

2012 WATER WATCH

Keeping an Eye on Water Resources

District-Wide Conditions for April 23, 2012

The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) is issuing the following briefing:

The region remains under a water shortage warning.

Portions of the 16-county South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) received up to 3 inches of rainfall during the past three days. This will help with short-term recharge of both surface and groundwater supplies, but the region is still facing a 5.85-inch rainfall deficit with the height of the dry season in April and May.

Weekend rainfall provided some basin runoff to the Caloosahatchee River and Estuary. Conditions remain favorable for the potential formation of algal blooms in the river. Earlier this month, in anticipation of potential algal bloom formation, the SFWMD Governing Board authorized staff to recommend short-duration freshwater releases from Lake Okeechobee, if conditions warrant.

Based on the best available data and science collected over the last nine days, staff today recommended to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers the immediate start of a three-day pulse release of 2,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) from Lake Okeechobee into the Caloosahatchee, as measured at the S-79 structure located in Alva, east of Fort Myers.

Without additional rainfall, water levels will continue to decline through the remainder of the dry season, and there is a potential to return to water shortage conditions in the coming weeks. Water conservation is essential to stretch regional supplies.

Lake Okeechobee Levels

Today	11.86 feet
Historical Average for Today	13.78 feet
This Date One Year Ago	11.16 feet
One Month Ago	12.62 feet
One Week Ago	11.81 feet

Water Levels in Key Locations (as of April 23, 2012)

LOCATION	WATER LEVEL	ONE WEEK AGO	HISTORICAL AVERAGE FOR TODAY
Lake Istokpoga	38.51 feet	38.49 feet	38.50 feet
WCA-1	15.98 feet	15.64 feet	14.81 feet

WCA-2	10.85 feet	10.56 feet	11.07 feet
WCA-3	9.16 feet	9.08 feet	8.91 feet
Lake Kissimmee	49.69 feet	49.65 feet	49.89 feet
For a map of dry season rainfall totals since Nov. 1 in all District basins, click here.			

Water Conservation Measures

- South Florida is under the District’s Year-Round Landscape Irrigation Rule that limits residential and business landscape irrigation to two or three days per week based on location.
 - Some city and county governments have adopted local ordinances that differ from the District rule and may further limit landscape irrigation. To determine watering days and times in your area, contact your local government or visit www.sfwmd.gov/2days.
 - Note: Customers of the West Palm Beach and Lake Worth utilities remain under local orders that limit landscape irrigation to one day per week.
- Permitted water users such as nurseries, agriculture, golf courses and utilities are required to continue following the water use conditions in their permits.
 - Copies of water use permits can be found in the Application/Permit records search online at www.sfwmd.gov/ePermitting.
- For information about water conservation, visit www.savewaterfl.com.
- Information about current weather and water conditions can be found at www.sfwmd.gov/waterwatch.

Other Actions

Lake Okeechobee releases

- On April 12, the South Florida Water Management District Governing Board provided guidance to recommend a short-duration pulse release from Lake Okeechobee, if conditions warrant, to minimize algal blooms in the Caloosahatchee River. District staff have been conducting extensive water quality testing along more than 40 miles of the river to evaluate the potential for algal bloom formation and to determine the optimal timing and duration of recommended pulse releases.

Navigation

- Starting April 16, the following locks on the north shore of Lake Okeechobee were closed due to low lake levels:
 - S-135 at J&S Fish Camp in Martin County
 - G-36 at Henry Creek in Okeechobee County
 - S-127 at Buckhead Ridge in Glades County
 - S-131 at Lakeport in Glades County
- The S-193 Lock, located on Taylor Creek on the north shore of Lake Okeechobee, is closed due to ongoing renovation work to refurbish the lock and ensure decades of reliable service.

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