



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

# NEWS RELEASE

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## **SFWMD Approves Pump Construction for Everglades Restoration Reservoir**

*Storage reservoir plus pumping capability to improve Everglades water flows, water quality*



*(The L-8 Reservoir will add 15 billion gallons of water storage when complete – enough to cover 34,000 football fields with a foot of water. Click on the picture for a larger version.)*

**West Palm Beach, FL** – The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) today awarded a contract for design and construction of a pump station and 6 massive pumps that will deliver water to the Everglades and natural systems from the 15 billion gallon L-8 Reservoir in Palm Beach County.

This milestone paves the way for the L-8 Reservoir to provide some of the increased water storage that is essential for Everglades restoration. With the \$63.9 million contract award, the District will begin work to design and construct the pumping facility, which can pull water from 40 feet below the surface.

“Constructing the L-8 pump station allows us to take full advantage of this reservoir’s capabilities,” said SFWMD Executive Director Melissa L. Meeker. “When completed, the project will meaningfully expand water storage south of Lake Okeechobee, reduce freshwater discharges to tide and maximize water quality improvement capabilities to the Everglades.”

The L-8 Reservoir is included in a suite of projects in the State’s \$880 million plan to

improve water quality in the Everglades. Governor Rick Scott, who first proposed the restoration strategy, announced earlier this week that the Florida Department of Environmental Protection has issued the necessary state and federal permits to move forward with the water-cleaning and water storage projects in the plan.

Initially, the deep-ground reservoir will capture, store and deliver water to the federally designated “Wild and Scenic” Loxahatchee River and protect water quality in the Lake Worth Lagoon. The reservoir will eventually become one of three Flow Equalization Basins in the restoration strategies plan, providing 99,000 acre-feet of storage for delivery of consistent flows needed to optimize performance of the region’s Stormwater Treatment Areas. The District is working with Palm Beach County to acquire their Mecca property to construct replacement storage and continue delivering water to the Loxahatchee River as the L-8 Reservoir transitions to operating as a Flow Equalization Basin.

To safeguard taxpayer investment in the project, the District included several contract provisions to ensure operating costs such as power do not rise above set targets. The contractor, Archer Western Contractors, must also meet construction and operating deadlines.

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

- Approximately 3.1 billion gallons of water from Tropical Storm Isaac were directed into the reservoir to help alleviate flooding from historic rainfall in Palm Beach County.
- The City of West Palm Beach utilized more than 600 million gallons of water from the reservoir for water supply during the historic 2007 drought and again drew 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 Loxahatchee River.
- Florida Power & Light (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.

<b>L-8 Reservoir Quick Facts</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>950-acre former rock mine</b></li><li>• <b>Watertight geology allows for deep, below-ground storage</b></li><li>• <b>Below-ground storage minimizes water loss through seepage and minimizes levee safety concerns</b></li><li>• <b>Initially approved in 2002, the project is capable of storing 15 billion gallons of water</b></li><li>• <b>This is enough to fill 34,000 football fields one foot deep</b></li><li>• <b>The reservoir will be able to accept up to 3,000 cubic feet per second of inflow from the L-8 Canal</b></li></ul>

**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.*