



APRIL 2020

The Lake Okeechobee Watershed Restoration Project (LOWRP) — part of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) — is cost-shared between the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD). The study area covers approximately 1,450,000 acres, primarily located north of Lake Okeechobee, and includes Lake Okeechobee and the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie estuaries.

PROJECT PURPOSE

The LOWRP is an Everglades restoration planning effort that will improve water levels in Lake Okeechobee; improve the quantity and timing of discharges to the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee estuaries; improve water supply for existing legal users of the Lake Okeechobee Service Area (LOSA); and increase the spatial extent and functionality of wetlands.

PROJECT STATUS

After being put on hold in 2006, planning efforts restarted in 2016. The project was re-scoped under USACE’s new SMART planning paradigm and a new array of alternatives was analyzed. A Tentatively Selected Plan (TSP) was chosen and documented in an integrated Project Implementation Report and Environmental Impact Statement (PIR-EIS). A revised draft PIR/EIS was posted for review in July 2019. The Chief’s Report is being prepared for congressional authorization in 2020.

RECOMMENDED PLAN FEATURES

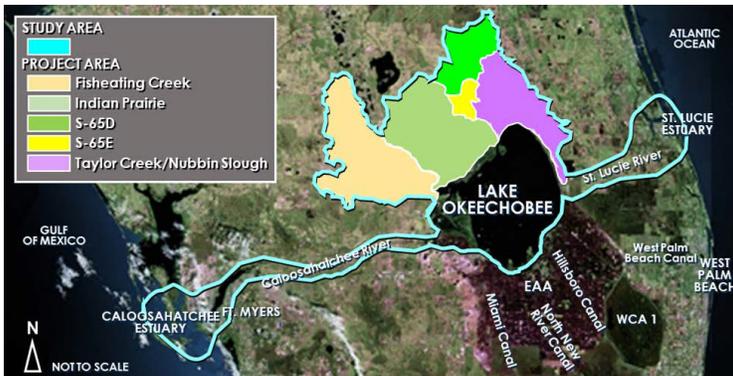
The map on the next page shows the recommended plan’s components:

- A wetland attenuation feature (WAF) with a static storage volume of approximately 46,000 acre-feet (ac-ft)
- 80 aquifer storage and recovery (ASR) wells with a storage volume of approximately 448,000 ac-ft per year
- Wetland restoration sites at Paradise Run (approx. 3,600 acres) and Kissimmee River–Center (approx. 1,200 acres)
- Recreation facilities at multiple sites in the WAF and wetland restoration sites

RECOMMENDED PLAN BENEFITS

The recommended plan will capture, store, and redistribute water entering the northern part of Lake Okeechobee to provide these benefits:

- Reduce the number and duration of undesirable discharges to the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie estuaries, increasing estuary resilience and improving habitat for fish, seagrass, and oysters.
- Increase the amount of time water depth is healthy for the lake, benefiting native vegetation and wildlife, and fisheries.
- Restore 4,800 acres of high-quality wetland habitat in the watershed and -10,000 acres of emergent wetland habitat in the WAF.
- Reduce water supply cutback volume (33%) and frequency for existing legal users of LOSA.



LAKE OKEECHOBEE WATERSHED RESTORATION PROJECT | LOWRP

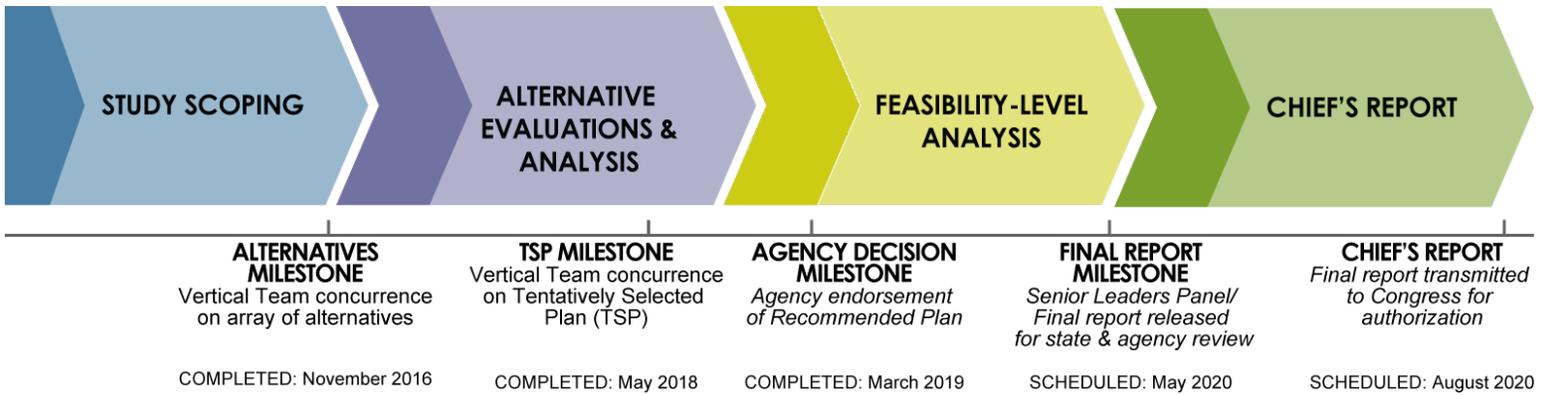


LEGEND

- Wetland Attenuation Feature
- Wetland Restoration
- Tribal Trust Lands
- Tribal Owned Lands
- ASR Well Cluster*
- Wetland Attenuation ASR Well Cluster*

* ASR well cluster locations are conceptual. Actual quantities and locations of wells will be based upon results from exploratory testing and site logistics.

STUDY SCHEDULE



ADDITIONAL PROJECT INFORMATION

The Florida legislature provided \$50 million in FY20 to begin implementation of LOWRP components designed to achieve the greatest reductions in harmful discharges to the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie Estuaries. The SFWMD has begun siting evaluations of well cluster locations identified in the Integrated Project Implementation Report and Environmental Impact Statement (PIR/EIS). Construction of exploratory wells is anticipated to begin in late 2020.

Additional project information, including the revised draft PIR-EIS, project presentations, maps, and PDT meeting summaries, can be found on the sponsors' websites:

USACE: <https://www.saj.usace.army.mil/LOWRP> SFWMD: <https://www.sfwmd.gov/lowrp>

FOR MORE INFORMATION



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