

PUBLIC (THURLOW-LIPPI SCH)



District Actions to Reduce Harmful Discharges to Northern Estuaries

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CAROLYN TIMMANN
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By WV D.C.

In response to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' October 9, 2020 announcement of likely discharges planned between October 13-14, 2020 to the northern estuaries from Lake Okeechobee, South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) created this webpage to share operational updates from the District. Updates to this page will be provided as they become available.

Related: October 9, 2020 Statement from Chairman Chauncey Goss

(<https://www.sfwmd.gov/news-events/news/district-remains-laser-focused-sending-water-south>)

SFWMD is doing all we can to help manage Lake Okeechobee levels to avoid and shorten the duration of future harmful discharge of lake water to the northern estuaries. Everglades restoration projects like the EAA Reservoir Projects remain a top priority for the South Florida Water Management District to reduce harmful estuary discharges in the future.

Throughout the wet season (since June), SFWMD held extra water in Lake Kissimmee to keep it from reaching Lake Okeechobee from the north. SFWMD will continue to hold water back.

There are currently no reported algal blooms near the discharge structures on Lake Okeechobee. Algae is reported in the center of Lake Okeechobee. *Photo taken October 11, 2020 in the center of Lake Okeechobee by SFWMD Governing Board Member Jacqui Thurlow-Lippisch.*

Operational Updates by South Florida Water Management District:

- For the last several weeks, SFWMD took aggressive action to send as much water south as possible. This will continue. This includes sending:
 - 300 cubic feet per second (200 million gallons per day) from Lake Okeechobee to storage in the L-8 Flow Equalization Basin in Palm Beach County.
 - 300 cubic feet per second (200 million gallons per day) from Lake Okeechobee into STA 3/4 in Palm Beach County
 - 200 cubic feet per second (130 million gallons per day) from Lake Okeechobee into STA 2 in Palm Beach County
- The District will continue to move as much water south as possible recognizing the Central Everglades is already suffering from high water levels.
- The District can utilize several key storage areas to reduce harmful estuary discharges if the start including:
 - Caulkins Dispersed Water Management in Martin County
 - Nicodemus Slough Dispersed Water Management Project in Glades County
 - Brighton Valley and West Water Hole Dispersed Water Management Project in Highlands County
 - Lake Hicopochee in Glades County
 - BOMA Above Ground Impoundments in Glades County
- Discharges of up to 600 cubic feet per second (400 million gallons per day) to the Lake Wort Lagoon will begin when discharges begin to the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee Estuaries.

