



# Northern Everglades and Estuaries Protection Program (NEEPP)

Progress Update – March 2024

## SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT (SFWMD) PROGRESS UPDATE

In accordance with NEEPP (§373.4595(6), Florida Statutes), the NEEPP Annual Progress Report in Chapter 8A of the Final 2024 *South Florida Environmental Report (SFER)* – Volume I, along with the Watershed Protection Plan annual reviews for Lake Okeechobee Watershed (Chapter 8B), St. Lucie River Watershed (Chapter 8C), and Caloosahatchee River Watershed (Chapter 8D), were web-published by SFWMD on March 1, 2024 ([SFWMD.gov/SFER](https://www.sfwmd.gov/SFER)). Chapter 8A was prepared by SFWMD in collaboration with DEP and FDACS to also report on the most recent updates of the state's BMAP and BMP progress in the Northern Everglades.

This year's consolidated reporting includes both the SFER-wide and chapter-specific *Highlights* that showcase our agencies' notable achievements and successes over the past year covered in the full ~3,000-page, three-volume publication. Moreover, this captures our project milestones accomplished during 2023 across the Northern Everglades – including NEEPP priorities outlined in Governor DeSantis' Executive Order 23-06: Achieving *Even More Now* for Florida's Environment (see Chapter 8A project spotlights in map and table below).

## INTERAGENCY SPOTLIGHT

On March 5, 2024, Coordinating Agencies' leadership met in person to discuss our ongoing collective work to implement the state's **Executive Order 23-06 (Achieving Even More Now for Florida's Environment)**.

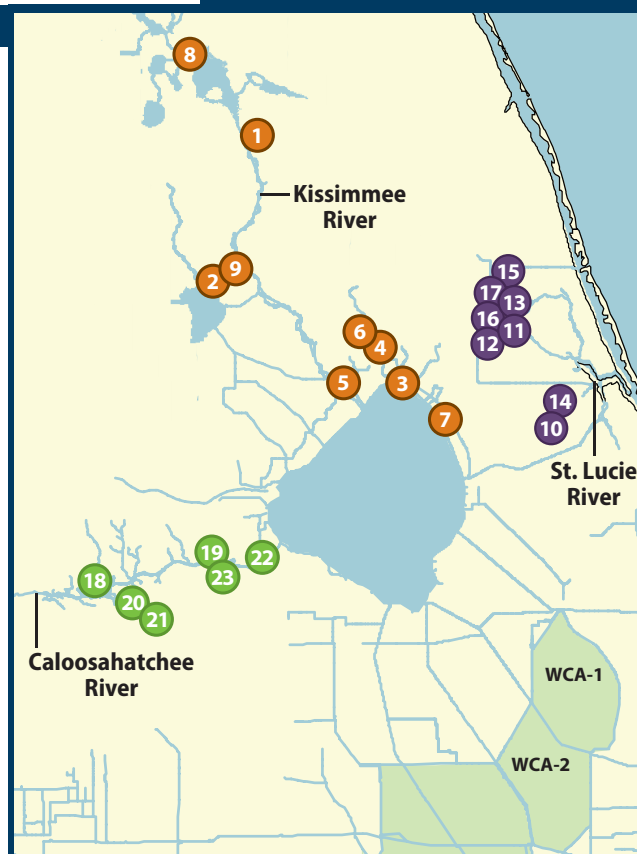
Importantly, key priorities of Executive Order 23-06 include expediting Everglades restoration projects and supporting the management of Lake Okeechobee to reduce harmful discharges and send more water south, strengthening Basin Management Action Plans (BMAPs), and improving agricultural Best Management Practices (BMPs).

Key highlights of SFWMD-led Watershed Construction Projects in Northern Everglades watersheds during 2023.

### MAJOR PROJECT MILESTONES

#PROJECT	FY2023 ACCOMPLISHMENT	PROJECTED CONSTRUCTION COMPLETION
<b>LAKE OKEECHOBEE WATERSHED</b>		
1. El Maximo Ranch Dispersed Water Management	Advanced Construction	2024
2. Aquaculture – Lake Istokpoga	Initiated Planning and Design	2024
3. S-191 Innovative Treatment Technologies	Updated Study Design, Began Construction	2024
4. TCNS 214 Storage and Treatment	Initiated Planning and Design	2026
5. Lower Kissimmee Basin STA	Continued Planning and Design Efforts	2027
6. Grassy Island Flow Equalization Basin	Continued Conceptual Design	2026
7. Brady Ranch Flow Equalization Basin	Continued Conceptual Design	2027
8. Headwater Lakes Regulation Schedule*	Continued Design	2027
9. Kissimmee River Restoration – Operations*	Continued Design	2031
<b>ST. LUCIE RIVER WATERSHED</b>		
10. C-44 Reservoir and STA*	Continued Operational Testing & Monitoring	2021
11. Ideal 1000	Initiated Planning	2024
12. C-23/C-24 District Lands Hydrolic Enhancements	Initiated Planning	2025
13. C-23/C-24 STA*	Advanced Construction	2025
14. C-23/C-44 Interconnect Canal*	Advanced Construction	2025
15. C-25 Reservoir and STA*	Continued Design	2028
16. C-23/C-24 South Reservoir*	Continued Design	2030
17. C-23/C-24 North Reservoir*	Continued Design	2030
<b>CALOOSAHATCHEE RIVER WATERSHED</b>		
18. ALJO Four Corners Rapid Infiltration	Completed Construction, Began Operations	2023
19. C-43 Water Quality Treatment & Testing Facility, Phase II, Test Cells	Began Construction	2024
20. C-43 Reservoir Water Quality Component*	Continued Permitting and Design	2025
21. C-43 West Basin Storage Reservoir*	Advanced Construction	2025
22. Lake Hicpochee Expansion, Phase II*	Continued Design	2026
23. Boma Flow Equalization Basin	Continued Design	2027

\*Priority Projects under Executive Order 19-12, Achieving More Now for Florida's Environment.





## FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (DEP) PROGRESS UPDATE

DEP is working closely with the Coordinating Agencies to prepare for the next annual BMAP meetings for the Caloosahatchee River and Estuary/Everglades West Coast, St. Lucie River and Estuary, and Lake Okeechobee, in April. The annual meeting for Lake Okeechobee will also cover the next 5-Year Review for the BMAP, which is planned to be published in December 2024. All three meetings will be held via webinar as follows:

- ▶ April 2, 2024: Caloosahatchee River and Estuary/Everglades West Coast Annual Meeting ([Registration Link](#))
- ▶ April 3, 2024: St. Lucie River and Estuary Annual Meeting ([Registration Link](#))
- ▶ April 4, 2024: Lake Okeechobee Annual Meeting and 5-Year Review Kick-off ([Registration Link](#))

DEP is reviewing Clean Waterways Act (CWA) wastewater and onsite sewage treatment and disposal system (OSTDS) draft remediation plans from local governments as part of the 2025 BMAP update process. Draft plans were due by February 1, 2024, and the final plans are due by August 1, 2024. To date, DEP has received over 100 draft remediation plans. More information on these plans can be found at [floridadep.gov/dear/water-quality-restoration/content/clean-waterways-act-requirements-wastewater-onsite-sewage](https://floridadep.gov/dear/water-quality-restoration/content/clean-waterways-act-requirements-wastewater-onsite-sewage).

## FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND CONSUMER SERVICES (FDACS) PROGRESS UPDATE

As of February 1, 2024, FDACS has completed 86% of required implementation verifications (IVs) for agricultural operations within the NEEPP boundary. IV completion increased as more of the enrolled producers whose IVs were deferred due to impacts of Hurricanes Ian and Nicole are having IVs completed. FDACS continues to collect and retain required nutrient application records as IVs are conducted.

FDACS Office of Agricultural Water Policy (OAWP) is working to revise nine existing Florida agricultural Best Management Practices (BMP) manuals and rules. As part of this effort, OAWP is also creating a new manual to enroll livestock types, such as goats, sheep, swine, and more exotic animals, that do not currently have a BMP manual available. The notice of rule development for the Sod Manual was published on February 13, 2024, and OAWP expects the notice of rule development for the Cattle Manual to follow shortly. Work groups for the other manuals are scheduling meetings and have started drafting needed revisions.

### A LOOK AHEAD

#### April 2, 3, and 4, 2024

DEP's Northern Everglades BMAP annual public meetings via webinar. Further updates on the BMAP meetings are available at [floridadep.gov/dear/water-quality-restoration/content/bmap-public-meetings](https://floridadep.gov/dear/water-quality-restoration/content/bmap-public-meetings).

#### April 10 and 11, 2024

An Open House, showcasing informational posters by the report authors and contributors of the 2024 SFER, will be held at SFWMD headquarters in West Palm Beach.

For more information, visit [SFWMD.gov/Meetings](https://SFWMD.gov/Meetings).

*Mouth of Caloosahatchee River Estuary, San Carlos Bay*

