

RIVERS COALITION UPDATE – May 29, 2014

Lake Okeechobee Conditions

As of Tuesday, Lake Okeechobee is at 12.54 feet NGVD

District News

At a joint briefing of the District and the National Weather Service on May 20th, it was reported that South Florida's water levels are at seasonally normal levels heading into the 2014 wet season, which is forecasted to produce near to slightly below-average precipitation.

Released May 20, the National Weather Service's 2014 wet season forecast calls for:

- A late start to the rainy season (Median start is May 20 on the southeast coast and May 27 in the interior and west coast.)
- Near to slightly below-average precipitation, with June potentially being the wettest month relative to normal
- Above-normal temperatures, 1-2 degrees Fahrenheit, more noticeable in the overnight/early morning
- El Niño to develop during the summer, which typically places South Florida in a transition zone between Caribbean dryness and slightly more precipitation across the southeast U.S.

May 14, 2014 – Governing Board Meeting

Strategic implementation of the District's many Everglades restoration projects continues to be one of the Board's highest priorities.

A project that was singled out this month is the Bolles Canal, the only east-west conveyance in a key area of the Everglades system just south of Lake Okeechobee. Several years ago, the District developed conceptual plans to expand the canal in order to increase water management flexibility.

The Board directed staff to move forward with completing the canal expansion, and construction could begin next year.

Part of this month's Board meeting was a public hearing to finalize a water reservation for the C-43 West Basin Storage Reservoir project. When constructed, the C-43 Reservoir will provide up to 170,000 acre-feet of storage, a much-needed resource for improving conditions in the Caloosahatchee River and Estuary.

May 2014 Indian River Lagoon Seagrass Update

Seagrass was monitored at Boy Scout Island and Willoughby Creek on May 13, 2014.

Salinity was high (BSI –36.4; WC –36.6) and visibility good.

Willoughby Creek:

Seagrass was present in all 30 quadrants. Shoal grass percent occurrence increased over the past month, while a slight decline occurred for Johnson's seagrass and Filamentous algae was less abundant than in

Boy Scout Island

Manatee grass percent occurrence remained similar to that observed in April 2014. All 30 quadrants contained manatee grass. However, manatee grass density remains low across the site which enabled Johnson's seagrass to expand. Canopy height increased from a mean of 8 cm in April to a mean of 15 cm in May. As in April, evidence of grazing (cropped manatee grass) was apparent at the site. Monthly monitoring through October will help document whether manatee grass recovery will continue.

C-44 Construction Update

Update on what is happening with the C-44 project:

C-44 Contract 1 (USCOE) – construction slated for completion July 2014 (constructed the C-400 Intake Canal, the C-133 Canal, and Citrus Boulevard improvements).

C-44 Interim System Discharge Spillway – currently out for bid – construction from July 2014 to September 2014 (allows 5.5 feet of water to be retained on the C-44 Project Site)

C-44 System Discharge – currently out for bid – construction from August 2014 to November 2015 (S-404 System Discharge Spillway and C-402 System Discharge Canal)

C-44 STA – issue for bid in July 2014 – construction from October 2014 to July 2017 (six STA Cells with 6,300 wetted acres)

C-44 Pump Station – issue for bid January 2015 – construction from April 2015 to September 2017 (1,100 cfs electric pump station)

C-44 Contract 2 (USCOE) – construction from July 2015 to August 2018 (50,600 ac-ft reservoir)

Other associated projects that are currently in some phase of construction include the TIWCD Permanent Pump Station, C-133 Wetlands and the Intake Canal Erosion Protection Project.

Upcoming Meetings

June 5

Water Resources Advisory Commission Meeting
9 a.m., SFWMD B-1 Auditorium, 3301 Gun Club Road, West Palm Beach

June 11

Governing Board Workshop
1 p.m., Osceola County

June 12

Governing Board Meeting
9 a.m., 1 Courthouse Square Osceola County Administration Office 4th Floor
Kissimmee, FL

June 16

Water Resources Advisory Commission – Recreational Issues Workshop
9 a.m., SFWMD B-1 Auditorium, 3301 Gun Club Road, West Palm Beach