

**Program Name:** Northern Everglades and Estuaries Protection Program  
**Project Name:** **Fisheating Creek Feasibility Study**  
**Project ID:** 1208  
**Lead Agency:** SFWMD, State of Florida  
**Funding Source:** Lake Okeechobee Trust Fund

**Strategic Plan Goal(s) Addressed:** 1-A.2, Get the hydrology right

**Measurable Output(s):** Complete a feasibility study to improve hydrology and water quality through storage and treatment features in Fisheating Creek (FEC) Sub-watershed.

**Project Synopsis:** The Coordinating Agencies [South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD), Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP), and Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS)] initiated the feasibility study in FEC Sub-watershed, which is one of the major sources of phosphorus loading to Lake Okeechobee, under the Northern Everglades and Estuaries Protection Program (Section 373.4595, Florida Statutes). The purpose of the feasibility study is to identify the best combination of storage and water-quality features to help improve the hydrology and water quality within the sub-watershed.

**Current Status:** Through extensive involvement with stakeholder groups and interagency coordination, a significant amount of information was compiled and synthesized. For example, a pre-drainage land use data set for the sub-watershed was developed, and preliminary planning targets for achieving water-storage and water-quality improvements (for phosphorus-load reduction) were established.

Initially, at stakeholders' request, the project was postponed until a sufficient level of design information was available on the United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service's Fisheating Creek Special Wetland Reserve Project, which encompasses a significant part of the FEC Sub-watershed. The information was needed to determine the magnitude of water storage and water quality improvements remaining after implementation of the Wetland Reserve project. At approximately the same time and also at stakeholder's request, the Coordinating Agencies initiated a related Lake Okeechobee (Lake O) Pre-Drainage Feasibility Study, to establish sub-watershed goals concurrently for the remaining five sub-watersheds north of Lake Okeechobee.

Model refinements, as recommended by an independent modeling peer-review panel, began on the Watershed Assessment Model (WAM), which was being used for both the FEC Feasibility Study and the Lake O Pre-Drainage Feasibility Study. As the model refinements are expected to improve confidence and understanding of the model and its output, the Coordinating Agencies collectively decided that it was in the best interest of the projects to wait until the model refinements are complete before recommencing. It was also agreed upon that the FEC Feasibility Project be merged into the related Lake O Pre-Drainage Feasibility Study so that it will encompass all six sub-watersheds north of the lake.

Currently, the Lake O Pre-Drainage Feasibility Study is identified as a specific task in DEP's Lake Okeechobee Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP) (DEP, December 2014). The BMAP also includes the WAM revisions, as recommended by an independent modeling peer-review panel, as a task to be funded by the Coordinating Agencies. Once the WAM refinements are complete, it is expected that the Coordinating Agencies will discuss the Lake O Pre-Drainage Feasibility Study and revisit the project scope based on the needs and priorities of current watershed restoration efforts. Furthermore, the information already gained will be utilized, as appropriate, in current and future planning efforts.

**Total Estimated Project Cost:** \$ 1,036,230 (Phase I and II)

**Project Schedule:**

**Start Date:** Phase I August 30, 2008  
 Phase II May 1, 2009  
**Finish Date:** Phase I February 27, 2009  
 Phase II TBD

**Actual Expenditures to Date by SFWMD:**

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012*	2013*	2014*	2015*	2016	Total to Date
<b>Phase I</b>	\$120,005	\$144,913						0	0	\$264,918
<b>Phase II</b>		\$214,073	\$135,645	\$136,249	\$10,771	\$21,777	\$9,488	0	0	\$528,003
										\$792,921

\* Total and projected expenditures as of June 12, 2015 per SFWMD fiscal year (October 1<sup>st</sup> through September 30<sup>th</sup>)

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