



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

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SFWMD Moves L-8 Reservoir Project Forward

Pump station construction to achieve reservoir's full functionality for water storage and delivery



The L-8 Reservoir will add 15 billion gallons of water storage when complete – enough to cover 24,000 football fields with a foot of water.

West Palm Beach, FL – The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) has taken a major step this month toward completion and operation of the L-8 Reservoir Project. The District issued a Request for Qualifications from engineering and construction firms to design and build a massive pump station needed to move water out of the reservoir and deliver it to the natural systems. Located in Palm Beach County, the L-8 Reservoir Project will increase water storage and delivery to help benefit South Florida's ecosystem and sustain regional water supplies.

“The ability to capture rainfall and store additional water is critical to a sustainable water supply, flood control and a healthy environment,” said SFWMD Executive Director Melissa Meeker. “Moving forward with this reservoir's pump station design and construction represents meaningful progress in our ability to get this regional project operating, expand water storage and reduce freshwater discharges to tide.”

The L-8 Reservoir is a unique, 950-acre former rock mine with a watertight geology that allows for deep, below-ground storage, which minimizes water loss through

evaporation and eliminates levee safety concerns. Initially approved in 2002, the project is capable of storing 15 billion gallons of water, enough to fill 24,000 football fields one foot deep. Once the pump station is constructed, the District will be able to pump water from 40 feet deep in the reservoir at a rate of 450 cubic feet per second – comparable to the pressure in more than 150 fire hydrants. At an estimated project cost of \$6,000 per acre-foot, the project is less costly than constructing an aboveground reservoir.

The L-8 Reservoir has already provided regional water resource benefits, including:

- The City of West Palm Beach was able to utilize more than 600 million gallons of water from the reservoir for water supply during the historic 2007 drought and to again draw from the reservoir during a prolonged dry period in 2011.
- During a 2011 pilot project, the District used small pumps to send fresh water from the reservoir north to benefit the federally designated “Wild and Scenic” Loxahatchee River.
- FPL has used reservoir water for its cooling system, reducing the demand on groundwater supplies.
- The reservoir also was used for flood control to protect local communities during major rain events, including the 2004 and 2005 hurricanes.

This week, the District hosted an informational meeting and site tour for firms interested in submitting qualifications for the L-8 pump station design and construction. The meeting drew more than 100 attendees. After staff review of the submittals, which are due March 27, and Governing Board direction, the District will issue a request for technical proposals from the approved list of qualifying firms.

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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.