat that is essential for a variety of estuarine plants and animals such as seagrasses, eastern oysters, blue crab and spotted sea trout. In addition, the wetlands will become more productive for wading birds, amphibians and mammals such as the river otter.

Progress to date includes:

- More than 80 percent of the land needed for the project has been acquired.
- Construction is near completion for the Deering Estate flow-way to re-distribute water from the C-100 Basin, south of Kendall, into coastal areas for rehydration and to reduce discharges into the bay.
- A series of culverts along the L-31E Canal in Homestead was constructed in June 2010. These culverts are moving excess water from the canal to rehydrate wetlands along Biscayne Bay. The wetlands filter water before it reaches the bay and provide wildlife habitat.
- Design of the Cutler flow-way is complete. Like the Deering Estate project, this flow-way will also help spread water across coastal wetlands.
- Additionally, the District coordinated with the Miami-Dade County Parks and Recreation Department to develop an educational site on the Deering Estate property.

The Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands Restoration Project is a component of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan, a framework for restoring, protecting and preserving the water resources of central and southern Florida. CERP is a 50-50 partnership between the State of Florida and the federal government. The State of Florida and the South Florida Water Management District have invested approximately \$2.4 billion toward this effort, including approximately \$300 million in construction. Through June 30, 2011, approximately 60 percent — or 243,149 acres — of the estimated lands needed to implement CERP have been acquired.

Click [here](#) for a more information about the Deering Estate flow-way project. For more information on the District's Everglades restoration efforts, please visit www.sfwmd.gov/everglades.

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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.