FACT SHEET
COMPREHENSIVE EVERGLADES RESTORATION PLAN
Lake Okeechobee Watershed Project
Construction General (C)
Congressional Districts: 9,17,18,19,20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25

1. DESCRIPTION

Congress authorized the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) in the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2000, Section 601 (b)(1)(A), as the framework for restoration of the south Florida ecosystem. The Lake Okeechobee Watershed Project (LOW) includes portions of five (5) components of the CERP plan: 1) Taylor Creek/Nubbin Slough Storage & Treatment Area; 2) Lake Okeechobee Watershed Water Quality Treatment Facilities; 3) North of Lake Storage Reservoir; and 4) Lake Okeechobee Aquifer Storage & Recovery (ASR)**.**

The Lakes Okeechobee watershed is primarily located to the north and it discharges to the east through the St. Lucie Canal (C-44) into the St. Lucie Estuary, to the west through the Caloosahatchee River (C-43) into the Caloosahatchee Estuary, and to the south through four major canals in the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA) into the Water Conservation Areas (WCA). The Lake Okeechobee Watershed (LOW), as defined hydrologically, is approximately 8,687 square miles (mi2), almost 13 times the area of Lake Okeechobee itself. It is a shallow trough that drains south from Orlando to the Florida Everglades. It is bounded by the sand hills of the Lake Wales Ridge on the west and upland forest and marshes of the Osceola Plain to the east. The study area encompasses approximately 1,500 square miles of the overall watershed.

The Lake Okeechobee Watershed is a diverse ecosystem including thirteen major vegetation community types: mesic temperate hammock, mesic pine flatwoods, hydric pine flatwoods, grasslands, wet prairie, freshwater marsh, seepage swamp, flowing water swamp, pond swamp, open water, scrub, scrubby high pine, and scrubby flatwoods. The LOW is home to no less than 26 species of wildlife and 41 species of plants that are listed by federal and/or state agencies.

The primary objectives of the project are capture, store, and redistribute water entering the northern part of Lake Okeechobee to improve lake stage levels, improve discharges to the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie estuaries, restore/create wetland habitats and re-establish connections among natural areas that have become spatially and/or hydrologically fragmented.

Through implementation of new and restored environmental infrastructure the project benefits will be:

1) Improvement to the quantity, timing and distribution of flows into Lake Okeechobee to maintain ecologically desired lake stage ranges

2) Improvement in the salinity regime and the quality of oyster, submerged aquatic vegetation, and other estuarine community habitats by limiting damaging freshwater discharges to the Northern Estuaries
3) An increase spatial extent and functionality of wetland habitat throughout the Lake Okeechobee watershed

2. FUNDING

Estimated Total Cost	$,2,069,812,000
Estimated Federal Cost	1,209,407,000
Allocation thru FY16	16,429,000
Allocation for FY17	800,000
President's Budget FY18	TBD

3. SPONSOR

South Florida Water Management District
3301 Gun Club Road
West Palm Beach, Florida 33406

4. STATUS

The Project Delivery Team (PDT) began development of a Project Implementation Report (PIR) under the requirements of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) SMART planning process in July 2016. The project is currently in the Alternative Analysis and Evaluation Phase culminating with Tentatively Selected Plan (TSP) Milestone completion in January 2018. The PDT is scheduled to complete the PIR in July 2019.

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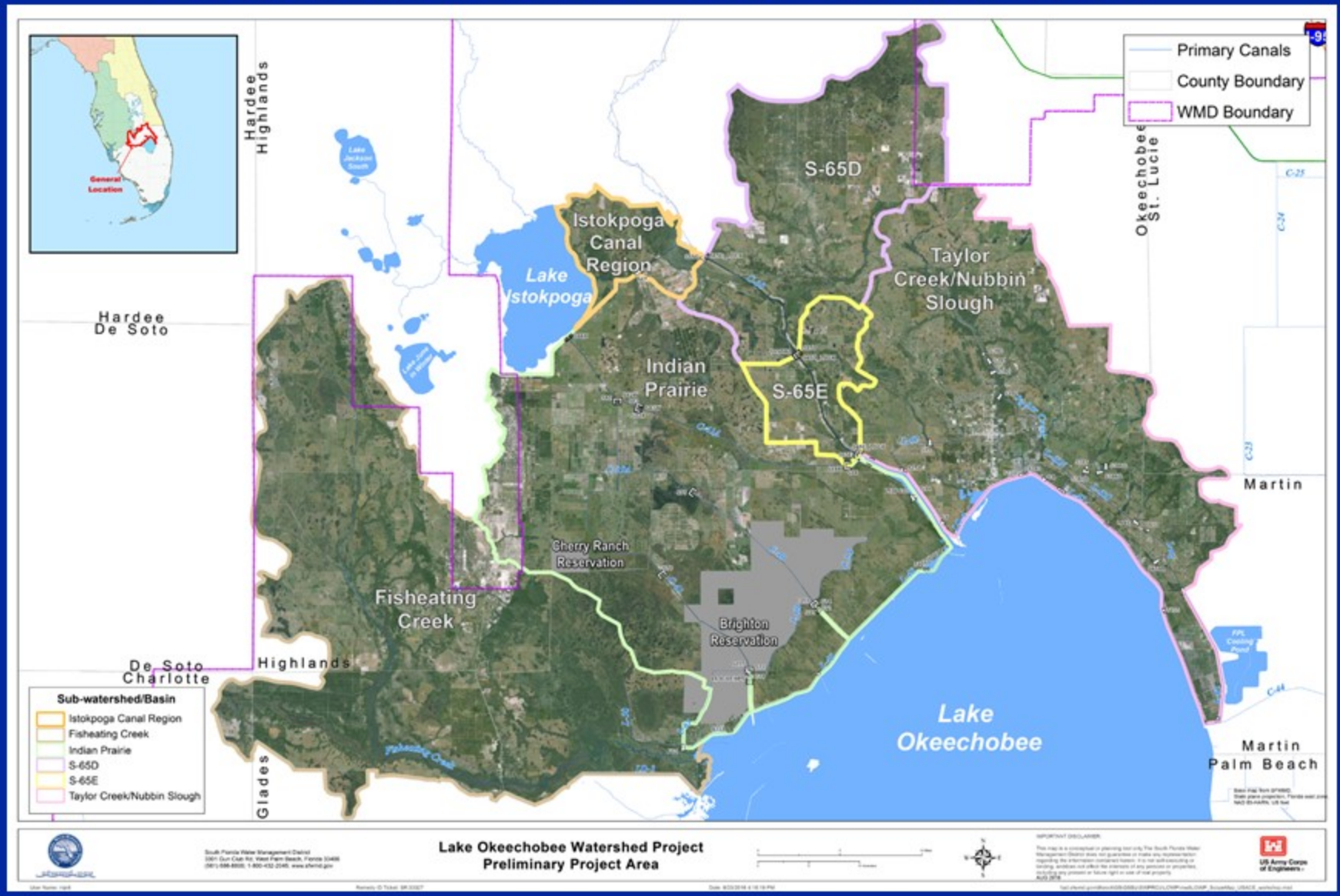

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