



## Lake Okeechobee Water Releases

### SANIBEL LEGISLATIVE AND FUNDING PRIORITIES

#### FEDERAL PRIORITIES

1. **Fully support the 2013 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) bill**, which includes authorization for the Caloosahatchee C-43 West Basin Reservoir Project; and appropriate the necessary funds to implement the C-43 Reservoir Project. (Reservoir will provide 170,000 acre-feet of storage within the Caloosahatchee basin and help address high and low flow issues.)
2. **Fast track the Central Everglades Planning Project (CEPP) and get congressional support and funding for the project.** (The project will move approximately 210,000 acre-feet of water south of Lake Okeechobee and will reduce some of the damaging flows to the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee estuaries.)
3. **The Federal Government needs to fund their share of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) and implement the projects** agreed to in the plan. (A majority of the lands needed for the projects have been purchased by the State and need Federal funding to move forward with the projects.)
4. **Continue to keep pressure on the Army Corps to move as quickly as possible to rehabilitate the Herbert Hoover Dike.** (The project will protect the communities around Lake Okeechobee and provide more freeboard and temporary storage in the lake to reduce peak flows to the estuaries.)
5. **Revisit the Lake Okeechobee Release Schedule (LORS2008) risk assessment** to determine if there are any opportunities to minimize discharges to the estuaries in light of recent improvements in the Herbert Hoover Dike; and to reevaluate how flows to the Caloosahatchee are measured under the LORS2008 schedule to make regulatory release more equitable.

-OVER-



## Lake Okeechobee Water Releases SANIBEL LEGISLATIVE AND FUNDING PRIORITIES

### STATE PRIORITIES

- 1) **Purchase additional lands south of Lake Okeechobee at fair market value, acquire private easements, or swap existing State-owned lands for the critical lands needed to facilitate storage, treatment and conveyance of water south into Everglades National Park.** The State currently owns 26,790 acres of land that was purchased for \$197,396,088 (\$7,400/acre) from U.S. Sugar Corp. as part of the *Reviving the River of Grass Project*, with an option to purchase an additional 153,209 acres. The State should acquire the critical lands needed to store, treat and convey water south through purchase from willing sellers, acquisition of private easements, or by swapping existing non-essential state-owned lands to acquire the footprint needed to effectively store, treat and convey water south through the Everglades Agricultural Area.
- 2) **Interim storage on C-43 West Reservoir site** – Project would significantly increase the amount of water that can be stored on the C-43 West Reservoir (Berry Groves) property until the full project is completed. It would require additional infrastructure, including building berms and installing larger pumps to put more water on the site. This would be considered phase I of the larger C-43 West Reservoir CERP project and could be included in the state cost share for the federal project. Estimated cost of the interim storage project is \$10 million. In addition, the 1,500 acres of land purchased as part of the Berry Groves acquisition should be used to construct a stormwater treatment area (STA) adjacent to the reservoir to treat water before it is discharged into the Caloosahatchee.
- 3) **Lake Hicpochee Restoration Project** – Funds needed to complete planning and construction on north and south sides of Lake Hicpochee to increase storage and treatment. Estimated cost for planning and construction is \$20-30 million. Project will result in increased water storage and treatment within the Caloosahatchee basin.
- 4) **Increase distributed storage in Kissimmee, Lake Okeechobee, and Caloosahatchee basins.** Additional funds are needed for the state to partner with large land owners in the Kissimmee, Lake Okeechobee and Caloosahatchee basins to store more water on the land so that it is not discharged to Lake Okeechobee or to the Caloosahatchee River. No cost estimate available, but new partners could be brought on as funds become available.

*Note: \*The state needs to continue to fully support the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Program (CERP) projects. Our biggest relief from the freshwater releases into the Caloosahatchee are going to come from the larger federal projects, which have much larger water storage benefits and can move water south into the Everglades. The state needs to continue to work with our federal partners to come up with strategies to move more water south of Lake Okeechobee.*

-OVER-