

# Strategic Plan

## 2012 – 2017

This document provides the South Florida Water Management District and the public it serves with the blueprint for successfully meeting the water resource management regional priorities for the next five years...and beyond. With fiscal resources focused on the agency's core mission functions of flood control, water supply, water quality and natural systems, these commitments and strategies will be put into action to help make a difference in South Florida's future.



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*Joe Collins*

## MESSAGE from the GOVERNING BOARD CHAIRMAN

### Governing Board Members

**Joe Collins**  
*Chairman*

**Kevin Powers**  
*Vice-Chairman*

**Sandy Batchelor**

**Daniel DeLisi**

**James J. Moran**

**Daniel O'Keefe**

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**Timothy Sargent**

**Glenn J. Waldman**

Florida's five water management districts were specifically created by the Water Resources Act in 1972 to manage and protect the state's waters on behalf of citizens. For four decades we have fulfilled our responsibilities of managing water supply, water quality, flood protection and natural systems in the public interest through resource-based programs, governing boards appointed by the Governor and state oversight through the Department of Environmental Protection.

Today and looking forward, the South Florida Water Management District is a lean and efficient agency that is focused on its core mission. We are committed to meeting taxpayer expectations for cost-effective and customer-driven services, government transparency and accountability in spending. At the same time, the District continues to be a dynamic agency that remains committed to developing its diverse, high-quality staff to ensure reliable, proficient water management now and into our future.

To guide the agency in meeting its mission-critical responsibilities, the Governing Board has identified strategic priorities for the next five years, which include:

- Refurbishing, replacing, improving and managing the regional water management system;
- Restoring the Northern and Southern Everglades;
- Meeting the current and future demands of water users and the environment; and
- Ensuring South Florida's taxpayers receive efficient and effective customer service.

In addition to prudent, results-based annual budgeting, the District is investing more than \$375 million in financial reserves toward further developing and protecting South Florida's water resources. These dedicated efforts will help expand water storage and improve water quality in the northern and southern Everglades, including Lake Okeechobee and the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee watersheds.

The public can be assured that the South Florida Water Management District is a government agency true to its founding principles, clearly focused on its mission, streamlined in its internal operations, conscientiously planning for the future and steadfastly committed to delivering efficient and cost-effective water resource management.



*Melissa Meeker*

## MESSAGE from the EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Guided by the strategic direction of our Governing Board, the South Florida Water Management District is focused on responsibly managing our water resources in the best interest of 7.7 million residents and a diverse environment. Without question, balancing the agency's multiple missions of delivering dependable flood control, protecting regional water supplies and improving natural systems can be challenging. Fortunately, these profound responsibilities also provide us with countless opportunities to make a lasting difference.

The next five years promise to be exciting ones. True to the District's 60-year history as a flood control agency, we continue the ongoing work of operating and maintaining South Florida's massive flood control infrastructure. Key multi-year projects include bank stabilization along the Hillsboro Canal, maintenance of the East Coast Protective Levee and structure refurbishments throughout the Kissimmee Basin. Investing in our flood control system ensures that we can continue to efficiently and effectively move billions of gallons of water each day, even during South Florida's unpredictable weather extremes.

Under the leadership of Governor Scott, and with federal and state consensus on a strategy to vastly improve the quality of water flowing into America's Everglades, the District will construct 6,500 acres of new stormwater treatment areas and close to 110,000 acre-feet of additional water storage to achieve ultra-low water quality requirements in the Everglades. In addition to improving water quality, the agency also remains a full partner in restoration of the Kissimmee River and implementation of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan. This collaboration with the federal government is a testament to our shared vision for a restored South Florida ecosystem—from the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes to the Everglades and Florida Bay.

As we make progress each year on our long-term restoration initiatives, we are also realizing near-term solutions, such as our innovative dispersed water management program. And we remain committed to sound science—the foundation of all successful restoration. With focused research and streamlined monitoring, we are able to ensure that science consistently informs our decision-making and supports our priority restoration projects.

Lastly, the District will continue to diversify South Florida's water supply portfolio with alternative water sources and, at the same time, work to protect existing supplies through conservation. Public-private partnerships, along with enhanced coordination between Florida's water management districts and the Department of Environmental Protection, are already strengthening our efforts to meet the water needs of the environment as well as the state's economy.

As we look to the years ahead, I am fully confident that the South Florida Water Management District has the resources and capabilities to successfully carry out our Governing Board's strategic direction and fulfill our mission responsibilities to the citizens we serve.

Headquartered in West Palm Beach, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) is a regional governmental agency that oversees the water resources in 16 counties – from Orlando to the Florida Keys. With a population of 7.7 million, this region covers 17,930 square miles (31 percent of the entire state) and includes vast areas of agricultural lands, water conservation areas and urban development.

Operating for more than 60 years, the SFWMD is the oldest and largest of the state's five water management districts. State legislation further divides the District into two taxing basins: the Big Cypress Basin includes all of Collier County and a portion of mainland Monroe County; the larger Okeechobee Basin comprises the remaining area within SFWMD boundaries.

A nine-member Governing Board sets policy and provides overall direction for the entire district. Board members are appointed by the Governor, confirmed by the Florida Senate and generally serve four-year terms. The annual budget is funded by a combination of property taxes and other sources such as federal, state and local revenue, licenses, permit fees, grants, agricultural taxes, investment income and bond proceeds.

The SFWMD is charged with safeguarding the region's water resources for today and for the future. This includes protecting water supplies and improving water quality. The agency also operates and maintains the Central and Southern Florida Project – one of the world's largest water management systems, made up of an extensive network of canals, levees, water storage areas, pump stations and other water control structures. The highly engineered system was built through one of the most diverse ecosystems in the world: the interconnected greater Everglades, which the SFWMD is helping to protect and restore.

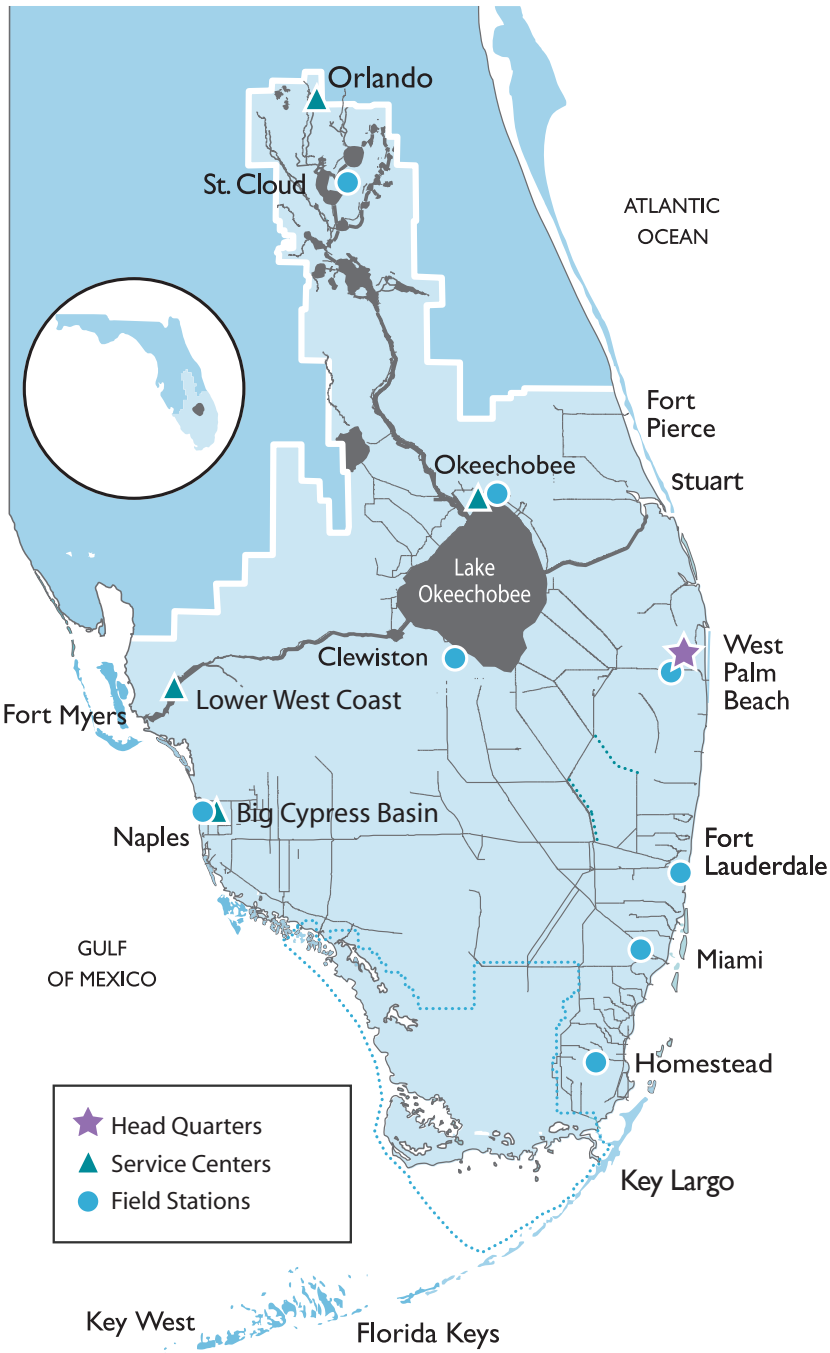
South Florida itself encompasses a mosaic of diversity – from landscapes and habitats to people and cultures. The agency strives to ensure that the public is informed and engaged, and that both local and regional perspectives are considered and incorporated into decisions and actions.

In addition to the main office in West Palm Beach, three Regulatory Service Centers and eight Field Stations provide assistance and operational support on water management-related issues. The Big Cypress Basin office in Naples provides intergovernmental and project support for Collier County.

## OUR MISSION

To manage and protect water resources of the region by balancing and improving water quality, flood control, natural systems and water supply





## SFWMD Locations

### Headquarters

West Palm Beach  
(561) 686-8800 or (800) 432-2045

### Big Cypress Basin

Naples: (239) 263-7615

### Regulatory Service Centers

Lower West Coast  
(239) 338-2929 or (800) 248-1201

Okeechobee  
(863) 462-5260 or (800) 250-4200

Orlando  
(407) 858-6100 or (800) 250-4250

### Field Stations

Big Cypress Basin  
(239) 597-2236

Clewiston  
(863) 983-1431

Fort Lauderdale  
(954) 452-4814

Homestead  
(305) 242-5933

Miami  
(305) 513-3420

Okeechobee  
(863) 462-5328

St. Cloud  
(407) 891-3550

West Palm Beach  
(561) 791-4100

*Toll-free numbers are Florida only.*



# FLOOD CONTROL

## Ensuring and Managing Water Flow

Tempering South Florida's weather extremes of flood and drought was the impetus for creation of the agency in 1949. That principal directive continues today through effective operation, maintenance and management of the primary canals, water control structures and District-owned lands as authorized by Chapter 373, Florida Statutes, and by agreement with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. To help accomplish this core mission, eight field stations are located throughout the 16-county region.

Because rainfall in South Florida averages about 52 inches per year, flood control is an ongoing and mission-critical responsibility. Almost three-quarters of the region's annual rainfall typically falls in the six-month period from May through October, when intense storms are common. However, frontal storms in the winter months also can produce significant rainfall. On average, rainfall distribution varies significantly for all basins.

In addition to seasonal variation, rainfall fluctuates significantly from year to year, and South Florida can move quickly from flooding to drought, or vice versa. The region is also highly vulnerable to the onslaught of hurricanes and tropical storms. These weather extremes add to the challenges associated with managing surface water resources.

Highly variable rainfall coupled with South Florida's flat topography necessitates flood protection for the region's 7.7 million residents. When the regional Central and Southern Florida (C&SF) Project was designed in the late 1940s, its primary function was flood control – although there were additional benefits to water supply, fish and wildlife preservation and other functions. Since U.S. Army Corps of Engineers construction of the public works project in the 1950s and 60s, the District's responsibilities as local sponsor of the federal flood control system have expanded to emphasize other aspects of water resource management.

Including the C&SF Project and Big Cypress Basin facilities, the South Florida Water Management District today operates and maintains more than 1,600 miles of canals and 1,000 miles of canals/levees, about 1,200 water control structures and 60 pump stations. The system is continuously expanding as new projects - such as the series of Stormwater Treatment Areas (STAs) south of Lake Okeechobee – are completed or expanded. Operation of the

### ► Strategic Priority

**Refurbish, replace, improve and manage the regional water management system by:**

- Implementing flood control system refurbishment projects as part of the 50-year plan
- Incorporating new works into water management system operations
- Operating the water management system to meet flood control and water supply needs
- Optimizing infrastructure maintenance by adhering to, or exceeding, industry standards and best practices
- Coordinating with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on levee inspections and improvements



complex system of water management structures is capable of delivering nearly 1.4 billion gallons per day – or 500 billion gallons annually – to support the water supply needs of urban areas and the agricultural industry.

Major responsibilities associated with the flood control mission include operations, maintenance and refurbishment of the entire infrastructure, along with hydrological data collection,

flow determination and hydrological basin management. The management and removal of nuisance aquatic vegetation is an ongoing initiative to ensure that water can flow unimpeded throughout the system. Improvements and upgrades include automation; pump station repair and restoration; gravity structure repair and restoration; levee inspections and repair; and canal conveyance dredging.



## Regional System Expansion and Enhancements

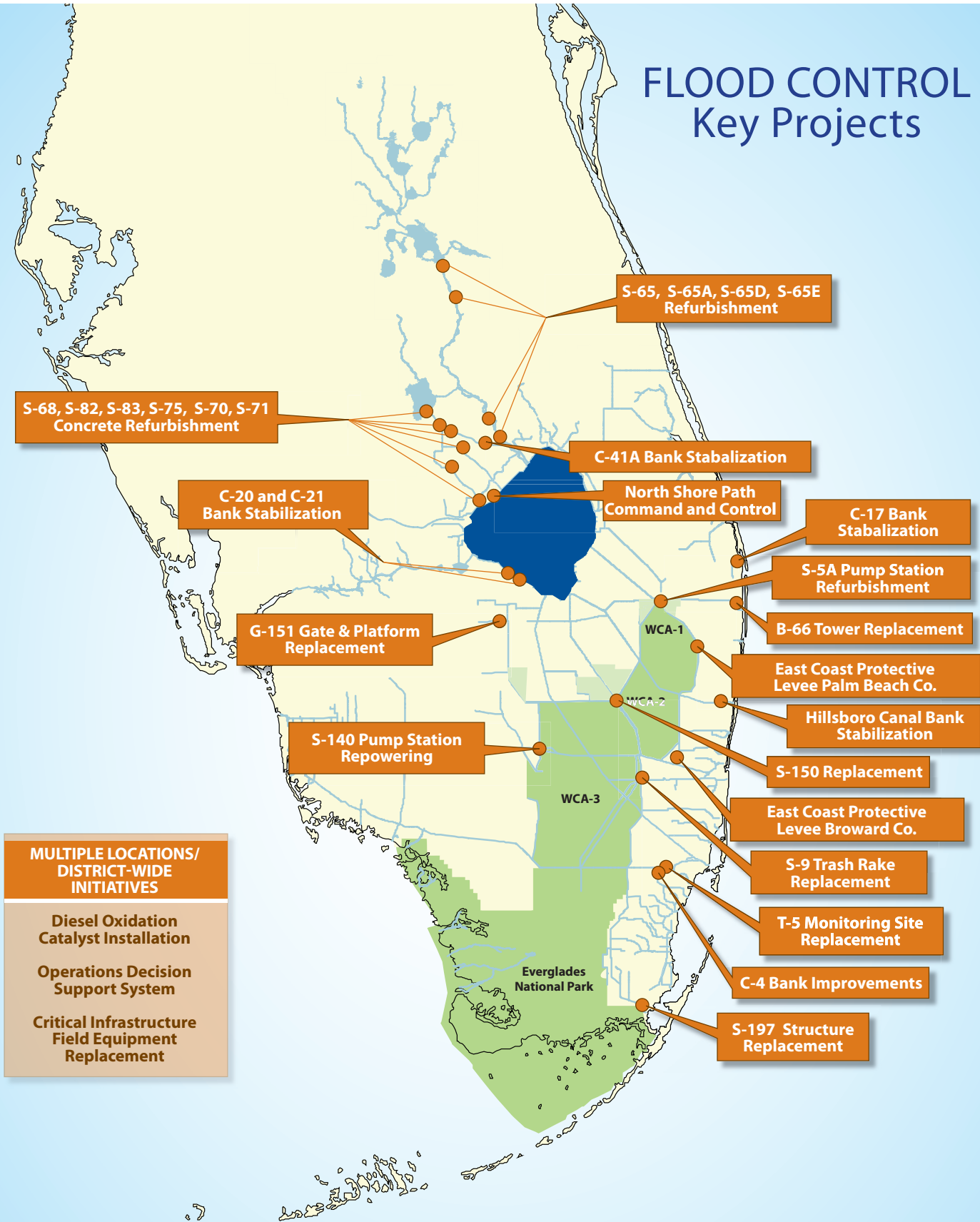
Moving water is central to the District's primary function. A well-maintained water management infrastructure assures the public that District facilities are operating at peak efficiency. The District commits to setting aside specific funds each year to implement the 50-year Plan for repairing, refurbishing and upgrading canals, water control structures, levees (including enhancements as needed to meet U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dam safety standards) and water storage areas. In addition, construction of new facilities requires an increase in operations and maintenance responsibilities, not only for managing new District-built facilities but also for restoration projects being constructed by the federal government that will ultimately be turned over to the District.

### ► Flood Control – Success Indicators

- Complete projects on time and on budget (earned value)
- Commission 100 percent of new works on schedule, prior to project close-out
- Operate 100 percent of works in accordance with established operating criteria
- Complete at least 80 percent of maintenance activities on schedule
- Perform at least 80 percent of all work activities as planned work; no more than 20 percent are unplanned
- Expend no more than 20 percent of maintenance efforts for unplanned work
- Pass U.S. Army Corps of Engineers annual inspection on 90 percent of canals/levees



# FLOOD CONTROL Key Projects



- MULTIPLE LOCATIONS/  
DISTRICT-WIDE  
INITIATIVES**
- Diesel Oxidation Catalyst Installation
- Operations Decision Support System
- Critical Infrastructure Field Equipment Replacement

2012 – 2017



# NATURAL SYSTEMS/ WATER QUALITY

## Protecting and Restoring Ecosystems

South Florida is characterized by its unique, diverse ecosystems. Over many decades, development and increased urbanization significantly changed the size, hydrology, water quality and ecology of ecosystems throughout the 16-county region. Today, a wide variety of restoration and water quality improvement projects are under way to protect and restore the greater Everglades ecosystem from the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes to the southern Everglades and Florida Bay.

### ► Strategic Priority

#### Restore the Northern and Southern Everglades by:

- Completing and implementing key ongoing and new restoration projects
- Expanding and improving water storage
- Implementing cost-effective solutions to improve water quality treatment, reduce nutrient loads and achieve water quality standards
- Utilizing regulatory permitting and compliance authority
- Managing invasive exotic and nuisance vegetation on District lands

#### State-Federal Partnerships

The ecological integrity of the Kissimmee River and floodplain is being restored through a joint partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to recreate the historic mosaic of wetland plant communities and to reestablish biological diversity and functionality. The District acquired 103,000 acres of land for the restoration effort and conducts scientific evaluations of ecosystem response. The Corps has completed three phases of backfilling the C-38 canal and continuous water flow has been reestablished to 24 miles of the river.

Also in partnership with the Corps, the District is implementing the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) to improve the quantity, quality, timing and distribution of water delivered to freshwater and coastal systems in South Florida. The District has invested \$2.4 billion toward the acquisition of more than 240,000 acres of land required for CERP implementation, project construction and science-based research and monitoring. Key partnership projects under way or targeted for authorization/construction include the Loxahatchee River Watershed Restoration, Indian River Lagoon – South, Picayune Strand Restoration, Site 1 Impoundment (Fran Reich Preserve), Caloosahatchee River (C-43) West Basin Storage Reservoir, C-111 Spreader Canal, Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands and Modified Water Deliveries to Everglades National Park.

#### State Projects and Programs

A series of intensive management activities are under way through the state's Northern Everglades and Estuaries Protection Program to restore the



health of Lake Okeechobee and downstream estuaries while continuing to balance flood protection, water supply, navigation and recreational needs. Updated watershed protection plans for Lake Okeechobee and the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee rivers and estuaries, identifying both water quality and water storage improvements, are being implemented in partnership with other state agencies. Primary efforts include agricultural and urban source controls (403,000 acres of agricultural lands are enrolled in the Best Management Practices, or BMP, program); construction projects (Lakeside Ranch Stormwater Treatment Area); alternative treatment technologies (Hybrid Wetland Treatment/Permeable Reactive Barrier/Nitrogen Testing); local water quality projects (more than 130); and habitat restoration. Dispersed water management is another innovative and cost-effective strategy for achieving environmental goals by

collaborating with property owners to store excess water on ranch lands. More than 137,000 acre-feet of shallow retention/storage has been made available to date. The District's regulatory authority includes the management of surface waters through Environmental Resource Permits. These permits ensure that proposed surface water management systems, including wetland dredging or filling, do not cause adverse water quality, water quantity or environmental impacts.

#### **Water Quality Improvements**

Solutions to achieve compliance with the long-term water quality standards established for the Everglades Protection Area are being implemented through agricultural best management practices and stormwater treatment areas, which use "green" technology to remove phosphorus from the water. More than 45,000 acres of constructed marshes are now successfully at work, with another 11,700 constructed and ready for operation in 2012. Additional water quality improvement remedies include the construction of an array of treatment and storage projects south of Lake Okeechobee to help better manage water flow and augment treatment performance, along with sub-regional source controls and habitat restoration. To date, BMPs and STAs have prevented more than 4,000 tons of phosphorus from entering the Everglades.



## Increased Storage, Improved Habitats and Cleaner Water

Improved water storage, habitat restoration and water quality treatment in both the northern and southern reaches of the greater Everglades ecosystem are key to a healthy environment and strong economy. The natural environment will experience significant benefits as restoration projects come on line and begin operating and delivering their desired results. The District is committed to identifying and implementing innovative, cost-effective and sustainable solutions to meet the region's water quality and ecosystem restoration challenges.

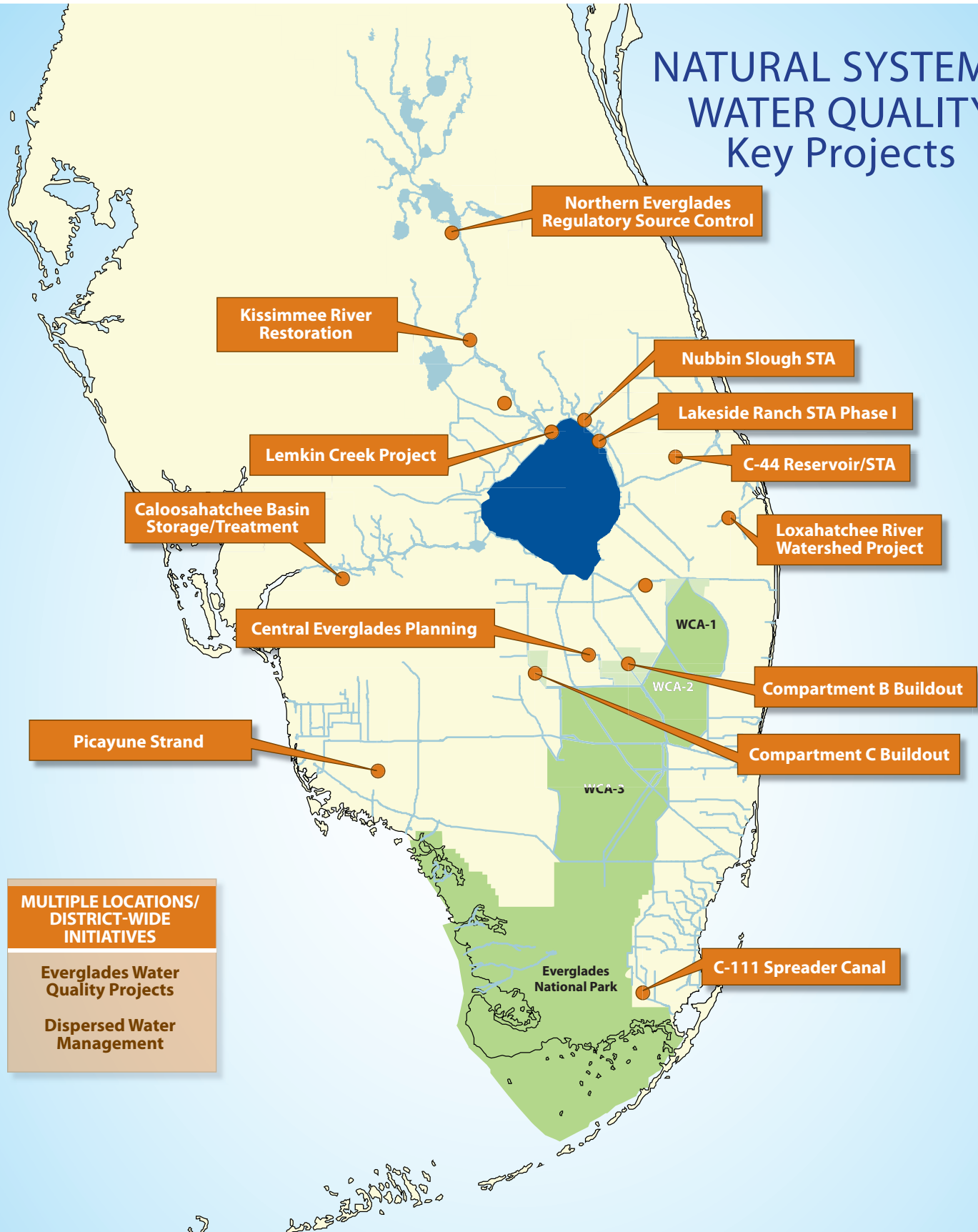


### ► Natural Systems/Water Quality – Success Indicators

- Complete projects on time and on budget (earned value)
- Commission 100% of new works on schedule, prior to project close-out
- Increase water storage by 50,000 acre-feet over the next three years
- Attain ambient water quality standards in the Everglades Protection Area
- Meet established Everglades Agricultural Area and C-139 Basin rule phosphorus reduction goals annually
- Implement Northern Everglades regulatory source control program for estuary watersheds within five years
- Process (average time) Environmental Resource Permits in less than 60 days, excluding Requests for Additional Information time/legal challenge; total average time in-house is less than 190 days
- Increase e-Permitting application submittals by 10 percent per year
- Conduct prescribed burning on 16,000 acres of District lands annually
- Hold exotic plant control costs to no more than \$50 per acre treated
- Treat 60,000 acres of aquatic, terrestrial and exotic vegetation annually



# NATURAL SYSTEMS/ WATER QUALITY Key Projects



2012 – 2017



# WATER SUPPLY

## Safeguarding and Stretching Water Resources

Water in the State of Florida is a public resource, so strategies that expand water supplies must be in the public interest. With general oversight and guidance provided by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the District utilizes a variety of tools and technologies to help ensure a reliable and sustainable supply of water for South Florida's citizens, environment and economy.

Water supply needs are continually evaluated by the District and appropriate programs are developed to achieve sustainable water resources pursuant to the Florida Water Resources Act (Chapter 373, Florida Statutes). Data are collected, and computer modeling is used to evaluate availability of water sources. Over time, land use changes, a growing population and agricultural development have resulted in higher demands for water supply. According to the Bureau of Economic and Business Research at the University of Florida, the region's permanent population is projected to reach 10.1 million by 2030. Planning for a growing population must also be balanced with ensuring water is available for natural systems.

To meet Florida's future demands, the state's water management districts are diversifying the water supply portfolio to maximize traditional sources while at the same time tapping into alternative sources. Strategies include sound planning and permitting; demand reduction through water conservation; development of alternative water sources such as surface waters, reuse and desalinization; and in South Florida, restoring the Everglades, which will result in more water overall for environmental, urban and agricultural users.

Water supply plans are updated in collaboration with stakeholders every five years. Based on a 20-year outlook, these plans include water demand estimates and projections; an evaluation of existing regional water resources; identification of water supply-related issues and options; water resource and water supply components, including funding strategies; and recommendations for meeting projected demands. Alternative

### ► Strategic Priority

**Meet the current and future demands of water users and the environment by:**

- Developing and implementing regional water supply plans in coordination with local governments and other stakeholders
- Supporting implementation of alternative water supply development and water conservation measures
- Utilizing regulatory permitting and compliance authority
- Using water reservation and minimum flow & level authorities to protect water for natural systems



water supplies, regional solutions and water conservation are encouraged through regulatory, voluntary and financial incentives.

The agency regulates and manages the consumptive use of water through Water Use Permits. These permits ensure that proposed uses are reasonable-beneficial, will not interfere with any presently existing legal users and are consistent with the public interest.

Other rules are in place for protecting Florida's water bodies, especially wetlands, from harm that could result from water supply over-pumping. In addition, the state's Water Reservations authority allow for water to be set aside in an ecosystem for the protection of fish and wildlife. This is an important tool in Everglades restoration.



## Planning, Regulation and Conservation

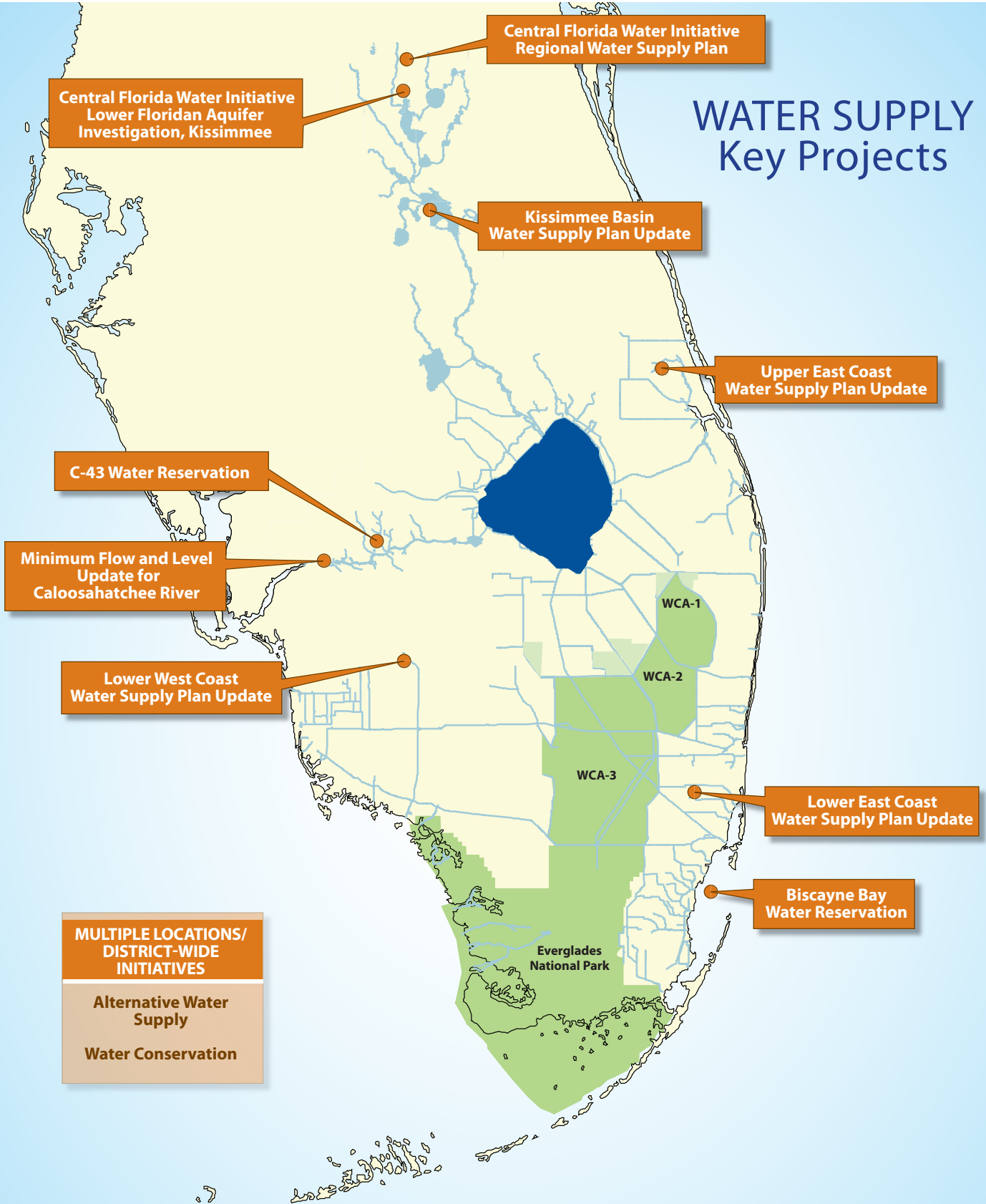
Effective planning and permitting, along with diversification and conservation, are key to ensuring that communities are less susceptible to the effects of drought. South Florida's primary water supply challenges are three-fold: the need for storage, unpredictable weather extremes and a growing demand coupled with competing uses. Finding and implementing workable, cost-effective solutions to environmental, water resource protection and water supply availability issues requires a concerted and collaborative approach, often achieved through creative solutions. Water supply development projects that support the reuse of treated wastewater are included in regional water supply plans, and its beneficial use is encouraged in consumptive use permits.

### ► Water Supply – Success Indicators

- Percentage of the 2010-2030 increase in public supply demand met by planning region annually
- Adopt 5-year water supply plan updates on schedule
- Percentage of local Water Facility Work Plans in compliance with 18-month deadline
- Gallons of alternative water supplies created per dollar invested annually
- Gallons of water conserved per dollar invested annually
- Annual water supply uniform gross per capita water use (public water supply) is less than 135 gpcd
- Process (average time) Consumptive Use Permits in less than 45 days, excluding Request for Additional Information time/legal challenge; total average time in-house is less than 250 days
- Increase e-Permitting application submittals by 10 percent per year
- Complete reservations/minimum flow and levels on schedule



# WATER SUPPLY Key Projects



2012 – 2017



## MISSION SUPPORT

### Delivering Efficient and Cost-Effective Services

The South Florida Water Management District constantly looks for opportunities and implements strategies to improve operations, enhance fiscal efficiency, ensure public access and involvement, create more accountability and, most importantly, deliver the services and results that citizens and businesses expect. Project and operational progress, along with overall organizational efficiency and effectiveness, are continuously measured and reported. Monthly financial statements are publicly presented at Governing Board meetings and posted online to clearly demonstrate how the District utilizes taxpayer dollars. By routinely collaborating with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and other water management districts, local governments, community organizations and private business, the District works to further leverage public dollars by identifying additional cost-saving strategies.

#### ► Strategic Priority

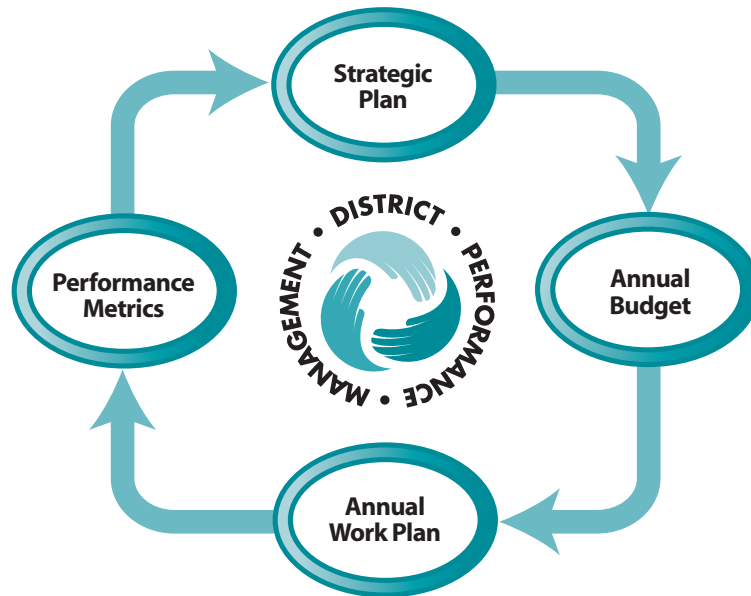
**Ensure South Florida's taxpayers receive efficient and effective customer service by:**

- Focusing resources on core functions, minimizing administrative costs and measuring performance
- Streamlining operations and achieving consistency across water management district boundaries
- Ensuring accountability, transparency and public involvement in agency decisions
- Employing and developing a high-quality, diverse workforce

#### ► Mission Support – Success Indicators

- Hold mission support and outreach costs to less than 15 percent of adopted budget
- Implement 100 percent of statewide consistency initiatives
- Document, assign and respond to 90 percent of public records requests within 14 days
- Maintain workforce turnover rate at less than 6 percent
- Employee introductory period completed by more than 90 percent of new hires

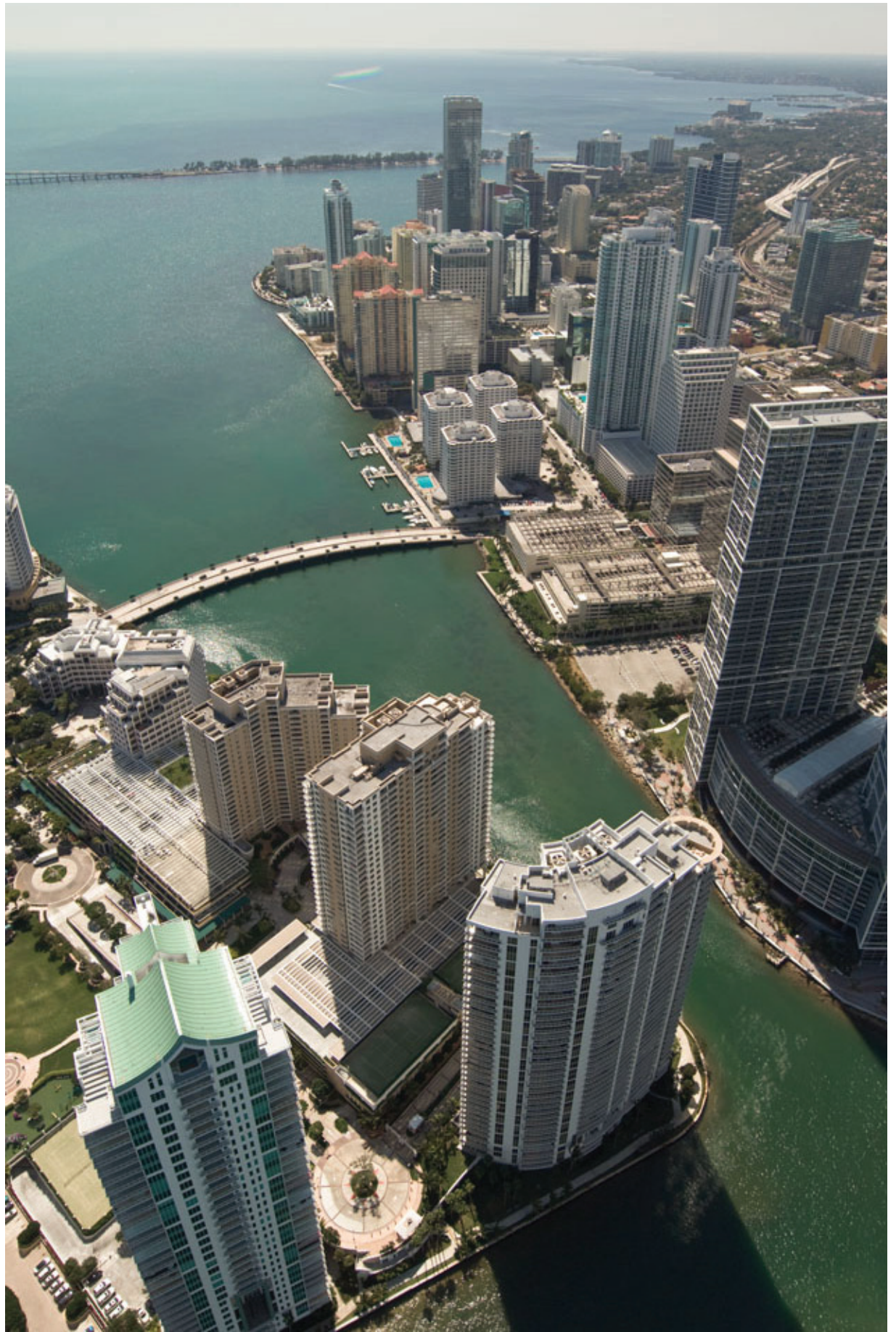
# PUTTING the PLAN into ACTION



The Strategic Plan is a key component of the South Florida Water Management District's integrated business cycle. It establishes the overall policy direction and strategic priorities set by the Governing Board to carry out the agency's core mission responsibilities. Serving as the agency blueprint for long-term planning and implementation, the Strategic Plan provides overarching guidance in development of the annual budget and work plan, and it identifies the success indicators used for measuring progress.

**Implementing the priorities identified in this Strategic Plan will result in:**

- Regional flood protection provided by a refurbished water management system
- Restoration of the South Florida ecosystem, including improvements in the timing and quantity of water flows and restored habitats
- Achievement of water quality standards
- Affordable and reliable water supplies
- Streamlined regulatory processes
- Consistency with other state agencies
- Public and private partnerships that help stretch limited resources
- Efficient and effective customer service for South Florida taxpayers



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