

CHAPTER 8A: NORTHERN EVERGLADES AND ESTUARIES PROTECTION PROGRAM ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT

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HIGHLIGHTS

Protecting the Lake Okeechobee Watershed

The Lake Okeechobee Watershed (LOW) encompasses over 3.4 million acres across Lake Okeechobee and nine subwatersheds. During the 2025 reporting period, seven SFWMD-led watershed construction projects in the LOW were in planning/design and 20 projects were operational.

WY2025 Project Performance

- Over 95,000 ac-ft per year of dynamic storage
- More than 28 t of TP retention
- Approximately 265 t of TN retention



Bird's eye view of Lake Okeechobee.



Red mangrove in the St. Lucie Estuary.

Protecting the St. Lucie River Watershed

The St. Lucie River Watershed (SLRW) encompasses 635,767 acres across six basins⁶. During the 2025 reporting period, five SFWMD-led watershed construction projects in the SLRW were in planning/design, six projects were under construction, and eight projects were operational.

WY2025 Project Performance

- Over 71,000 ac-ft per year of dynamic storage
- More than 21 t of TP retention
- More than 127 t of TN retention

Protecting the Caloosahatchee River Watershed

The Caloosahatchee River Watershed (CRW) encompasses over 1.1 million acres across four basins. During the 2025 reporting period, three SFWMD-led watershed construction projects in the CRW were in planning/design, three projects were under construction, and four projects were operational.

WY2025 Project Performance

- Over 26,000 ac-ft per year of dynamic storage
- More than 7 t of TP retention
- More than 53 t of TN retention



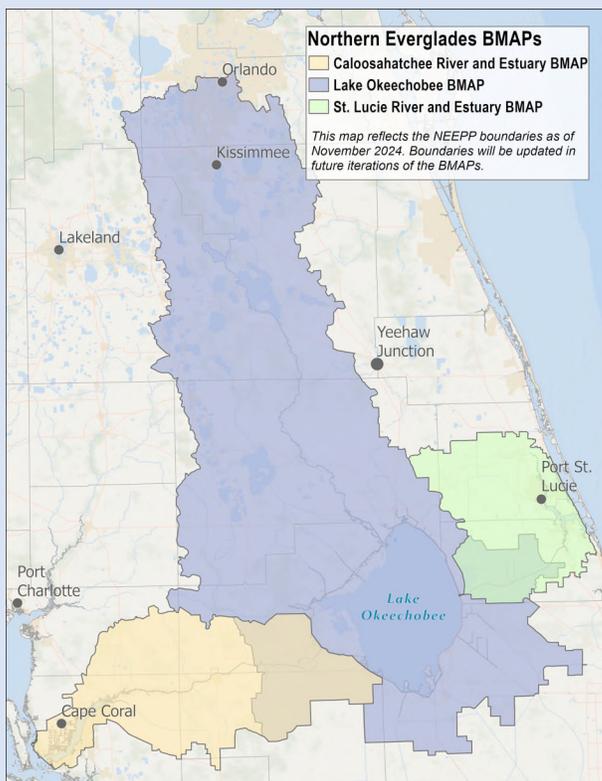
Oyster reef in the Caloosahatchee River Estuary.

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NEEPP Accomplishments and Successes

FDEP Basin Management Action Plans

STAR Spotlights Even More Progress on BMAPs

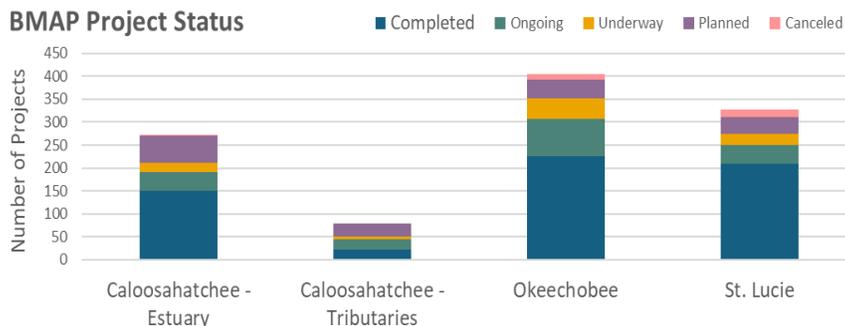


Progress continues on FDEP’s basin management action plans (BMAPs) designed to implement nutrient reductions established by the total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) for the Northern Everglades watersheds (see latest BMAP project status below).

The 2024 *Statewide Annual Report on Total Maximum Daily Loads, Basin Management Action Plans, Minimum Flows or Minimum Water Levels, and Recovery or Prevention Strategies* (STAR) details progress made through December 31, 2024, including implementation of the NEEPP BMAPs (FDEP 2025d).

For more information on the STAR, visit FloridaDEP.gov/star.

BMAP Project Status



NEEPP Watershed Loading Models Aid in BMAP Implementation

FDEP is developing and updating Hydrological Simulation Program - FORTRAN (HSPF) models for all three Northern Everglades and Estuaries Protection Program (NEEPP) watersheds. The Caloosahatchee River and Estuary HSPF was updated with the most current land use information and incorporates more water quality data for calibration. Utilizing the ArcGIS-based Nutrient Loading Estimation Toolkit, Python created improved estimations of nutrient contributions from onsite sewage and treatment disposal systems. The Caloosahatchee model update will be completed by the end of 2025. HSPF models for the St. Lucie River and Estuary and LOW are also being developed and anticipated to be completed in 2026 and 2027, respectively. Model results will be used to reassess starting nutrient loads and allocated reductions assigned to stakeholders in the next BMAP updates.

2025 BMAPs Expand Water Quality Protections

FDEP completed statewide updates to all nutrient-related BMAPs, including the Lake Okeechobee and St. Lucie and River watersheds, which were adopted by Secretarial Order on June 27, 2025. These updated restoration plans incorporate requirements from recent laws as well as expanded policies for remediation of nutrient sources in the BMAPs. Importantly, these BMAPs establish compliance milestones for enforcement of BMAP requirements and nutrient reduction goals, thereby strengthening water quality protections for the region. Following delayed implementation due to requests for extension of time, the 2025 updates to the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee BMAPs went into effect on November 25, 2025. Implementation of the 2025 Lake Okeechobee BMAP remains unresolved.

Water Quality Grant Programs Advance Across the Northern Everglades

FDEP administers several grant programs intended to assist local stakeholder implement nutrient-reducing projects in the Northern Everglades. State grants are available to local government for projects addressing nonpoint source management, water quality improvement, and innovative technologies to combat algal blooms. For information on the grant, including awards, visit ProtectingFloridaTogether.gov.

NEEPP Accomplishments and Successes

FDACS Office of Agricultural Water Policy Program

Implementation of the Agricultural Non-Point Source Program

FDACS continues to collaborate with agricultural producers to implement best management practices (BMPs) for nutrient reduction, irrigation management, and protection of water resources both state-wide and across the Northern Everglades region.

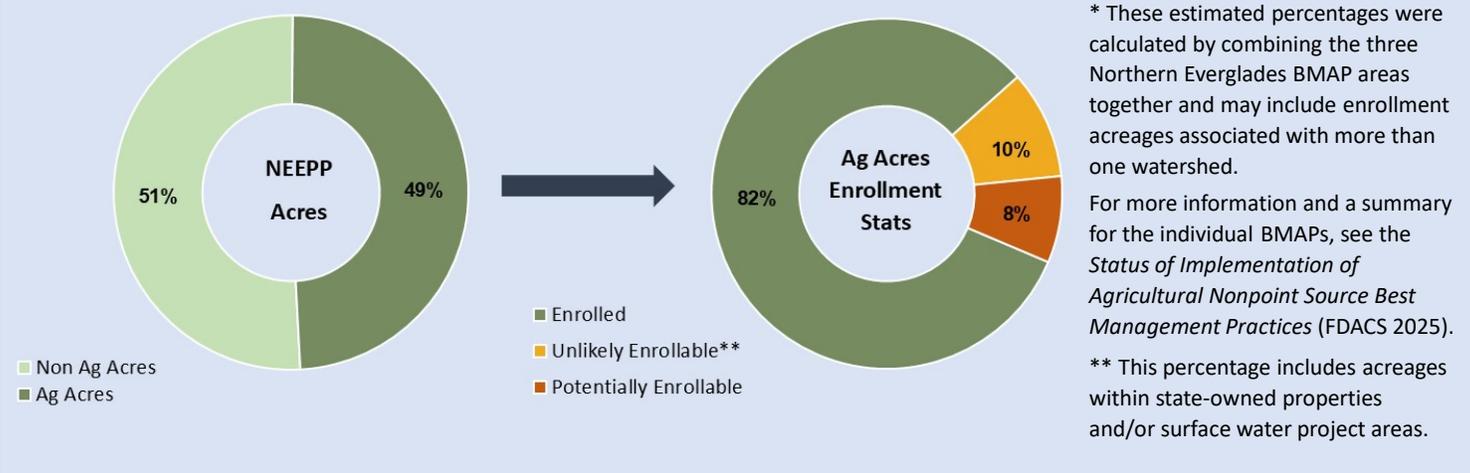
As of February 28, 2025, FDACS enrolled a total of 2,165,500 agricultural acres in the Northern Everglades watersheds. The percent of agricultural lands located within the Northern Everglades BMAPs and enrollment information is summarized in the graphic below.

FDACS Enrollment in the Northern Everglades (as of February 28, 2025)

- 1,513,426 agricultural acres in the LOW
- 278,459 agricultural acres in the SLRW
- 373,615 agricultural acres in the CRW

Further details on FDACS BMP enrollment and implementation for each watershed is available at <https://www.fdacs.gov/divisions-offices/agricultural-water-policy>.

Status of Agricultural Lands within the NEEPP Boundary*



Program Spotlights: *Even More Progress on NEEPP BMPs*

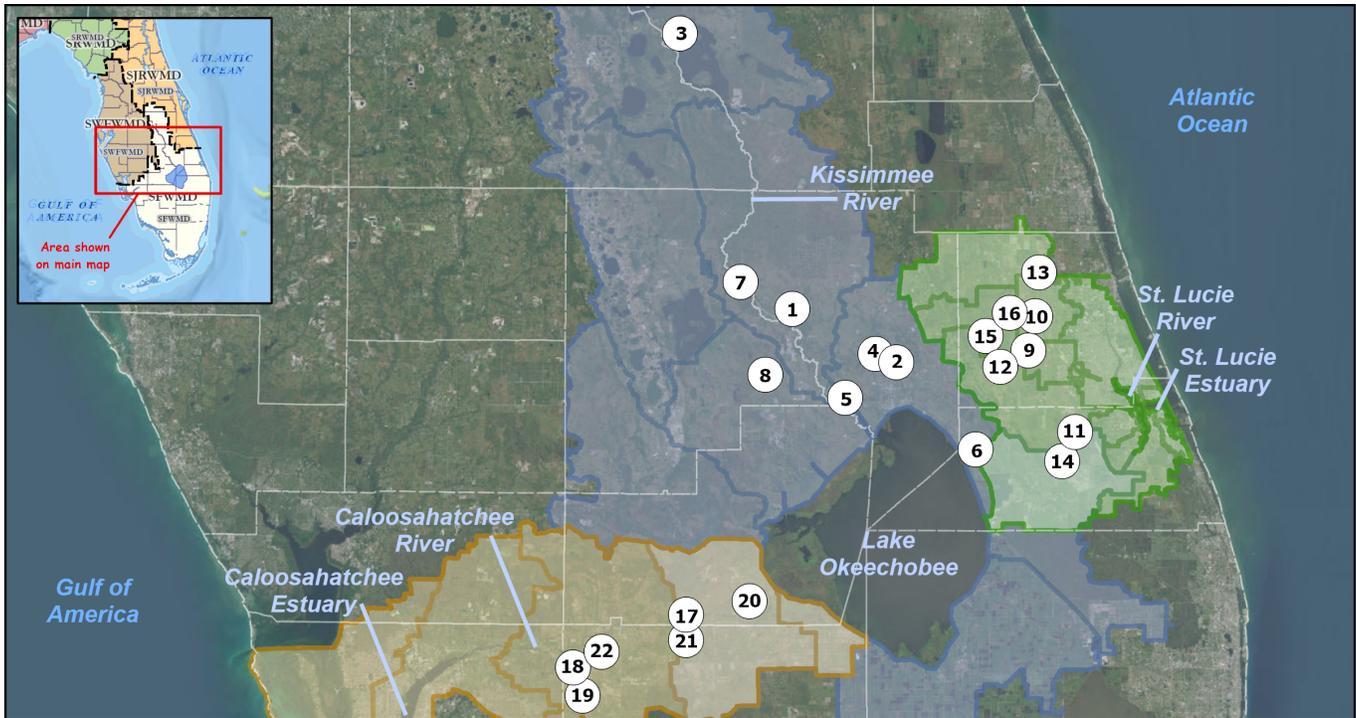
During 2024, FDACS Office of Agricultural Water Policy (OAWP) worked with stakeholders to update nine of the existing agricultural BMP manuals and develop a new BMP manual for small farms and specialty livestock. As of March 2025, all 10 manuals were adopted by rule. Collectively, these manuals reflect advancements in agricultural science, water quality research, and on-the-ground practices. The new manuals can be found at <https://www.fdacs.gov/Agriculture-Industry/Best-Management-Practices-BMPs>.

FDACS is initiating new regional water quality projects in the NEEPP watersheds. These projects include completing planning and design efforts for a new floating aquatic vegetation treatment (FAVT) project in Arbuckle Creek and constructing free stall barns for three dairies in the Taylor Creek/Nubbin Slough and Lake Istokpoga subwatersheds to reduce nutrient runoff and improve regional water quality in the area.

Three updated FDACS informational videos are also now available online which highlight the BMP program: *What is a BMP?*, *What Is an IV Site Visit?*, and *How Do I Enroll in the BMP Program?*. All 11 videos in total can be viewed at <https://www.fdacs.gov/Agriculture-Industry/Best-Management-Practices-BMPs>.

NEEPP Accomplishments and Successes

SFWMD-Led Watershed Construction Projects



MAJOR PROJECT MILESTONES

# PROJECT	FY2025 ACCOMPLISHMENT	PROJECTED CONSTRUCTION COMPLETION DATE
LAKE OKEECHOBEE WATERSHED		
1. Basinger Dairy Legacy Phosphorus	Completed Design and Initiated Construction	2026
2. TCNS 214 Storage and Treatment	Continued Planning and Design Efforts	2027
3. Kissimmee River Headwaters Revitalization Schedule*	Continued Implementing First Phase of Schedule (known as HRS Increment 1 Deviation)	2027
4. Grassy Island FEB	Completed Conceptual Design	2029
5. Lower Kissimmee Basin STA	Continued Planning and Design Efforts	2030
6. Brady Ranch FEB	Completed Conceptual Design	2031
7. Kissimmee River Restoration – Operations*	Continued Evaluation of Restoration Efforts	2031
8. Lake Okeechobee Component A Reservoir (LOCAR)*	Initiated Preliminary Design	TBD
ST. LUCIE RIVER WATERSHED		
9. Ideal 1000	Under Development/Planning	TBD
10. C-23/C-24 STA*	Advanced Construction	2026
11. C-23 Estuary Discharge Diversion*	Advanced Construction	2026
12. C-23/C-24 District Lands Hydrologic Enhancements	Initiated Design	2026
13. C-25 Reservoir and STA*	Advanced Construction	2032
14. C-44 Reservoir and STA*	Continued Operational Testing and Monitoring	2032
15. C-23/C-24 South Reservoir*	Advanced Construction	2032
16. C-23/C-24 North Reservoir*	Advanced Construction	2034
CALOOSAHATCHEE RIVER WATERSHED		
17. C-43 Water Quality Treatment & Testing Facility – Phase II, Test Cells	Completed Construction and Initiated Research	2025
18. C-43 West Basin Storage Reservoir*	Final Phase of Construction/Opened	2025
19. C-43 Reservoir Water Quality Component*	Advanced Construction	2025
20. Lake Hicpochee Expansion, Phase II*	Initiated Construction	2028
21. Boma FEB	Continued Design	2029
22. Berry Groves District Lands Enhancement	Initiated Conceptual Design	2030

EVEN MORE PROGRESS TOWARD NEEPP GOALS

Water Storage Benefits in the Northern Everglades



SFWMD-owned land at Berry Groves in Hendry County.

During WY2025, a total of 28 watershed construction projects were operational in the Northern Everglades watersheds, including both DWM and other regional restoration projects that provide water storage benefits. Together, these projects provided an estimated storage volume of 192,521 ac-ft (237.5 cubic meters) across the region.

As a major restoration milestone, SFWMD, in partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, opened the Caloosahatchee River (C-43) West Basin Storage Reservoir in July 2025. With a 160,000-acre-foot storage capacity, the reservoir will reduce harmful flows of water from Lake Okeechobee and the local watershed during the wet season and deliver beneficial freshwater flows to the Caloosahatchee River Estuary during the dry season.

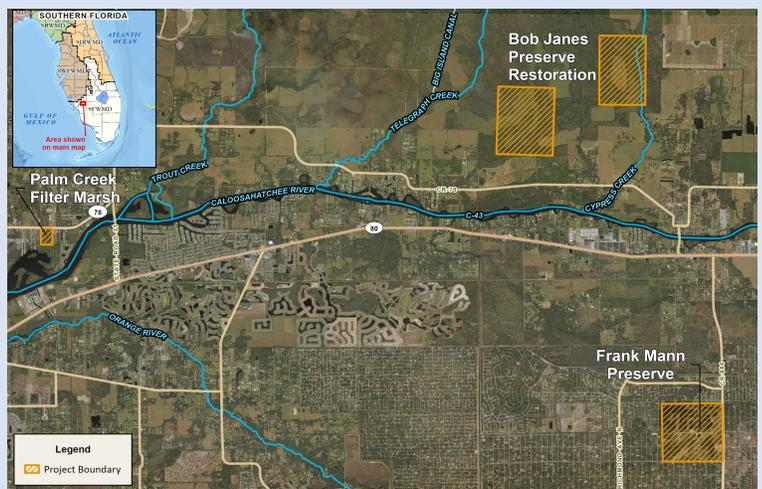
Also in 2025, SFWMD began conceptual design for the Berry Groves District Lands Enhancement project. On 1,900 acres directly north of the C-43 Reservoir, the planned project will improve public lands to retain rainfall and improve drainage control, while enhancing existing wetland function and improving wildlife habitat.

Project Spotlight: Caloosahatchee Water Quality Improvement Grant Projects

In January 2024, Governor Ron DeSantis and the Florida Legislature approved over \$30 million for water quality improvement projects that benefit the Caloosahatchee River and Estuary.

Subsequently, in March 2025, the SFWMD Governing Board authorized entering into new agreements with grant-eligible local governments for three Caloosahatchee River Water Quality Improvement Grant projects—Lee County's Palm Creek Lower Filter Marsh and Bob Janes Preserve projects, and Lehigh Acres Municipal Services Improvement District's Frank Mann Preserve Project—with construction planned for completion in 2027 and 2028, respectively.

Importantly, these projects will assist in meeting the state's TMDL goal for total nitrogen, and provide water storage and treatment, flood protection, aquifer recharge, and water quality benefits for the Caloosahatchee River Estuary.



Water quality improvements are critical to oyster health in the river estuary.

Visit [SFWMD.gov/WPPs](https://www.sfwmd.gov/WPPs) for more information on the Northern Everglades Watershed Protection Plans.

INTRODUCTION

In 2007, the Florida legislature amended the Lake Okeechobee Protection Act to the [Northern Everglades and Estuaries Protection Program \(NEEPP; Section 373.4595, Florida Statutes \[F.S.\]](#)) to expand the program to cover the entire Northern Everglades watersheds, including the Lake Okeechobee Watershed (LOW), and the St. Lucie River Watershed (SLRW) and Caloosahatchee River Watershed (CRW) and associated estuaries (**Figure 8A-1**). In 2016, NEEPP was amended to emphasize Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) basin management action plans (BMAPs) for the Northern Everglades and to further define roles and responsibilities, coordination, implementation, and reporting efforts among the three Coordinating Agencies—FDEP, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS), and South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) (**Figure 8A-2**). Together, the Coordinating Agencies are jointly responsible for implementing NEEPP, each with specific areas of responsibility. In agreement with the NEEPP legislation, FDEP is the lead on water quality protection measures through BMAPs adopted pursuant to [Section 403.067, F.S.](#); SFWMD is the lead on hydrologic improvements pursuant to the watershed protection plans (WPPs); and FDACS is the lead on agricultural interim measures, best management practices (BMPs), and other measures adopted pursuant to Section 403.067, F.S. SFWMD, in cooperation with FDEP and FDACS, is the lead agency for this NEEPP annual progress report, while each coordinating agency is responsible for implementing its respective programs.

NEEPP describes the legislative intent to protect and restore surface water resources and achieve and maintain compliance with water quality standards in the Northern Everglades through a phased, comprehensive, and innovative protection program that includes long-term solutions based upon the state's total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) established in accordance with Section 403.067, F.S. (FDEP 2012, 2013, 2014). NEEPP requires watershed protection programs to improve the quality, quantity, timing, and distribution of water in the Northern Everglades ecosystem. The programs are watershed-specific and comprised of research and monitoring, development, and implementation of BMPs, refinement of existing regulations, and structural and nonstructural projects, including public works. The programs are driven by the BMAPs adopted by FDEP and supported, in part, by watershed-specific WPPs developed by SFWMD and integrated with FDEP and FDACS programs to control nutrient sources at the local, subregional, and regional levels. The latest adopted BMAP updates for Lake Okeechobee (FDEP 2025a), St. Lucie River and Estuary (FDEP 2025b), and Caloosahatchee River and Estuary (FDEP 2025c) were adopted by secretarial orders in June 2025. All BMAP updates incorporate the new Clean Waterways Act requirements for wastewater treatment plans and onsite sewage treatment and disposal systems remediation plans for nutrient-related BMAPs, in accordance with [Chapter 2020-150, Laws of Florida](#). Implementation of the 2025 update for Lake Okeechobee has been delayed, while the 2025 updates for Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie Rivers and Estuaries went into effect in November 2025 (see *FDEP Basin Management Action Plans* section).

Annually, stakeholders submit status updates on projects and management strategies that are published in the statewide annual reports on TMDLs, BMAPs, minimum flows or minimum water levels, and recovery or prevention strategies. BMAP project status updates were most recently published in the *2024 Statewide Annual Report on Total Maximum Daily Loads, Basin Management Action Plans, Minimum Flows or Minimum Water Levels, and Recovery or Prevention Strategies* (2024 STAR; FDEP 2025d), available at <https://floridadep.gov/star>. Also, the most recent [5-Year Reviews of the Caloosahatchee River and Estuary BMAP](#) (FDEP 2022), [St. Lucie River and Estuary BMAP](#) (FDEP 2023), and [Lake Okeechobee](#) (FDEP 2025e) were published in 2022, 2023, and 2025, respectively.

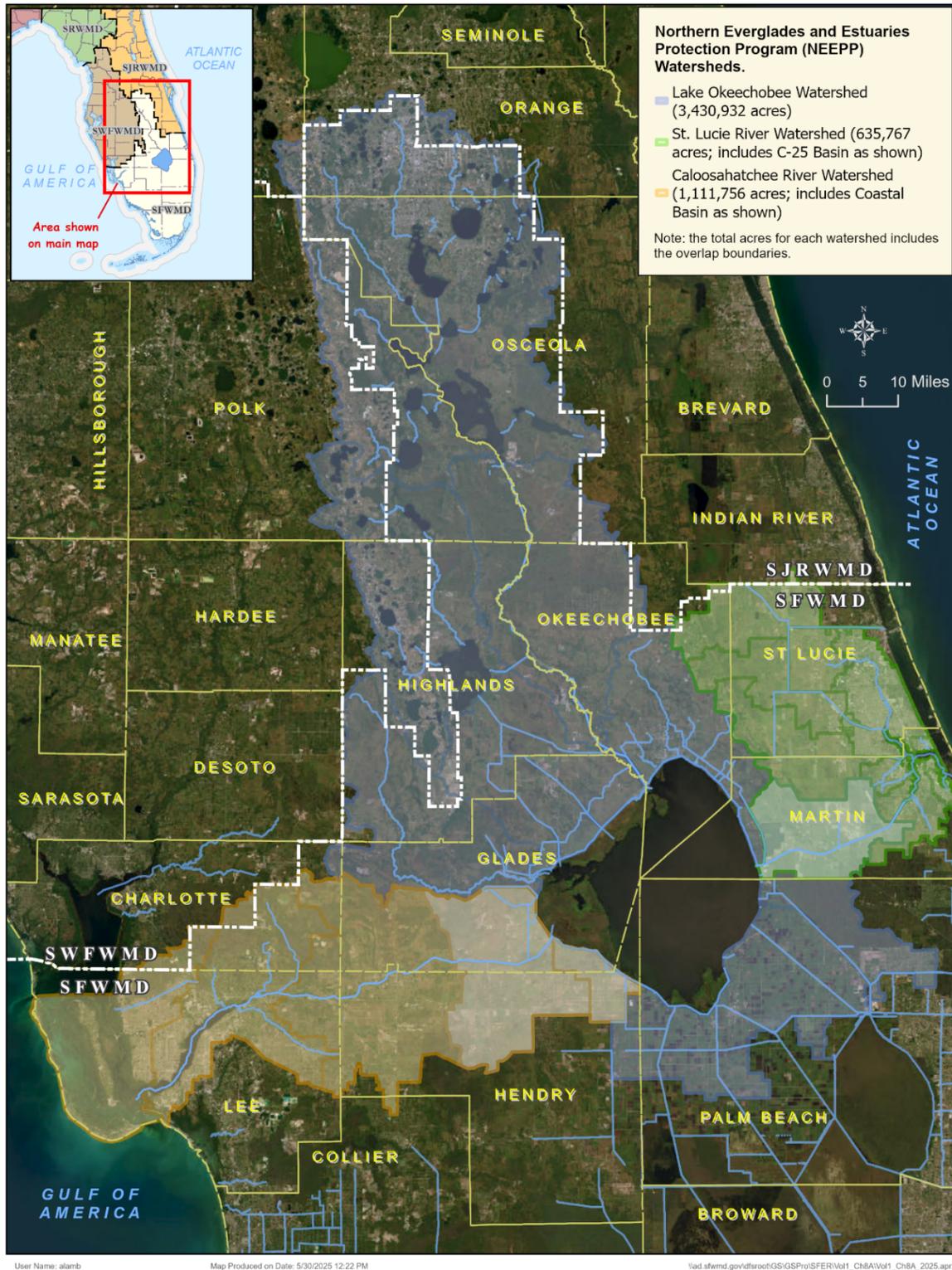


Figure 8A-1. The Northern Everglades watersheds: Lake Okeechobee Watershed (LOW), St. Lucie River Watershed (SLRW), and Caloosahatchee River Watershed (CRW). (Note: In the CRW, the Coastal Basin is shown on this overview map and, in the SLRW, the C-25 Basin is also shown to reflect regional projects being implemented in the watershed.)

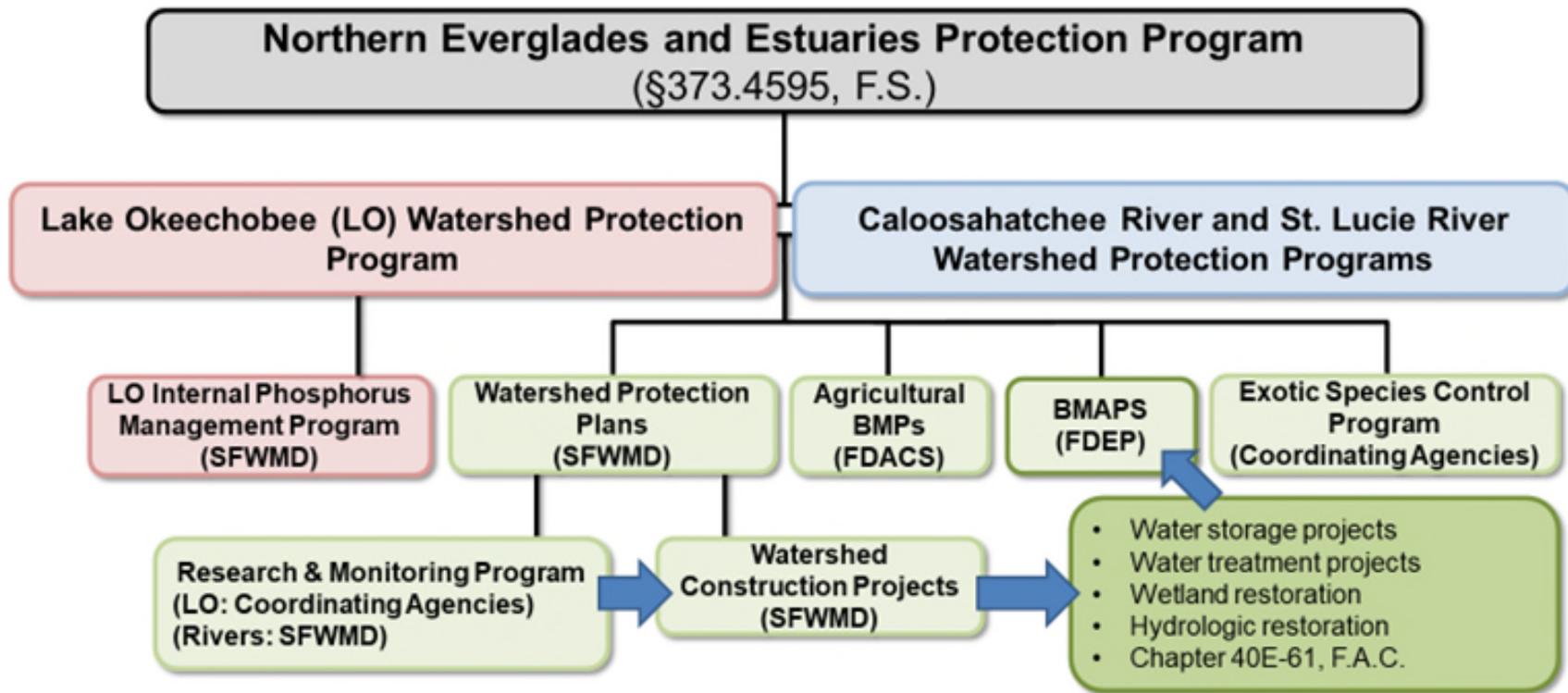


Figure 8A-2. Overview of NEEPP (Section 373.4595, F.S.), including key program components and primary responsibilities of the Coordinating Agencies—FDEP, FDACS, and SFWMD. (Note: F.A.C. – Florida Administrative Code.)

Under NEEPP, WPPs are unique to the watershed and receiving water body and yet coordinated in recognition of the connectivity of the LOW, SLRW, and CRW. They are science-driven plans that include two components: (1) a research and water quality monitoring program (RWQMP) and (2) a watershed construction project (WCP) (**Figure 8A-3**). RWQMPs are used by the Coordinating Agencies to build upon existing research and monitoring to ensure data and science-based information exist to track progress and inform decisions for carrying out future efforts, including identifying modifications and adjustments to WPPs and BMAPs. The purpose of the WCP is to provide a comprehensive strategy consisting of constructed facilities and programs implemented for improving water quality, quantity, timing, and distribution of water in the Northern Everglades ecosystem to assist in achieving TMDL targets. Collectively, these WPP elements inform FDEP's BMAP updates and, when combined with information from other agencies, support development of future restoration activities to meet the TMDLs in the Northern Everglades watersheds. Further information on the WPPs for the Northern Everglades watersheds is available on SFWMD's website at www.sfwmd.gov/wpps.

Governor DeSantis signed [Executive Order 19-12: Achieving More Now For Florida's Environment](#) in January 2019. This order focused on accelerating key water quality and Everglades restoration projects, with several directives focused on NEEPP implementation including FDEP's 2020 updates to all the Northern Everglades' BMAPs and SFWMD-led projects realizing benefits sooner by advancing many key restoration projects. This included completing construction of the Kissimmee River Restoration Project in partnership between the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and SFWMD, expediting the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) C-44 Reservoir and Stormwater Treatment Area (STA), completing construction of the Bluefield Grove and Scott Water Farms, expanding the Lake Hicpochee Hydrologic Enhancement (Phase II), expediting the CERP Caloosahatchee (C-43) West Basin Storage Reservoir (C-43 Reservoir), and adding a water quality treatment component to improve the quality of water leaving the C-43 Reservoir.

Building on the progress made under Executive Order 19-12, Governor DeSantis signed [Executive Order 23-06: Achieving Even More Now For Florida's Environment](#) in January 2023. This order built on the momentum for environmental protection in Florida and brought additional resources to accelerate Everglades restoration and water quality projects. It called for a record-setting \$3.5 billion over four years to protect water resources and restore the Everglades. These funding levels will advance Everglades restoration projects on an expedited schedule and support the most ambitious water quality improvements in the state's history. Of the many key priorities outlined in the order, dedicated efforts include advancing water storage and treatment north of Lake Okeechobee and advancing targeted projects to improve regional water quality. Importantly, this underscores the state's commitment to strengthening the BMAPs and improving agricultural BMPs, which are both fundamental to NEEPP advancements. More about SFWMD's focused work to advance key priority projects can be found on SFWMD's web page at www.sfwmd.gov/our-work/AchieveMoreNow.

SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

SFWMD's Role under NEEPP



Watershed
Protection Plans

SFWMD Watershed Protection Plans (WPPs) Inform FDEP Annual BMAP Progress Reports and 5-Year Updates

- Research and Water Quality Monitoring Program
 - Comprehensive monitoring network
 - Flow, water quality, precipitation, biology, etc.
 - Major structures, upstream, and estuarine
 - Research and modeling of a wide-range of ecosystem processes
- Watershed Construction Projects and Programs
 - Source control programs
 - Regional projects
 - New Projects
 - Project costs
 - Estimated and measured project performance
- When combined with information from other agencies, WPPs help evaluate the ecosystem, identify problems/deficiencies, and inform restoration activities. The WPPs provide measured data and science-based assessments to help inform and quantify the collective progress toward meeting the state's BMAP goals.

sfwmd.gov

Figure 8A-3. Primary roles of the Coordinating Agencies associated with WPP and BMAP updates.

This chapter of the *2026 South Florida Environmental Report (SFER) – Volume I*, in conjunction with Chapters 8B, 8C, and 8D of this volume, comprise the NEEPP Annual Progress Report, which has been prepared by SFWMD in cooperation with FDEP and FDACS in accordance with Subsection 373.4595(6), F.S. SFWMD’s statutory requirement for NEEPP annual progress reporting includes a summary of the conditions of the hydrology, water quality, and aquatic habitat in the Northern Everglades based on the results and status of the Lake Okeechobee Watershed Protection Plan (LOWPP), the St. Lucie River Watershed Protection Plan (SLRWPP), and the Caloosahatchee River Watershed Protection Plan (CRWPP). Also, in accordance with NEEPP, the most recent 5-year LOWPP, SLRWPP, and CRWPP updates were published in the 2025 SFER – Volume I, Chapters 8B, 8C, and 8D (Welch et al. 2025, Parker et al. 2025a, 2025b, respectively) to ensure that they are consistent with the state’s adopted Northern Everglades BMAPs. To aid in further integration with FDEP’s BMAP updates, this year’s annual reviews for the LOWPP, SLRWPP, and CRWPP are provided in Chapters 8B, 8C, and 8D of this volume for Lake Okeechobee, St. Lucie River, and Caloosahatchee River watersheds, respectively. These WPP reviews are provided to maintain transparency and accountability in the BMAP process and to assist in progressively moving towards achievement of the state’s TMDLs.

In accordance with NEEPP, this chapter also includes SFWMD’s annual accounting of the expenditure of Save Our Everglades Trust Fund (SOETF) funds during SFWMD’s Fiscal Year 2025 (FY2025; October 1, 2024–September 30, 2025) per Subsection 373.4595(6), F.S., and the Northern Everglades Annual Work Plan – FY2026 per Paragraph 373.026(8)(b), F.S. Additionally, in cooperation with the Coordinating Agencies, this annual progress report documents the status of FDEP’s Lake Okeechobee, Caloosahatchee River and Estuary, and St. Lucie River and Estuary BMAPs and the status of FDACS’ implementation of the agricultural nonpoint source BMPs in the Northern Everglades watersheds.

COORDINATING AGENCY PROGRESS UPDATES

FDEP BASIN MANAGEMENT ACTION PLANS

A BMAP is a framework for water quality restoration that contains a comprehensive set of solutions to achieve the pollutant reductions established by a TMDL. Examples include permit limits on regulated facilities, urban and agricultural BMPs, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure, regional projects and conservation programs designed to achieve pollutant reductions established by a TMDL. A BMAP is developed with local stakeholders and relies on local input and commitment for successful implementation. BMAPs are adopted by Secretarial Order and are legally enforceable. BMAPs use an adaptive management approach that allows for incremental load reductions through the implementation of projects and management strategies, while simultaneously monitoring and conducting studies to better understand the water quality and hydrologic dynamics. Progress is tracked by assessing project implementation and using water quality analyses. FDEP continues to work with local and regional partners to identify additional projects necessary to meet reduction milestones to achieve the TMDLs and inform funding priorities. TMDL documents can be accessed through the FDEP’s TMDL web page at <https://floridadep.gov/dear/water-quality-evaluation-tmdl/content/total-maximum-daily-loads-tmdl-program>, and adopted BMAPs, along with BMAP StoryMaps, are available on the FDEP’s BMAP web page at <https://floridadep.gov/bmaps>. BMAP project status updates are provided through the comprehensive annual reports from FDEP. The 2024 STAR details the progress made on BMAP implementation statewide through December 31, 2024, and is available on the FDEP’s web page at <https://floridadep.gov/star> (FDEP 2025d). Water quality assessments are also used to evaluate progress.

Sections 373.4595 and 403.067, F.S., require the NEEPP BMAPs to include milestones for implementation and water quality improvement, and associated water quality monitoring components sufficient to evaluate whether reasonable progress is being achieved over time. These statutory requirements, along with recently adopted law requirements and additional recommendations, are included

in the 5-Year Reviews for the BMAPs (completed at 5-year increments determined by the month and year of initial BMAP adoption) and have been adopted into the updated BMAPs. The first *5-Year Review of the Caloosahatchee Estuary Basin Management Action Plan* (FDEP 2017) was completed in November 2017. The first *5-Year Review of the St. Lucie River and Estuary Basin Management Action Plan* (FDEP 2018) was completed in June 2018. The first *5-Year Review for the Lake Okeechobee Basin Management Action Plan* (FDEP 2019a) was completed in December 2019. Recommendations from each of these 5-Year Reviews were incorporated into their respective BMAP updates in 2020 in accordance with Executive Order 19-12, Section 1-C, which required an update for each of the NEEPP BMAPs within one year of the executed order. The *2022 5-Year Review of the Caloosahatchee Estuary Basin Management Action Plan* (FDEP 2022) was completed in December 2022. The *2023 5-Year Review of the St. Lucie River and Estuary Basin Management Action Plan* (FDEP 2023) was completed in June 2023. The *2024 5-Year Review for the Lake Okeechobee Basin Management Action Plan* was completed in January 2025 (FDEP 2025e).

Recommendations from this second round of reviews, along with other recent law changes, were incorporated into all three NEEPP BMAPs, which were signed by Secretarial Order on June 27, 2025. In accordance with statute, these BMAPs establish compliance milestones for responsible entities and agencies within each BMAP to identify and report on creditable projects to meet the upcoming 5-year reduction milestone. Implementation of the 2025 BMAPs was delayed due to requests for extension of time to file a Petition for an Administrative Hearing to contest the Final Order establishing these BMAPs. Implementation of the 2025 update for the Lake Okeechobee continues to be delayed, while the 2025 updates for Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie Rivers and Estuaries went into effect in November 2025. Further details on the status of the BMAPs, 5-Year Reviews, updated BMAPs, and STAR are available through the above-listed BMAP web page.

Highlights of these latest reports, including progress towards required nutrient reductions in each BMAP, are provided below. The Coordinating Agencies are working together with local stakeholders on additional BMAP projects that will achieve further nutrient reductions. Many of these projects are dependent on annual legislative funding. FDEP administers grant programs to assist local governments with the implementation of projects. SFWMD manages the construction and operations of water quality treatment and storage facilities, including the Dispersed Water Management (DWM) Program in the Northern Everglades region. FDACS projects include lands enrolled in the BMP Program, cost-share practices, hybrid wetland treatment technology (HWTT), and floating aquatic vegetation treatment (FAVT) projects funded through the agency. In addition to the BMAP projects listed in the 2024 STAR (FDEP 2025d), Coordinating Agencies' initiatives are also underway to further aid in regional restoration efforts and gather additional data. New projects will continue to be developed and identified in conjunction with local stakeholders.

Lake Okeechobee Basin

Background

Lake Okeechobee is the largest lake in the southeastern United States. It is a shallow, eutrophic lake with an average depth of 9 feet. The LOW covers more than 3,450,475 acres (ac) and consists of nine subwatersheds. In August 2001, FDEP adopted a [total phosphorus \(TP\) TMDL for Lake Okeechobee](#) after nine lake segments, referred to as water body identification (WBID) numbers—3212A, 3212B, 3212C, 3212D, 3212E, 3212F, 3212G, 3212H, and 3212I—were identified as impaired by TP (FDEP 2001). The TMDL is the TP load to Lake Okeechobee of 308,647 pounds per year (lb/yr; 140 metric tons per year or t/yr), of which 77,162 lb/yr (35 t/yr) fall directly on the lake through atmospheric deposition. The remaining 231,485 lb/yr (105 t/yr) of TP are allocated to the entire LOW. The Lake Okeechobee BMAP was first adopted in December 2014 (FDEP 2014) to implement the TP TMDL, with BMAP updates adopted in February 2020 (FDEP 2020a) and June 2025 (FDEP 2025a).

BMAP Update

The Lake Okeechobee BMAP is governed by Section 373.4595, F.S., as part of NEEPP, Section 403.067, F.S., and other law requirements. The primary goal of this program is to restore and protect the state's surface water resources by addressing the quality, quantity, timing, and distribution of water to the natural system. In accordance with the requirements of the 2016 NEEPP, the first 5-Year Review for the Lake Okeechobee BMAP was completed in December 2019. Subsequently, this review was incorporated into the latest BMAP revision in February 2020 (FDEP 2020a). The *2024 5-Year Review of the Lake Okeechobee Basin Management Action Plan* (FDEP 2025a) was completed in January 2025. Further information regarding the 5-Year Reviews can be found on the [BMAP web page](#). FDEP adopted the updated 2025 Lake Okeechobee BMAP on June 27, 2025, which included a compliance timeframe for responsible entities to report on projects and management actions that will contribute to subwatershed reduction goals. The BMAP update also incorporates statutory requirements for nutrient reductions from sources, such as wastewater effluent limits and agricultural cooperative regional elements. However, implementation of the 2025 BMAP has been delayed due to requests for extension of time to file a Petition for an Administrative Hearing to contest the Final Order establishing this BMAP.

Status of Projects

For the first phase of the BMAP, which was adopted in 2014, load reductions were considered only for projects located in the six northern subwatersheds as the model was not initially developed to estimate the load reductions from the southern watersheds. In 2017, revisions to the Watershed Assessment Model (WAM) were completed, and the East, West, and South Lake Okeechobee subwatersheds were incorporated into the tool used to estimate project load reductions. As part of the 2020 BMAP, projects and loading were considered in all nine LOW subwatersheds, and this was continued in the 2025 BMAP.

TP loads were estimated using the WAM. Through December 31, 2024, 226 BMAP projects were completed, and 80 activities are listed as ongoing. Completed and ongoing projects are estimated to achieve total reductions of 227,453 lb/yr (103.2 t/yr) of TP, or 42% of the reductions needed to meet the TP TMDL. The TP load reductions are based on model-estimated project benefits in the nine subwatersheds. An additional 87 projects are underway or planned.

FDEP is working to develop a Hydrological Simulation Program – Fortran (HSPF) model for the LOW. The modeling efforts are expected to be completed by 2027. Adjustments to subbasin or entity specific allocations will be evaluated based on the results of the new model. If any adjustments to allocations are made, then these will be incorporated into the next BMAP update. Basin boundaries are being updated as part of the current HSPF model development, and those revised basins also will be reflected in the next BMAP update.

St. Lucie River and Estuary Basin

Background

The St. Lucie River and Estuary Watershed is located in southeastern Florida in Martin, St. Lucie, and Okeechobee counties and consists of 11 basins. The 2013 St. Lucie River and Estuary BMAP area covered 13 basins; however, some of these basins were merged to align with monitoring and other priorities. The St. Lucie Estuary is a major tributary to the Southern Indian River Lagoon.

Water quality in the St. Lucie River and Estuary Watershed is affected by freshwater runoff from agricultural and urban sources in the watershed and discharges from Lake Okeechobee. FDEP identified the St. Lucie River and Estuary as impaired because of excessive amounts of TP, total nitrogen (TN), and biochemical oxygen demand (BOD). The nutrient and dissolved oxygen (DO) TMDL for the St. Lucie River and Estuary (FDEP 2008) was adopted by FDEP in March 2009.

The St. Lucie River and Estuary BMAP Update (FDEP 2013) was adopted in June 2013 to implement the TN and TP TMDLs. Additionally, updated BMAPs were adopted in February 2020 (FDEP 2020b) and June 2025 (FDEP 2025b).

BMAP Update

The St. Lucie BMAP is governed by Section 373.4595, F.S., as a part of NEEPP, Section 403.067, F.S., and other law requirements. The primary goal of this program is to restore and protect the state's surface water resources by addressing the quality, quantity, timing, and distribution of water to the natural system. In accordance with the requirements of the 2016 NEEPP, the *5-Year Review of the St. Lucie Basin Management Action Plan* was completed in June 2018 (FDEP 2018), and these findings were incorporated into the latest BMAP revision in February 2020 (FDEP 2020b). The *2023 5-Year Review of the St. Lucie River and Estuary Basin Management Action Plan* (FDEP 2023) was published in June 2023. For more information regarding the 5-Year Review, the full report can be downloaded from the [BMAP web page](#). FDEP adopted the updated 2025 St. Lucie River and Estuary BMAP on June 27, 2025, which included a compliance timeframe for responsible entities to provide a list of projects demonstrating how they will reach their assigned reduction milestone. The BMAP update also incorporates statutory requirements for nutrient reductions from sources, such as wastewater effluent limits and agricultural cooperative regional elements. Implementation of the 2025 BMAP was delayed due to requests for extension of time to file a Petition for an Administrative Hearing to contest the Final Order establishing this BMAP. However, all petitions were resolved and the 2025 St. Lucie BMAP went into effect on November 25, 2025.

Status of Projects

The St. Lucie Estuary Watershed Water Quality Simulation (WaSh) model was updated as described in the 2020 BMAP through a collaborative effort between SFWMD and FDEP (FDEP 2020b). TN and TP loads and allocations were estimated from the WaSh model during development of the 2020 BMAP. The St. Lucie River and Estuary BMAP boundary was also updated at that time. Through December 31, 2024, 210 BMAP projects were completed, and 39 activities are listed as ongoing. Completed and ongoing projects are estimated to achieve total reductions of 929,517 lb/yr (421.7 t/yr) of TN, or 74% of the reductions needed (1,252,107 lb/yr total TN reductions needed) to meet the TN TMDL and 218,648 lb/yr (99.2 t/yr) of TP, or 50% of the reductions needed (407,980 lb/yr total TP reductions needed) to meet the TP TMDL. The TN and TP load reductions are based on model-estimated project benefits in the watershed. An additional 65 projects are underway or planned.

FDEP is working to develop an HSPF model for the SLRW. The modeling efforts are expected to be completed by 2026. Adjustments to subbasin and entity specific allocations will be evaluated based on the results of the new model. If any adjustments to allocations are made, then these will be incorporated into the next BMAP update. Basin boundaries are being updated as part of the current HSPF model development, and those revised basins also will be reflected in the next BMAP update.

Caloosahatchee River and Estuary Basin

Background

The Caloosahatchee River and Estuary Watershed is located in southwestern Florida in Charlotte, Collier, Glades, Hendry, and Lee counties. The Caloosahatchee River runs from Lake Okeechobee through a series of locks to San Carlos Bay. It has both fresh and marine segments: the freshwater segment is from Lake Okeechobee to the Franklin Lock (S-79). The marine segment extends from the Franklin Lock to Shell Point, adjacent to San Carlos Bay, with Pine Island Sound to the northwest and Estero Bay to the southeast.

Water quality in the Caloosahatchee River and Estuary Watershed is affected by freshwater runoff from agricultural and urban sources in the watershed and discharges from Lake Okeechobee, and FDEP identified

the Caloosahatchee Estuary as impaired for DO and chlorophyll *a*. In August 2009, FDEP adopted the Caloosahatchee Estuary TMDL (FDEP 2009), which established a reduction target for TN in the Caloosahatchee Estuary (downstream of the S-79) to restore chlorophyll *a* to the levels that will support the river and estuaries designated uses. The Caloosahatchee Estuary BMAP was adopted in November 2012 to implement the TN TMDL in the tidal portion of the Caloosahatchee system, excluding the upstream subwatersheds that contribute flows to the estuary at S-79.

Additionally, FDEP identified the following five tributaries to the Caloosahatchee River as impaired for DO: S-4 Basin, C-19 Canal, Lake Hicpochee, Long Hammock Creek, and Townsend Canal. In late 2019, FDEP adopted [TMDLs for these tributaries](#), which established reduction targets for TN, TP, and BOD (FDEP 2019b). The eastern part of the Caloosahatchee River Watershed and the Caloosahatchee River Tributary TMDLs were incorporated into the updated Caloosahatchee River and Estuary BMAP in February 2020 (FDEP 2020c).

BMAP Update

The Caloosahatchee River and Estuary BMAP is governed by Section 373.4595, F.S., as part of NEEPP, Section 403.067, F.S., and other law requirements. In accordance with the requirements of the 2016 NEEPP, the first *5-Year Review of the Caloosahatchee Estuary Basin Management Action Plan* was completed in November 2017 (FDEP 2017), and these findings were incorporated into the latest BMAP revision in February 2020 (FDEP 2020c). The *2022 5-Year Review of the Caloosahatchee River and Estuary Basin Management Action Plan* (FDEP 2022) was published in December 2022. For more information regarding the 5-Year Review, the full report can be downloaded from the [BMAP web page](#). FDEP adopted the updated 2025 Caloosahatchee River and Estuary BMAP on June 27, 2025, which included a compliance timeframe for responsible entities to provide a list of projects demonstrating how they will reach their assigned reduction milestone. Assigned reduction milestones for entities in the east and west subbasins were updated to reflect information about measured loads. The BMAP update also incorporates statutory requirements for nutrient reductions from sources, such as wastewater effluent limits and agricultural cooperative regional elements. Implementation of the 2025 BMAP was delayed due to requests for extension of time to file a Petition for an Administrative Hearing to contest the Final Order establishing this BMAP. However, all petitions were resolved and the 2025 Caloosahatchee River and Estuary BMAP went into effect on November 25, 2025.

Status of Projects

The HSPF and Environmental Fluid Dynamics Code (EFDC) models were updated, as described in the 2020 BMAP (FDEP 2020c), to reflect additional data and input provided by stakeholders. TN and TP loads and allocations were estimated using the HSPF model. The Caloosahatchee River and Estuary BMAP boundary and monitoring plan were also updated as part of the BMAP update in February 2020.

Through December 31, 2024, 150 BMAP projects were completed, and 40 activities are listed as ongoing. Completed and ongoing projects are estimated to achieve total reductions of 720,497 lb/yr (326.9 t/yr) of TN, or 79% of the reductions needed (910,676 lb/yr total TN reductions needed) to meet the TN TMDL for the estuary. In the tributaries, there are an additional 22 completed and 23 ongoing projects that are estimated to achieve total reductions of 10,827 lb/yr of TP (4.9 t/yr), or 43% of the reductions needed (24,986 lb/yr total TP reductions needed) to meet the TP TMDL for the tributaries. The TN and TP load reductions are based on model-estimated project benefits in the BMAP area. An additional 81 projects are underway or planned.

FDEP is updating the HSPF model for the CRW. The modeling efforts are expected to be completed by 2025. Adjustments to subbasin and entity specific allocations will be evaluated based on the results of the updated model. If any adjustments to allocations are made, then these will be incorporated into the next BMAP update. Basin boundaries are being updated as part of the current HSPF model development, and those revised basins also will be reflected in the next BMAP update.

SFWMD WATERSHED CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

Addressing the complex and varying problems in the Northern Everglades watersheds necessitates a multifaceted restoration approach including reducing nutrient loading and excess freshwater inflows and discharges to Lake Okeechobee as well as to the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee rivers and estuaries. The focus on water quality and storage is intended to improve hydrology, water quality, and aquatic habitats in both the watersheds and receiving waters. In support of the BMAPs adopted by FDEP and as directed by NEEPP (Section 373.4595, F.S.), SFWMD, in cooperation with FDEP and FDACS, developed WPPs for each of the watersheds to protect and restore surface water resources of the Northern Everglades. These plans contain an integrated management strategy that is based on implementation of nutrient source control programs, including BMPs at the parcel level, projects at the subbasin and regional levels, and other management measures necessary to improve water quality in the watersheds.

As outlined in NEEPP, each WPP includes an RWQMP and a WCP. Pursuant to Section 373.4595(3)(a), F.S., the LOWPP was first updated in 2020 and most recently in 2025, building upon a review and analysis of the performance of projects constructed during Phase I and Phase II of the Lake Okeechobee Watershed Construction Project (LOWCP), and relevant information resulting from the Lake Okeechobee BMAP, Lake Okeechobee Watershed RWQMP, Lake Okeechobee Exotic Species Control Program, and Lake Okeechobee Internal Phosphorus Management Program (Betts et al. 2020, Welch et al. 2025). Per Section 373.4595(4)(f), F.S., the SLRWPP and CRWPP were also updated in 2025 (Parker et al. 2025a,b). SFWMD identified modifications and recommendations to the LOWCP, SLRWCP, and CRWCP to be incorporated into their respective BMAP updates to assist the Coordinating Agencies in prioritizing resources and projects to meet NEEPP goals. In this year's progress reporting, LOWPP, SLRWPP, and CRWPP annual reviews are provided in Chapters 8B, 8C, and 8D of this volume, respectively, for the Lake Okeechobee, St. Lucie River, and Caloosahatchee River watersheds, with some key highlights presented in this chapter.

The following section provides a high-level overview on existing NEEPP construction project activities accomplished during the 2025 reporting period and other key regionwide efforts throughout the Northern Everglades watersheds. An overview of the watershed construction projects is depicted on **Figure 8A-4**. **Table 8A-1** is the crosswalk of project names for the numbers shown on the map along with the associated project status during this reporting period. **Table 8A-2** summarizes Water Year 2025 (WY2025; May 1, 2024–April 30, 2025) water storage and water quality data for TP and TN in the Lake Okeechobee, St. Lucie River, and Caloosahatchee River watersheds; further details on these data and their evaluation to track progress toward achieving programmatic goals can be found in Chapters 8B, 8C, and 8D, respectively. An overview of WY2025 project benefits (water storage and nutrient removal) are presented in Table 8B-11 for the LOW, Table 8C-12 for the SLRW, and Table 8D-13 for the CRW in this volume. In total, 28 SFWMD-led and select Coordinating Agencies' projects that provide storage benefits were operational in the Northern Everglades watersheds and collectively provided an estimated dynamic storage volume of 192,521 acre-feet (ac-ft; 237.5 cubic meters or m³) during WY2025.

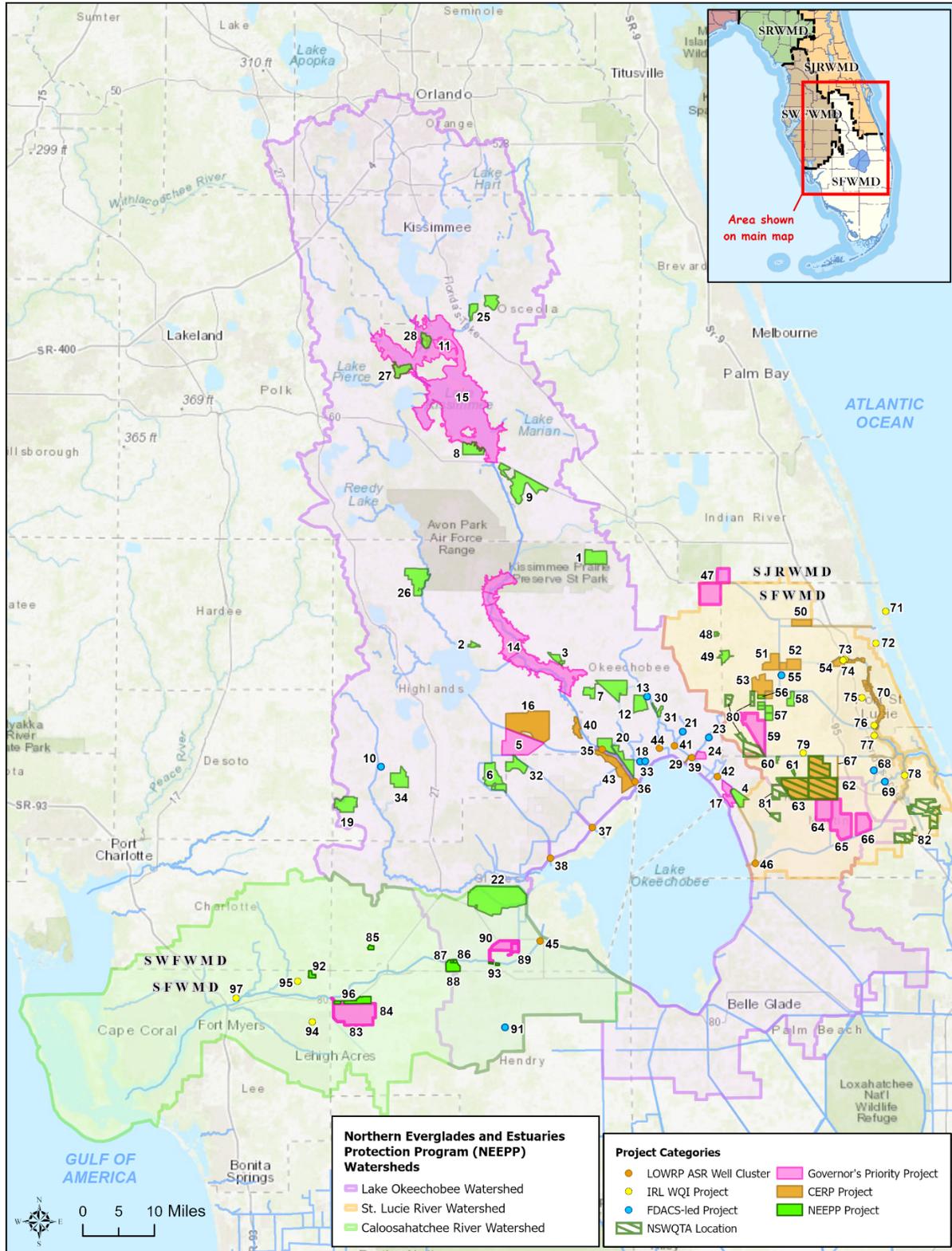


Figure 8A-4. Overview of watershed construction projects and key components in the Northern Everglades watersheds (see **Table 8A-1** for the key to projects list and abbreviations).

Table 8A-1. Crosswalk for watershed construction projects and key components in the Northern Everglades watersheds shown on **Figure 8A-4.**

Map ID No.	Project Title	Project Status	Map ID No.	Project Title	Project Status
Lake Okeechobee Watershed			St. Lucie River Watershed		
1	Abington Preserve	O&M	47	Scott Water Farm	O&M
2	Aguaculture - Lake Istokpoga	O&M	48	Alderman-Deloney Ranch	O&M
3	Basinger Dairy Legacy Phosphorus	Design	49	Adams Ranch	O&M
4	Brady Ranch FEB	Design	50	C-25 Reservoir and STA	Construction
5	Brighton Valley DWM	O&M	51	C-23/C-24 North Reservoir	Construction
6	Buck Island Ranch	O&M	52	C-23/C-24 STA	Construction
7	Dixie Ranch	O&M	53	C-23/C-24 South Reservoir	Construction
8	Eagle Haven Ranch	O&M	54	Ten Mile Creek WPA	O&M
9	El Maximo Ranch	O&M	55	Ideal Grove HWTT (FDACS)	O&M
10	Fisheating Creek FAVT (FDACS)	O&M	56	C-23/C-24 Interim Storage Section C	O&M
11	Gardner-Cobb Marsh Restoration	O&M	57	C-23/C-24 District Lands Hydrologic Enhancements	Design
12	Grassy Island FEB	Design	58	Ideal 1000	Planning
13	Grassy Island HWTT (FDACS)	O&M	59	Bluefield Grove Water Farm	O&M
14	Kissimmee River Restoration	In Progress	60	Spur Land and Cattle Water Farm	O&M
15	Kissimmee River Restoration Headwaters Lakes	In Progress	61	Bull Hammock Ranch	O&M
16	Lake Okeechobee Component A Reservoir (LOCAR)	Design	62	Allapattah Flats Parcels A and B Wetland Restoration	O&M
17	Lakeside Ranch STA	O&M	63	Allapattah Ranch Parcel C	Planning
18	Lemkin Creek HWTT (FDACS)	O&M	64	C-44 Reservoir	OT&MP
19	Llano Ranches	O&M	65	C-44 STA	OT&MP
20	Lower Kissimmee Basin STA	Design	66	Caulkins Water Farm	O&M
21	Mosquito Creek HWTT (FDACS)	O&M	67	C-23 Estuary Discharge Diversion	Construction
22	Nicodemus Slough	O&M	68	Bessey Creek HWTT (FDACS)	O&M
23	Nubbin Slough HWTT (FDACS)	O&M	69	Danforth Creek HWTT (FDACS)	O&M
24	Nubbin Slough STA	O&M	70	North Fork Floodplain Restoration	Planning
25	Partin Family Ranch	O&M	71	N Hutchinson Island Septic to Sewer (St. Lucie County)	Complete
26	Rafter T Ranch	O&M	72	Georgia Ave Basin WQ Improvements (City of Ft. Pierce)	Complete
27	Rolling Meadows Wetland Restoration Phase I	O&M	73	Gordy Road Structures Retrofit (NSLRWCD)	Complete
28	Rough Island	O&M	74	Ten Mile Creek Restoration (NSLRWCD)	Complete
29	S-191 Basin Phosphorus Removal	O&M	75	Sagamore Basin STAs (City of PSL)	Complete
30	Taylor Creek STA	O&M	76	Floresta Drive Baffle Box (City of PSL)	Complete
31	TCNS 214 Storage and Treatment	Planning	77	Reclaimed Water BMP Research (UF)	Complete
32	West Waterhole	O&M	78	Old Palm City Septic to Sewer (Martin County)	Construction
33	Wolff Ditch HWTT (FDACS)	O&M	79	McCarty Ranch Ext. Areas 3-5 (City of PSL)	Complete
34	XL Ranch	O&M	80	IRL-S Cypress Creek Complex NSWQTA	Planning
35	LOWRP ASR C-38N Well Cluster	Planning	81	IRL-S Allapattah Complex NSWQTA	Planning
36	LOWRP ASR C-38S Well Cluster	Planning	82	IRL-S Palmar Complex NSWQTA	Planning
37	LOWRP ASR C-40 Well Cluster	Planning	Caloosahatchee River Watershed		
38	LOWRP ASR C-41 Well Cluster	Planning	83	C-43 West Basin Storage Reservoir	Opened
39	LOWRP ASR C-59 Well Cluster	Planning	84	C-43 Reservoir Water Quality Component	Construction
40	LOWRP Kissimmee River Center Wetland	Planning	85	Mudge Ranch	O&M
41	LOWRP ASR L-63N Well Cluster	Planning	86	Boma Interim Storage	O&M
42	LOWRP ASR L-63S Well Cluster	Planning	87	C-43 WQTTP Phase II Test Cells	O&M
43	LOWRP Paradise Run Wetland	Planning	88	Boma FEB	Design
44	LOWRP ASR Taylor Creek Well Cluster	Planning	89	Lake Hicpochee Hydrologic Enhancement Phase I	O&M
45	LOWRP ASR C-43 Well Cluster	Planning	90	Lake Hicpochee Hydrologic Enhancement Phase II Expansion	Construction
46	LOWRP ASR C-44 Well Cluster	Planning	91	East Caloosahatchee FAVT (FDACS)	O&M
			92	Four Corners Rapid Infiltration	O&M
			93	Roadrunner C-43 Nutrient Load Reduction	Planning
			94	Frank Mann Preserve	Design
			95	Bob Janes Preserve Restoration	Design
			96	Berry Groves District Lands Enhancement	Planning
			97	Palm Creek Filter Marsh	Design

Key to Abbreviations: ASR – Aquifer Storage and Recovery; BMP – Best Management Practice; DWM – Dispersed Water Management; FAVT – Floating Aquatic Vegetation Tilling; FDACS – Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services; FEB – Flow Equalization Basin; HWTT – Hybrid Wetland Treatment Technology; ID No. – Identification Number; IRL-S – Indian River Lagoon - South; LOCAR – Lake Okeechobee Component A Storage Reservoir; LOWRP - Lake Okeechobee Watershed Restoration Plan; NSLRWCD – North St. Lucie River Water Control District; N – North; NSWQTA – Natural Storage and Water Quality Treatment Area; O&M – Operations and Maintenance; OT&MP – Operational Testing and Monitoring Phase; PSL – Port St. Lucie; STA – Stormwater Treatment Area; TCNS – Taylor Creek/Nubbin Slough; UF – University of Florida; WPA – Water Preserve Area; WQ – Water Quality, WQI – Water Quality Improvements, and WQTTP – Water Quality Treatment and Testing Project.

Table 8A-2. Summary of WY2025 and 5-year average (WY2021–WY2025) water quality and water storage data for the Lake Okeechobee, St. Lucie River, and Caloosahatchee River watersheds (see Chapters 8B, 8C, and 8D of the volume, respectively, for further details).

Parameter (unit) ^a	Lake Okeechobee Watershed ^b	St. Lucie River Watershed ^c	Caloosahatchee River Watershed ^c
Area (ac) ^d	3,430,932	536,036	882,435
WY2025			
Inflow (ac-ft x 10 ³)	1,683	907	1,695
TP Load (t)	302	190	359
TP FWMC (µg/L)	144	169	172
TP UAL (lb/ac)	0.19	0.78	0.90
TN Load (t)	3,635	1,266	2,521
TN FWMC (mg/L)	1.75	1.13	1.21
TN UAL (lb/ac)	2.34	5.21	6.30
Project Dynamic Storage (ac-ft/yr) ^e	95,441	71,037	26,043
Project TP Removal Performance (t/yr)	28.9	21.8	7.8
Project TN Removal Performance (t/yr)	265.6	127.6	53.7
5-Year Average (WY2021–WY2025)			
Inflow (ac-ft x 10 ³)	2,062	767	1,521
TP Load (t)	358	179	275
TP FWMC (µg/L)	140	189	147
TP UAL (lb/ac)	0.23	0.74	0.69
TN Load (t)	4,047	1,091	2,355
TN FWMC (mg/L)	1.59	1.15	1.26
TN UAL (lb/ac)	2.60	4.49	5.88

a. Key to Units and Abbreviations: µg/L – microgram(s) per liter; ac – acre(s); ac-ft x 10³ – 1,000 acre-foot (feet); ac-ft/yr – acre-feet per year; FWMC – flow-weighted mean concentration; lb/ac – pound(s) per acre; mg/L – milligram(s) per liter; t – metric ton(s); t/yr – ton(s) per year; TN – total nitrogen; TP – total phosphorus; UAL – unit area load; WY – Water Year.

b. Lake Okeechobee nutrient loading does not include atmospheric deposition (35 t/yr for TP; 1,233 t/yr for TN).

c. River watershed values exclude inflows from Lake Okeechobee.

d. For the LOW, total acres reflect those reported in Chapter 8B of this volume and include the overlap boundaries of the river watersheds. For the SLRW, total acres reflect those reported in Chapter 8C of this volume and exclude the C-25 Basin (99,731 ac) to align with the load calculations used for the St. Lucie Estuary. For the CRW, total acres reflect those reported in Chapter 8D of this volume and exclude the Coastal Basin (229,321 ac) to align with the load calculations used for the Caloosahatchee Estuary.

e. Total storage for the SLRW does not include estimates from the C-25 Basin. Total storage for the CRW does not include Lake Hicpochee Hydrologic Enhancement (Phase I) project storage data, which are not available for WY2025.

Watershed-Specific Construction Project Updates

This update on the status of existing NEEPP construction projects focuses on the Coordinating Agencies' regional and subregional projects critical to achieving the water quality, water storage, and restoration goals of the LOWPP, SLRPP, and CRWPP. During the reporting period, SFWMD, in conjunction with the other Coordinating Agencies, continued implementing various projects to improve conditions across the Northern Everglades watersheds, as highlighted below. LOWPP, SLRWPP, and CRWPP annual reviews are presented in Chapters 8B, 8C, and 8D of this volume, respectively, with key highlights of construction projects' progress in each watershed shown below. Notably, many of these advancements are priorities under Executive Order 19-12: Achieving More Now for Florida's Environment and Executive Order 23-06: Achieving *Even More* Now for Florida's Environment (see **Figure 8A-4** for priority projects shown in pink).

Lake Okeechobee Watershed

- In the LOW, conceptual design is anticipated to be completed for the Grassy Island and Brady Ranch flow equalization basins (FEBs) in fall 2025. Importantly, these two large-scale projects—2,400-ac Grassy Island adjacent to Taylor Creek STA and 1,800-ac Brady Ranch adjacent to Lakeside Ranch STA—will provide regional storage and assist with STA operations. Full design is expected in 2026 for the Grassy Island FEB and in 2027 for the Brady Ranch FEB, each followed by two to four years of construction, respectively.
- A major milestone of regional restoration efforts in the LOW, construction of the Kissimmee River Restoration Project (KRRP) was completed in summer 2021 in partnership with USACE. Physical reconstruction of about one-third the Kissimmee River and its floodplain reestablished flow in the river and its floodplain, which had been disrupted by construction of the C-38 Canal in the 1960s. Reestablishment of historic hydrologic conditions will begin to occur over the next several years as new operational criteria are adopted for the Headwaters Lakes (Lakes Kissimmee, Cypress, and Hatchineha), bringing more natural patterns of flow and seasonality to the physically reconstructed portions of the river.

As a key priority, the new regulation schedule for the S-65 structure—known as the Kissimmee River Headwaters Revitalization Schedule (HRS, a component of the regional KRRP)—is being implemented through 2026. Subsequently, the final phases of restoration evaluation (post-HRS monitoring) are planned to continue for at least five years. The first regulation schedule increase toward HRS (HRS Increment 1 deviation) was approved and implemented in August 2024 by USACE in coordination with SFWMD. Further details on the KRRP can be found in Chapter 9 of this volume.

- The preliminary design for the expanded Lower Kissimmee Basin STA Project was completed in September 2025 (EIP 2025). This project in the Taylor Creek/Nubbin Slough Subwatershed will use constructed wetlands to improve regional water quality. Phase Two of the project was approved by the SFWMD Governing Board in September 2025, which includes transferring project land to SFWMD ownership and completion of the final design and permitting through initial operations until turnover to SFWMD occurs. Final design is expected in 2027, and construction is slated through 2030. More details on this project can be found at www.sfwmd.gov/LKBSTA.
- In collaboration with the Coordinating Agencies, the Basinger Dairy Legacy Phosphorus project kicked off in summer 2023. The project will allow access to and use of 950 ac on the ~1,300-ac recently closed dairy farm in the S-65D NEEPP Priority Basin, about 2 miles upstream of the Kissimmee River. This opportunity is intended to support the Lake

- Okeechobee BMAP by removing a long-standing source of legacy phosphorus in the Lower Kissimmee Subwatershed and provide an in-situ location to conduct a series of innovative treatment technology studies and nutrient remediation at the property. For the phytoremediation phase of the project, the final design is planned to be completed by fall 2025, followed by construction with anticipated completion in 2026.
- During WY2025, 14 SFWMD-led and select Coordinating Agencies projects that provide storage benefits were operational in the LOW. Collectively, these projects provided an estimated dynamic storage volume of 95,441 ac-ft (117.7 million m³) during this reporting period.
 - FDACS' operations of the five HWTT facilities (Lemkin Creek, Wolff Ditch, Grassy Island, Nubbin Slough, and Mosquito Creek) continued over the past year; a total of 10,244 ac-ft (14.7 million m³) was treated, removing 3.0 t TP and 8.0 t TN. Operations at Fisheating Creek FAVT were affected by no or low flow periods; a total of 6,911 ac-ft (9.9 million m³) was treated, removing 0.7 t TP and 7.6 t TN.

St. Lucie River Watershed

- In the SLRW, construction advanced on the CERP Indian River Lagoon – South (IRL-S) projects, in partnership with USACE. As priority work, construction of the C-44 Reservoir and STA project was completed in late 2021; operational testing and monitoring is underway until full operations are transferred from USACE to SFWMD. Construction progressed on the C-23/C-24 STA, C-23 Estuary Discharge Diversion (C-23 to C-44 Interconnect), C-23/C-24 North Reservoir, C-23/C-24 South Reservoir, and C-25 Reservoir and STA projects. For the C-23/C-24 District Lands Hydrologic Enhancements project, design is under way and planned to be completed in spring 2026; construction is then scheduled to be completed by 2027.
- During WY2025, 10 SFWMD-led and select Coordinating Agencies' projects that provide storage benefits were operational in the SLRW. Collectively, these projects provided an estimated dynamic storage volume of 71,037 ac-ft (87.7 million m³) during this reporting period.
- In 2020, nine new water quality improvement projects by local governments were awarded state grant funds, which are being administered under the Indian River Lagoon Water Quality Improvement (WQI) Projects Grant Program via a memorandum of understanding between SFWMD and St. Johns River Water Management District (see **Figure 8A-4**, map ID numbers 71 through 79). Marking a 5-year milestone, construction is now complete for seven projects: City of Fort Pierce's Georgia Avenue Stormwater WQI; City of Port St. Lucie's Floresta Drive Baffle Box, Sagamore Basin STAs, and C-23 Water Quality Restoration (McCarty Ranch Extension Areas 3-5); North St. Lucie River Water Control District's Ten Mile Creek Restoration and Gordy Road Structures Retrofit projects; and University of Florida's Efficacy of Reclaimed Water BMPs for Nutrient Reductions in Residential Areas Study. Construction for the remaining two projects—St. Lucie County's North Hutchinson Island Septic to Sewer and Martin County's Old Palm City Septic to Sewer projects—are slated to be completed by 2026 and 2028, respectively.
- FDACS' operations of the three HWTT facilities (Ideal 2 Grove, Bessey Creek, and Danforth Creek) continued over the past year. A total of 3,866 ac-ft (5.5 million m³) was treated, removing 0.7 t TP and 1.7 t TN.

Caloosahatchee River Watershed

- As a key priority project, construction of the CERP Caloosahatchee River (C-43) West Basin Storage Reservoir (C-43 Reservoir) project was opened in July 2025. The 170,000-ac-ft capacity reservoir will help reduce harmful flows of water from Lake Okeechobee and the local watershed during the wet season and deliver beneficial freshwater flows to the estuary during the dry season. Work on the C-43 Reservoir Water Quality Component also moved forward, with construction planned for completion and operations slated to begin in FY2026.
- In April 2025, a new work order was executed for the conceptual design of the Berry Groves District Lands Enhancement project, situated on 1,900 ac of public lands immediately north of the C-43 Reservoir. The conceptual design will evaluate the existing condition of the drainage system and the agricultural land and is planned to be completed by September 2026. The proposed project is intended to improve public lands to retain rainfall and improve drainage control, while enhancing existing wetland function and improving wildlife habitat.
- Operations continued on Phase I of the Lake Hicpochee Hydrologic Enhancement project, while priority efforts also advanced on the Lake Hicpochee Expansion under Phase II. Construction commenced in summer 2025, with completion scheduled in 2028. The expansion includes a new 2,200-ac FEB, a new pump station to draw water from the Caloosahatchee River (C-43 Canal), and associated flow features to connect to the existing Phase I project and expand regional storage in the CRW.
- Over the past year, design work progressed for the Boma FEB, with final design planned to be completed by the end of 2025, followed by three years of construction. Once operational, the planned FEB is anticipated to have a storage capacity of approximately 7,200 ac-ft and provide water quality benefits to the Caloosahatchee River. In early 2025, construction was completed for the C-43 Water Quality Treatment and Testing Facility – Phase II (Test Cells), which is co-located with the FEB to maximize both water quality and storage benefits at the property. Multiyear research began in summer 2025 and is anticipated to continue until 2027.
- During WY2025, four SFWMD-led and select Coordinating Agencies’ projects that provide storage benefits were operational in the CRW. Collectively, these projects provided an estimated dynamic storage volume of 26,043 ac-ft (32.1 million m³)⁷ during this reporting period.
- In partnership with SFWMD, three local government projects in the CRW—Lee County’s Palm Creek Filter Marsh and Bob Janes Preserve Restoration, and Lehigh Acres-Municipal Services Improvement District’s Frank Mann Preserve projects—have received funding under the Caloosahatchee Water Quality Improvements Grant Program. All these projects are currently in design, with project construction planned for completion in 2027 and 2028, respectively. They are intended to help meet the state’s TMDL goal for TN, and provide water storage and treatment, flood protection, aquifer recharge, and water quality benefits for the Caloosahatchee River and Estuary.
- FDACS’ operations of the East Caloosahatchee FAVT continued over the past year. A total of 24,213 ac-ft (34.8 m³) was treated, removing 2.3 t TP and 14.5 t TN.

⁷ Note that total project storage for the CRW does not include Lake Hicpochee Hydrologic Enhancement (Phase I) project storage data, which is not available for WY2025.

Other Regional Efforts

Lake Okeechobee Watershed Restoration Project

In 2019–2020, the Florida legislature appropriated funding for the design, engineering, and construction of specific Lake Okeechobee Watershed Restoration Project (LOWRP) components designed to reduce harmful discharges to the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie estuaries. LOWRP is being implemented in partnership between USACE and SFWMD. The current recommended plan proposes approximately 5,900 ac of wetland restoration along the Kissimmee River including 4,700 ac in Paradise Run and 1,200 ac in Paradise River Center and up to 55 aquifer storage and recovery (ASR) wells located in clusters across the Northern Everglades watersheds. The plan reflects storage north of Lake Okeechobee is key to reducing harmful discharges to the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie estuaries.

The ASR Well Program has remaining uncertainties and risks that are being addressed through a stepwise scientific approach. The first public and peer reviewed *Aquifer Storage and Recovery Science Plan* was published by SFWMD and USACE in June 2021 (SFWMD and USACE 2021). The second plan was drafted and posted for public review in October 2022 (SFWMD and USACE 2022) and was revised after input from the ASR peer review panel workshop held in July 2024. The ASR Science Plan Version 2 was published in December 2024 at www.sfwmd.gov/asr (SFWMD and USACE 2024). Looking ahead, the plan will be updated as the program progresses. To begin addressing the uncertainties associated with ASR in CERP, SFWMD began advancing ASR exploration in the northern watersheds in 2019 with siting evaluations completed at several well cluster locations. SFWMD work on the continuous core and data collection for four locations began in 2020 and was completed in 2024. The first set of test wells at three ASR cluster locations (C38N, C38S, and L63N) were initiated in 2021 and were completed in early 2025. The next set of test wells at C38S are planned to be initiated by late 2025. Test wells, pump tests, demonstration treatment facility, and cycle testing are important next steps to evaluating the scope and scale of the ASR program. Further details on regional LOWRP progress can be found in Chapter 8B of this volume and at <https://www.sfwmd.gov/our-work/cerp-project-planning/lowrp>.

Lake Okeechobee Component A Storage Reservoir

As a priority in Executive Order 23-06, SFWMD is directed to advance Everglades restoration projects to ensure meaningful progress over the next four years, including all CERP storage components within the LOW. As the non-federal sponsor for CERP, SFWMD conducted a feasibility study for the North of Lake Okeechobee Storage Reservoir (known as the Lake Okeechobee Component A Storage Reservoir, or LOCAR) Section 203 Study under the federal Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 1986, as amended. SFWMD also contracted with USACE to work on its behalf to provide technical assistance and conduct federal activities to meet these requirements. Under LOCAR, USACE has the lead in coordinating the National Environmental Policy Act portion of the feasibility study and environmental impact statement (EIS).

The feasibility study and EIS explored opportunities for aboveground water storage north of Lake Okeechobee, with an estimated water storage capacity of 200,000 ac-ft. The study area covers a large portion of the LOW north of Lake Okeechobee and will provide ecological benefits to the lake and the northern estuaries. On February 28, 2024, the final feasibility study and EIS was submitted to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works for consideration by the United States Congress in WRDA 2024. In summer 2024, both the final feasibility study and EIS were revised with input and comments received from USACE headquarters. LOCAR received congressional authorization in WRDA 2024, and preliminary design began in summer 2025. Further details on regional LOCAR progress can be found in Chapter 8B of this volume and at <https://www.sfwmd.gov/our-work/lake-okeechobee-component-reservoir-locar>.

Northern Everglades Watersheds Water Retention and Nutrient Load Reduction Projects

In May 2022, in response to the *Northern Everglades Watersheds Water Retention and Nutrient Load Reduction Projects* Request for Proposals (RFP), SFWMD’s Governing Board authorized SFWMD staff to proceed in project discussions and contract negotiations for up to 14 projects in the Northern Everglades watersheds. Subsequently, 10-year contract renewals were executed for the following 6 DWM projects: Buck Island Ranch (consolidating three prior project components into a single project), Eagle Haven Ranch (formerly Lost Oak Ranch), Dixie Ranch (including consolidation with former Dixie West), and XL Ranch in the LOW; and Alderman-Deloney Ranch and Spur Land and Cattle Water Farm in the SLRW. In 2023, three new project agreements—Aguaculture – Lake Istokpoga and Partin Family Ranch in the LOW and Four Corners Rapid Infiltration in the CRW—were executed and, currently, all these projects are in operations. In March 2025, a new project agreement for Roadrunner C-43 Nutrient Load Reduction in the CRW was executed to help reduce harmful discharges to the river estuary; subsequently, a technical suitability report for the project was completed in summer 2025. One additional project, Ideal 1000 in the SLRW, is also now under development. Further information on these specific projects can be found in Chapters 8B, 8C, and 8D of this volume.

One of the key recommendations from the 2025 CRWPP 5-Year Update (Acevedo and Olson 2025) is to focus on new storage projects in the West Caloosahatchee Basin to help manage the flow of surface waters and reduce nutrient loads to the CRE. Building on the SFWMD’s progress to attain NEEPP water storage goals, the *Caloosahatchee River Watershed Water Storage Initiative* RFP was released in May 2025. Designed to solicit water retention projects in the West Caloosahatchee Basin, the RFP closed in July 2025, and proposals were subsequently reviewed. This is the next step in a series of future solicitations anticipated for Northern Everglades watersheds’ water quantity and quality improvements. Future additional projects will help provide water storage solutions to support the target of an additional 205,000 ac-ft of storage needed to meet the CRWPP goals. Potential storage projects may include DWM alternatives such as aboveground impoundments, water retention above current water management elevations, and/or water storage below ground in areas where there is high percolation. Other ancillary project benefits may include hydrologic enhancement, groundwater recharge, and native habitat enhancement.

Northern Everglades Monitoring and Focus Area Assessments

In 2020, SFWMD expanded its existing upstream monitoring program across the Northern Everglades watersheds in response to Executive Order 19-12. The expansion added 67 new monitoring sites (37 in the LOW, 15 in the SLRW, and 15 in the CRW), augmented sampling with additional water quality monitoring parameters, and increased sampling frequency. SFWMD’s expanded upstream monitoring program continued during WY2025 with a total of 211 monitoring sites in the Northern Everglades watersheds. These SFWMD upstream monitoring networks in the LOW, SLRW, and CRW are described in more detail in Appendices 8B-1, 8C-1, and 8D-1 of this volume, respectively. Further details on the SFWMD’s monitoring information (e.g., current conditions, location maps, parameters sampled, and other multimedia documents of interest) can be found on SFWMD’s DBHYDRO Insights webpage (www.sfwmd.gov/DBHYDROInsights). As part of the 2025 WPP updates, longer-term trend analyses for water quality parameters were also provided for Lake Okeechobee in Appendix 8B-3 (Jones and Olson 2025) and the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee estuaries and watersheds in Appendices 8C-2 and 8D-2 of the final 2025 SFER – Volume I (McDonald et al. 2025, Acevedo et al. 2025), respectively.

Also of note, subwatershed- and/or basin-specific assessments within NEEPP priority areas are underway. The assessments gather information to pinpoint the nutrient sources contributing to water quality issues, consider existing and planned projects and their expected impact to water quality, determine what remains to be done to improve water quality, and recommend actions in collaboration with the Coordinating Agencies.

In 2020, assessments were planned for 10 priority areas—seven in the LOW (S-191, S-154, S-154C, C-40, C-41, C-41A, and L-59E basins), two in the SLRW (C-24 and Ten Mile Creek basins), and one in the CRW (West Caloosahatchee Basin). The *Lake Okeechobee Watershed Taylor Creek/Nubbin Slough Analysis* (SFWMD 2023), which includes information on the S-191, S-154, S-154C, S-133, and S-135 basins, and the *Focus Assessment Report for Taylor Creek/Nubbin Slough Subwatershed – S-191 Basin* (Olson et al. 2023) were both published in April 2023. The *Focus Assessment Report for the West Caloosahatchee Basin* was published in October 2024 (Olson et al. 2024). As part of the 5-year WPP updates, high-level assessments were completed for each watershed: Appendices 8B-4 (LOW; Olson et al. 2025a), 8C-3 (SLRW; McDonald and Olson 2025), and 8D-3 (CRW; Acevedo and Olson 2025) of the final 2025 SFER – Volume I. The 2025 high-level assessments recommended more detailed assessments be completed for the Lower Kissimmee and Indian Prairie subwatersheds, which include the C-40, C-41, C-41A, and L-59E basins, in the LOW and the East Caloosahatchee Basin in the CRW over the next 5 years. No basin-specific assessments are currently planned for the SLRW, as the 2025 high-level assessment indicated that this watershed is expected to reach its SFWMD planning targets. Most recently, the *Focus Assessment Report for the Upper Kissimmee Subwatershed* and the *Focus Assessment Report for the Lower Kissimmee Subwatershed* were both published in November 2025 (Olson et al. 2025b,c). All the assessment reports are available at www.sfwmd.gov/wpps (see the *Key Information and References, Focus Area Assessments* section).

Additionally, over the past year, collaborative interagency meetings were held among subject matter experts of the NEEPP Coordinating Agencies' Water Quality Technical Team. SFWMD also continued to work closely with the water quality team to implement a Rapid Assessment process, which has been established to notify each agency and share information when high nutrient events happen in an effort to be more proactive in managing specific water quality issues (see Appendices 8B-1, 8C-1 and 8D-1 of this volume for further details). Overall, with guidance and recommendations from the team, SFWMD continues to pursue funding opportunities and water quality improvement grants for nutrient reduction and storage projects in priority areas across the Northern Everglades watersheds.

FDACS IMPLEMENTATION OF AGRICULTURAL NON-POINT SOURCE BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

FDACS BMP Program

Agricultural best management practices (BMPs) are an integral part of water resource protection implemented under the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) Office of Agricultural Water Policy (OAWP) BMP Program. BMP manuals provide specific research-based practices agricultural producers can implement to improve water quality and protect water resources. As of March 2025, OAWP updated nine existing manuals (cattle, sod, equine, specialty fruit and nut crops, citrus, nursery, dairy, vegetable and agronomic crops, and poultry; FDACS 2024a through i, respectively) and developed a new BMP manual for small farms and specialty livestock (FDACS 2024j). The updated manuals reflect advancements in agricultural science, water quality research, and on-the-ground practices. More information about OAWP’s BMP Program and digital copies of the new manuals are available at <https://www.fdacs.gov/Agriculture-Industry/Best-Management-Practices-BMPs>.

FDACS enrolls agricultural producers in the adopted BMP regulatory programs to promote the highest level of efficiency in nutrient, irrigation, and water resource management. In BMAP areas, producers are required to properly implement the applicable BMPs identified during enrollment or undertake water quality monitoring to ensure that their production practices do not cause or contribute to a violation of state water quality standards. FDACS representatives work with producers to identify the applicable BMPs for the commodity being produced and the producer signs a Notice of Intent (NOI) to implement those BMPs. Further information on the FDACS BMP Program and enrollment in the program can be found at <https://www.fdacs.gov/Agriculture-Industry/Best-Management-Practices-BMPs>.

FDACS used the Florida Statewide Agricultural Irrigation Demand Version 12 (FSAID12) data set to identify the agricultural lands within the NEEPP watersheds. As of February 28, 2025, FDACS enrolled 1,513,426 agricultural ac in the LOW, 278,459 agricultural ac in the SLRW, and 373,615 agricultural ac in the CRW (**Figure 8A-5**). The boundaries of the LOW overlap with those of the CRW and SLRW as shown in **Figure 8A-1**; therefore, the enrollment acreages provided for the different watersheds may include the same NOIs where these NOIs and associated acreages are in more than one watershed. FDACS’ OAWP continues to prioritize enrollments and those properties where enrollment and proper implementation of the applicable BMPs will achieve the greatest benefits to water resources from nutrient reduction. The enrollment acreages provided here are different than those reported in the BMAPs, but are consistent with the latest NEEPP boundary updates reflected in the 2025 WPP updates, as reported in the 2025 SFER. For more information on BMP enrollments within each BMAP, see the FDACS report, *2025 Status of Implementation of Agricultural Nonpoint Source Best Management Practices* (FDACS 2025), available on the FDACS Office of Agricultural Water Policy’s web page at <https://www.fdacs.gov/Divisions-Offices/Agricultural-Water-Policy>.

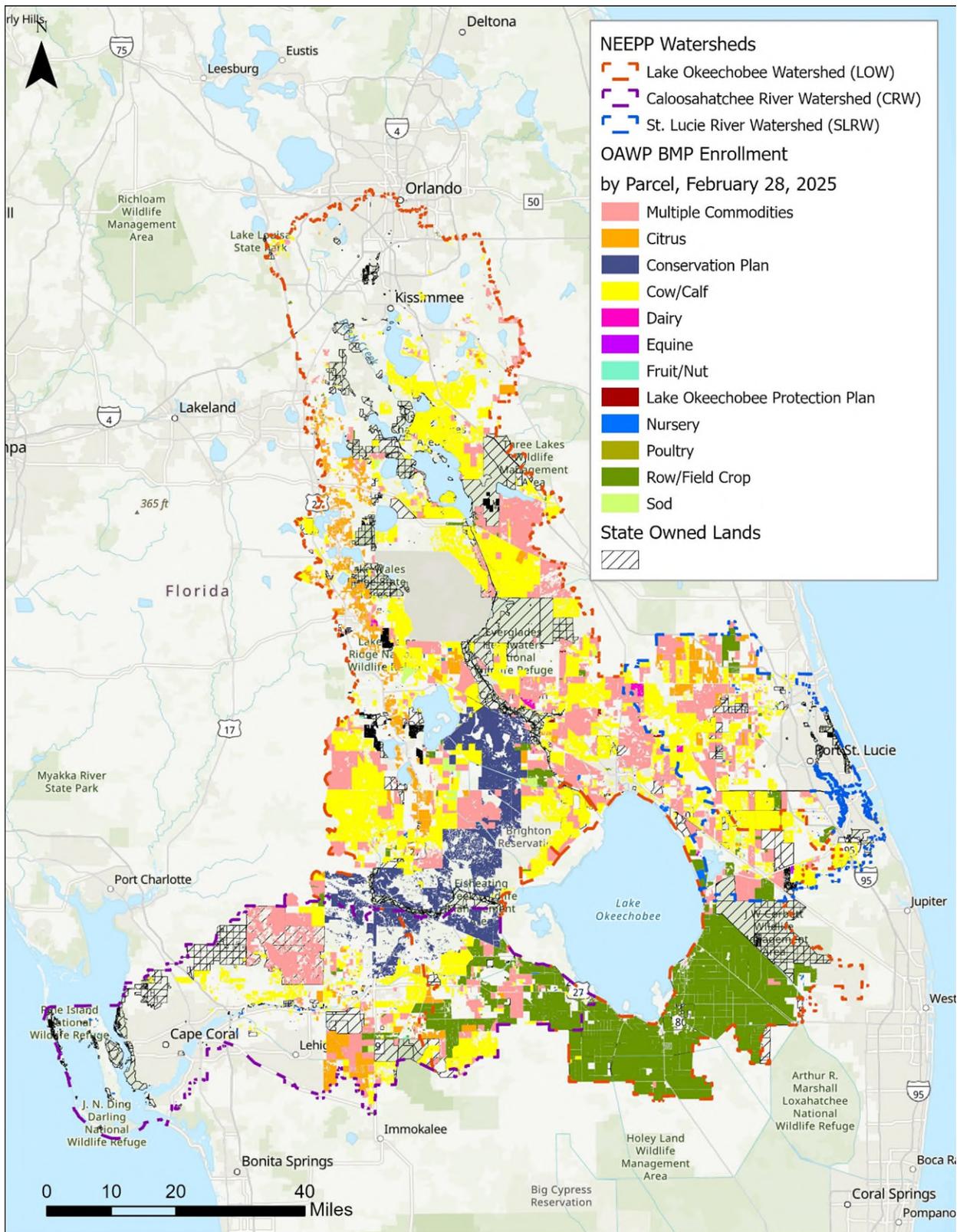


Figure 8A-5. FDACS BMP Program enrollment as of February 28, 2025.

FDACS Implementation Assurance Program

FDACS OAWP continued its efforts to successfully implement the requirements of Section 403.067, F.S., by enrolling new agricultural producers and performing site visits to verify the proper implementation of applicable agricultural BMP for producers enrolled in the BMP Program. FDACS is required to perform BMP Implementation Verification (IV) site visits to enrolled operations at least every two years to ensure that BMPs are being properly implemented and to retain records related to application of phosphorus and nitrogen fertilizers (Section 403.067(7)(d)3., F.S.).

Site visits are the most effective way to address areas of concern on an operation and help FDACS representatives identify opportunities for achieving greater nutrient, irrigation, or water resource management efficiencies, and further advancing water conservation. If, during an IV site visit, a producer is not properly implementing BMPs according to the process outlined in Chapter 5M-1, Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.), then that producer is referred to FDEP for enforcement action after attempts at corrective and remedial action are exhausted.

FDACS is required to submit annual reports on the status of BMP implementation and verification to the Florida legislature and governor. During Calendar Year 2024, FDACS conducted IV visits for 644 NOIs (97%) in the Lake Okeechobee BMAP area, 144 NOIs (97%) in the Caloosahatchee Estuary BMAP area, and 144 NOIs (96%) in the St. Lucie River and Estuary BMAP area. In response to hurricanes Debby, Helene, and Milton, the Commissioner of Agriculture issued Emergency Orders which deferred IV site visits for impacted counties through the end of calendar year 2024. Details on BMP implementation for each BMAP area are presented in the FDACS report, *2025 Status of Implementation of Agricultural Nonpoint Source Best Management Practices* (FDACS 2025), which can be found at <https://www.fdacs.gov/Divisions-Offices/Agricultural-Water-Policy>.

SAVE OUR EVERGLADES TRUST FUND EXPENDITURES

While the authority to use Save Our Everglades Trust Fund (SOETF) funds is provided in Section 373.470, F.S., NEEPP also requires annual reporting on NEEPP expenditures from SOETF (Subsection 373.4595(6), F.S.). Specifically, NEEPP requires that the annual progress report contains a detailed annual accounting of the expenditure of SOETF funds including information concerning the amount and use of funds from federal, state, or local government sources. **Table 8A-3** provides an accounting of NEEPP expenditures and funding sources during Fiscal Year 2025 (FY2025; October 1, 2024–September 30, 2025). This report was prepared in cooperation with the other Coordinating Agencies and affected local governments.

CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

NEEPP construction projects and activities that comprised the FY2025 expenditures include the following: Lakeside Ranch STA; Lake Hicpochee Hydrologic Enhancement; C-43 West Basin Storage Reservoir Water Quality Component; Boma FEB; C-43 Water Quality Treatment and Testing Facility Project – Phase II; C-23/C-24 District Lands Hydrologic Enhancements; Grassy Island FEB; Brady Ranch FEB; Nubbin Slough STA Refurbishments; Lower Kissimmee Basin STA; Lake Okeechobee Drainage Delineation, Water Retention, and Nutrient Reduction projects; DWM projects; and research, modeling, and monitoring in the Northern Everglades watersheds. CERP components of the NEEPP construction project are reported in the *Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan Annual Report – 470 Report* (see Volume II, Chapter 8) and are not included here to avoid duplicative reporting and tracking.

POLLUTANT CONTROL PROGRAMS

The Pollutant Control Program is a multi-faceted approach for improving the management of pollution sources within the Northern Everglades watersheds. It includes source control programs, such as BMPs, on-site treatment technologies, stormwater and wastewater infrastructure upgrades and master planning, and regulatory programs focused on water quality and quantity.

RESEARCH AND WATER QUALITY MONITORING PROGRAM

This program primarily assesses ecological health and progress toward achieving the water quality and storage targets and the plans, programs, and other responsibilities in the WPPs. The activities comprising FY2025 expenditures include ecological and water quality monitoring, applied research, model application and development, and exotic species control.

Table 8A-3. Accounting of NEEPP expenditures for FY2025 (October 1, 2024–September 30, 2025).

Plan/Program	Expenditures by Funding Source					Total
	SOETF	Other State	Federal	Local	District Ad Valorem ^a	
Lake Okeechobee Watershed Protection Plan (LOWPP)						
Construction Projects ^{b,c}	\$0	\$786,327	\$0	\$0	\$2,712,768	\$3,499,095
Pollutant Control Program	\$0	\$336,644	\$0	\$0	\$777,651	\$1,114,295
District Research and Water Quality Monitoring Program ^b	\$0	\$5,108,606	\$171,850	\$0	\$4,567,985	\$9,848,441
LOWPP FY2025 Expenditures	\$0	\$6,231,492	\$171,850	\$0	\$8,058,404	\$14,461,831
St. Lucie River Watershed Protection Plan (SLRWPP)						
Construction Projects ^c	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$9,584	\$9,584
Pollutant Control Program	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$8,602	\$8,602
District Research and Water Quality Monitoring Program ^b	\$0	\$334,560	\$64,013	\$0	\$1,007,307	\$1,405,880
SLRWPP FY2025 Expenditures	\$0	\$334,560	\$64,013	\$0	\$1,025,493	\$1,424,066
Caloosahatchee River Watershed Protection Plan (CRWPP)						
Construction Projects ^{b,c}	\$0	\$13,692,569	\$0	\$0	\$300,162	\$13,992,731
Pollutant Control Program	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$30,882	\$30,882
District Research and Water Quality Monitoring Program ^b	\$0	\$740,067	\$27,561	\$0	\$301,391	\$1,069,019
CRWPP FY2025 Expenditures	\$0	\$14,432,636	\$27,561	\$0	\$632,435	\$15,092,632
Dispersed Water Management ^b	\$0	\$37,552,534	\$0	\$0	\$1,053,582	\$38,606,116
FDACS Agricultural BMP Program ^d	\$0	\$4,337,870	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$4,337,870
FDACS Lake Okeechobee Restoration Agricultural Projects ^d	\$0	\$1,503,059	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,503,059
TOTAL	\$0	\$64,392,151	\$263,424	\$0	\$10,769,914	\$75,425,574

a. These figures include SFWMD personnel services.

b. Other state funding includes expenses for C-43 Water Quality Treatment and Testing Facility – Phase II (\$8.1 million Land Acquisition Trust Fund or LATF), C-43 West Basin Storage Reservoir Water Quality Component (\$4.4 million LATF and \$72,526 General Revenue or GR), Lake Hicpochee Hydrologic Enhancement Project (\$532,844 LATF), Boma FEB (\$817,416 LATF), Grassy Island and Brady Ranch FEB (\$337,546 LATF and \$316,203 GR), research, monitoring, and modeling in the NEEPP watersheds - Lake Okeechobee (\$1.7 million LATF, inclusive of Basinger Dairy Project \$972,598), St. Lucie River (\$137,002 LATF), and Caloosahatchee River (\$302,715 LATF), and Dispersed Water Management, including Water Retention and Nutrient Reduction Projects (\$31.5 million LATF and \$6.1 million GR), as well as funding from state grants for Lake Okeechobee Ecosystem Health Study (\$2.0 million GR), Lake Okeechobee Turbidity Control (\$132,578 GR), Lake Okeechobee S-191 Basin Surface Runoff Phosphorous Removal Project (\$50,141 GR), and expanded monitoring efforts in the NEEPP watersheds – Lake Okeechobee (\$1.4 million GR), St. Lucie River (\$197,558 GR), and Caloosahatchee River (\$149,977 GR).

c. These figures do not include CERP projects in NEEPP watersheds, including the Indian River Lagoon - South (C-44 Reservoir and STA, C-23/C-24 Reservoir and STA, C-23 Estuary Discharge Diversion, and C-25 Reservoir and STA), Lake Okeechobee Watershed Restoration Project (LOWRP), and Caloosahatchee River (C-43) West Basin Storage Reservoir, totaling \$332.3 million (see Appendix 1-2 of this volume).

d. The FDACS Lake Okeechobee Restoration Agricultural Projects were appropriated as fixed-capital outlay funds

NORTHERN EVERGLADES ANNUAL WORK PLAN FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026

This Northern Everglades Annual Work Plan was prepared pursuant to the requirements of Paragraph 373.026(8)(b), F.S., which states that prior to the release of state funds for the implementation of the NEEPP WPPs, SFWMD must prepare an annual work plan, as part of the annual consolidated report, consistent with the goals and objectives of Section 373.4595, F.S. Upon a determination by the FDEP Secretary of the annual work plan's consistency with the goals and objectives of Section 373.4595, F.S., the Secretary may approve the release of state funds.

The Coordinating Agencies have requested to spend SOETF dollars for implementation of the projects identified in the Lake Okeechobee, St. Lucie River, and Caloosahatchee River WPPs. The projects collectively identified by the Coordinating Agencies that will be implemented in FY2026 using SOETF funding are listed below with an asterisk (*) and are an integral part of the respective WPP. To provide a more comprehensive picture, projects that will be implemented in FY2026 to further the goals and objectives of NEEPP but will be funded by other sources are also included in the list. A key to the lead or local sponsor of the projects is provided below the list. It should be noted that this work plan is subject to change throughout the fiscal year as deemed appropriate by the Coordinating Agencies.

LAKE OKEECHOBEE WATERSHED

I. Construction Project and Other Related Activities

- Lake Okeechobee BMAP¹
- Brady Ranch FEB²
- Grassy Island FEB²
- Kissimmee River Restoration and Headwaters Revitalization Schedule^{2,6}
- TCNS 214 Storage and Treatment^{1,2}
- Lower Kissimmee Basin STA²
- Lake Okeechobee Watershed Restoration Project (LOWRP)^{2,6}
- Dispersed Water Management Program
 - Lykes West Waterhole²
 - Nicodemus Slough Water Management Project²
 - Northern Everglades Payments for Environmental Services Program²
 - Public-Private Partnership Projects^{1,2,3}
 - Public Lands Projects²
- Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule Support²
- Local Government Water Quality Projects^{1,4}
- Northern Everglades Watersheds Water Retention and Nutrient Load Reduction Projects²

II. Pollutant Control Program

- Agricultural³ and Urban¹ BMPs
- SFWMD Works of the District²

- Basinger Dairy Legacy Phosphorus Removal^{1,2}
- Innovative Treatment Technologies
 - Hybrid Wetland Treatment Technology³ and Floating Aquatic Vegetation Tilling³
 - Lake Okeechobee S-191 Basin Surface Runoff Phosphorus Removal Using Innovative Technologies^{1,2}

III. Research and Water Quality Monitoring Program

- Regional Phosphorus Control Project Monitoring (Taylor Creek, Nubbin Slough, and Lakeside Ranch STAs)²
- Water Quality Assessment and Reporting²
- Upstream Monitoring Flow Network (United States Geological Survey)³
- Upstream Water Quality and 2020 Expansion (includes additional stations, increased sample frequency, and increased parameter collection)²
- Kissimmee River-related Ecological, Water Quality, and Flow Monitoring and Modeling²
- Lake Okeechobee In-lake Assessments²
- Exotics and Nuisance Species Control²
- Lake Okeechobee In-lake and Watershed Modeling²

CALOOSAHATCHEE RIVER WATERSHED

I. Construction Project and Other Related Activities

- Caloosahatchee River and Estuary BMAP^{1,2,4}
- Caloosahatchee River (C-43) West Basin Storage Reservoir^{2,6}
- Lake Hicpochee Storage and Shallow Hydrologic Enhancement Expansion²
- C-43 Water Quality Treatment and Testing – Phase II, Test Cells²
- Boma FEB²
- Caloosahatchee Reservoir Water Quality Component²
- Local Government Water Quality Projects^{1,4}
- Dispersed Water Management Program
 - Northern Everglades Payment for Environmental Services Program²
 - Public-Private Partnership Projects^{1,2,3}
 - Public Lands Projects²
- Northern Everglades Watersheds Water Retention and Nutrient Load Reduction Projects²
- Caloosahatchee River Watershed Water Storage Initiative Projects²
- Caloosahatchee Water Quality Improvement Grant Projects
 - Palm Creek Lower Filter Marsh⁴
 - Bob Janes Preserve⁴
 - Frank Mann Preserve⁴

II. Pollutant Control Program

- Agricultural³ and Urban¹ BMPs
- SFWMD Works of the District²
- Innovative Treatment Technologies
 - Floating Aquatic Vegetation Tilling³

III. Research and Water Quality Monitoring Program

- Upstream Water Quality and 2020 Expansion (includes additional stations, increased sample frequency, and increased parameter collection)²
- Ecological Monitoring (Oysters, Seagrass, and Zooplankton)²
- Applied Research, Model Development, and Application²

ST. LUCIE RIVER WATERSHED

I. Construction Project and Other Related Activities

- St. Lucie River and Estuary BMAP¹
- CERP Indian River Lagoon – South*
 - C-44 Reservoir and STA^{2,6}
 - C-23/C-24 North Reservoir⁶
 - C-23/C-24 South Reservoir²
 - C-23/C-24 STA⁶
 - C-25 Reservoir and STA²
 - C-23 Estuary Discharge Diversion²
- Ten Mile Creek Water Preserve Area^{2,6}
- Allapattah Conservation and Recreation Area^{2,5,6}
- Dispersed Water Management Program
 - Northern Everglades Payment for Environmental Services Program²
 - C-23/C-24 District Lands Hydrologic Enhancements^{1,2,3}
 - Water Farming Project²
- Old Palm City Septic-to-Sewer Conversion⁴
- St. Lucie County North Hutchinson Island Septic-to-Sewer⁴
- Northern Everglades Watersheds Water Retention and Nutrient Load Reduction Projects²

II. Pollutant Control Program

- Agricultural³ and Urban¹ BMPs
- SFWMD Works of the District²
- Innovative Treatment Technologies
 - Hybrid Wetland Treatment Technology³

III. Research and Water Quality Monitoring Program

- United States Geological Survey St. Lucie Estuary Monitoring²
- Upstream Water Quality Monitoring and 2020 Expansion (includes additional sampling locations and increased parameter collection)²
- Ecological Monitoring (Oysters, Seagrass, and Phytoplankton)²
- Efficacy of Reclaimed Water BMPs for Nutrient Reductions in Residential Areas⁴
- Applied Research, Model Development, and Application²

Lead and/or Local Sponsor

¹ Florida Department of Environmental Protection

² South Florida Water Management District

³ Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services

⁴ Local government

⁵ Natural Resources Conservation Services

⁶ United States Army Corps of Engineers

* The projects collectively identified by the Coordinating Agencies that will be implemented in FY2026 using SOETF funding.

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