

## Martin County Projects Update



### Rivers Coalition Meeting

**June 24, 2015 at 6 p.m., City of Stuart Commission Chambers**

**(Update provided by Dianne Hughes, Senior Ecosystem Specialist,  
Ecosystem Restoration & Management Division)**

- Lake O currently at 12.34 feet
  - 1 year ago 12.89 feet
  - 2 years ago 13.94 feet
  - No Lake discharges occurring; salinity conditions in the estuary are good.
- The Senate and House passed the General Appropriations Act last Friday and the Governor signed the budget on Tuesday, June 23 after striking 450 lines totaling almost \$461.4 million from the spending plan for the budget year that begins next month.
- The Governor's Office stated that this year, Everglades restoration projects received more than \$106 million, and more than half of that amount was provided as recurring funding. The C-44 project will receive a portion of that funding; specific amounts are not yet available.
- Land Acquisition and Increase Land Management - The budget invests \$71.5 million in land management and land acquisition, which includes \$17.4 million in new cash for the Division of State Lands within the Department of Environmental Protection, \$15 million for the Rural and Family Lands Program within the Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services, \$5.5 million for the Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program (FRDAP) and \$33.6 million for additional land management. Of interest to Martin County is \$20 million for restoration of the Kissimmee River, one of the top priorities of the 16 County Coalition, and \$17.4 Million for Florida Forever, another key priority.
- The budget provided \$47 million for local water projects to assist communities with investing in local water resources and enhancing the quality of water that families receive. Martin County was successfully included in the legislature's budget and avoiding the veto pen, securing \$1.5 Million for its #1 ranked submitted water project application, the North River Shores Phase II Vacuum Sewer, and \$50,000 for the Leilani Heights Stormwater project. We thank our legislative sponsors for their extraordinary advocacy. The Town of Ocean Breeze also secured \$150,000 for a stormwater project. Over 1/3 of the water projects were vetoed, and Martin County appreciates the support in keeping the items secured in the budget intact.
- \$5.5 M was vetoed for the newest hybrid wetland/chemical treatment systems and two floating aquatic vegetative tilling treatment systems. Martin County has two hybrid wetland treatment projects, Danforth and Bessey Creek.
- **Agricultural nonpoint source** controls in the Okeechobee, Caloosahatchee, and St. Lucie River watersheds received: \$4,332,449 in recurring funds for the implementation of nonpoint source controls.
- The appropriation was vetoed for **Dispersed Water Management** (\$13.7 million)
- The appropriation for **Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs)** is \$9.4 million
- The appropriation for **Muck Dredging/Removal** is \$19.6 million

- The budget also provides \$223.3 million for low interest loans to local governments for the construction of wastewater treatment and stormwater management systems, including collection and transmission sewers, reclaimed water (reuse) systems, and a variety of other facilities and activities through the Clean Water State Revolving Fund.
- The Governor's Budget had recommended establishing dedicated funding for Everglades restoration, Springs protection, and land management and acquisition, which Martin County supported. By establishing dedicated funding for key ecosystem restoration projects, long-term planning would be encouraged, delays in critical projects would be minimized and Floridians could feel confident that the finish line for projects would be reached. The Governor stated many of his vetoes were intended to help reserve funds so that resources are available in the next fiscal year to continue moving towards dedicated funding for key established environmental efforts such as Everglades restoration and reducing discharges to south Florida's estuaries, springs protection, land management, and investing in Florida Forever.

**FEDERAL UPDATE**

- At the federal level, both the House and Senate Energy and Water Bills support the President's Budget for Everglades restoration, which includes approximately \$59 million for the C-44 project. We are awaiting final passage of the bills by the House and Senate.
- Legislation that would enhance funding for the Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program continues to move forward, and we are grateful to our Congressman, Patrick Murphy for his support.