

IMPORTANT: A CALL FOR ACTION!



To COTI Members and Friends,

The City of Sanibel is again asking citizens for help in contacting representatives of our federal and state governments to take appropriate actions for dealing with the current water quality crisis affecting our area.

Those of you on the City's email system may have already received their email message sent last weekend. We are reprinting it for those of you who did not receive it and to reinforce the request.

The key message points in the City's most recent note are updated from the points in the City's early July messages and in our message to you of July 11th.

Please consider making contact with the individuals listed below and offering your input. It is important that we all speak up to deal with these important concerns.

We need your help. Thanks.

Mike Miller
COTI President

**An Update from the Mayor on the Status of
Water Quality Issues in the Caloosahatchee**

**Lake Okeechobee and Caloosahatchee Water Quality
Call For Action
July 21, 2018**

On behalf of Sanibel City Council, I want to take this time to update you on the

status of our water quality issues in the Caloosahatchee. On Tuesday July 17th, we had the opportunity to participate in an aerial survey of the river & estuary from Sanibel to Lake Okeechobee. During our survey, blue-green algae were present to varying degrees from Shell Point to the Moore Haven Lock located at Lake Okeechobee. Algae were also present in Lake Okeechobee & visible moving through the lock structure.

The ongoing freshwater releases from Lake Okeechobee & stormwater runoff from the Caloosahatchee watershed continue to support an extensive blue-green algae bloom. The blue-green, algae also referred to as cyanobacteria, have been identified as *Microcystis aeruginosa* - a known toxin-producing species. These blooms have resulted in beach closures along the Caloosahatchee & have prompted the Florida Department of Health to post warnings to avoid contact with the algae.

The water quality problems associated with Lake Okeechobee releases & runoff from the Caloosahatchee watershed must be addressed immediately! This is critical for the health & safety of our coastal communities, to protect the ecology of our river & estuary, & to preserve our quality of life & local economy.

Next week, I will be joining Councilwoman Smith & Director of Natural Resources James Evans in Washington D.C. to participate in the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force meeting & to meet with our representatives to advocate for our water quality priorities.

[Click here for Water Quality Priorities document](#)

We need your help in getting the federal & state governments to take swift action to address this important issue. Please consider writing to your elected leaders & agency representatives to let them know how these water quality issues are impacting your quality of life.

Below are contacts for various elected leaders and agencies, along with specific requests and talking points.

Thank you for doing your part to help improve our water quality.
Sincerely,
Mayor Kevin Ruane

Federal Government

Key Message 1: Maintain flows to the Caloosahatchee at or below 3,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) measured at the W.P. Franklin Lock (S-79) for the remainder of the wet season.

- Watershed runoff & Lake Okeechobee discharges are compounding water quality impacts in the Caloosahatchee River & Estuary.
- Higher salinities throughout the lower & mid-estuary are needed to reduce the area suitable for algal growth.
- Lower flows will also reduce nutrient loading (i.e., nitrogen & phosphorus) from Lake O, which is currently not meeting its Total Maximum Daily Load for nutrients.

Key Message 2: Accelerate critical CERP projects, including the Everglades Agricultural Area Reservoir (EAA), the C-43 Reservoir, & the Lake Okeechobee Watershed Project.

- The EAA Reservoir Project will provide critical water storage, treatment, & conveyance south of Lake Okeechobee. It is imperative that the EAA Reservoir Project be included in the 2018 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) & the necessary funds are appropriated so that construction can move forward as soon as possible.
- C-43 Reservoir will provide critical storage within the watershed & needs continued funding by the State of Florida to stay on track with the Integrated Delivery Schedule (IDS). The Caloosahatchee is currently "impaired" for nutrients, so it is imperative that a water quality treatment component be added to improve the quality of the water discharged to the river.
- The Lake Okeechobee Watershed Project is critical for reducing inflows to the Lake & must be fast-tracked. This project will help regulate the volume, timing, & quality of the water delivered to the Lake.

Key Message 3: US Army Corps of Engineers must utilize maximum operational flexibility to move additional water south & overcome operational constraints that do not directly impact human health & safety.

- Following Governor Scott's Emergency Order, the water management system must be reevaluated to maximize freshwater flows south of Lake Okeechobee.
- This includes assessing and overcoming current operational constraints that do not directly impact human health & safety.

Contacts:

President Donald Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Senator Bill Nelson
United States Senate
716 Senate Hart Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
Email form: <https://www.billnelson.senate.gov/contact-bill>

Senator Marco Rubio
284 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
Email form: <https://www.rubio.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/contact>

Congressman Rooney, 19th Congressional District
Washington, DC Office
120 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20515
Email form: <https://francisrooney.house.gov/contact/>

Congressman Mario Diaz-Balart, 25th Congressional District
Washington, DC Office
440 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
Email form: <https://mariodiazbalart.house.gov/contact-mario>

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Colonel Jason Kirk, District Commander and District Engineer

Email: Jason.a.kirk@usace.army.mil

Lieutenant Colonel Jennifer Reynolds, Deputy District Commander for South Florida

Email: Jennifer.A.Reynolds@usace.army.mil

State of Florida

Key Message 1: State of Florida must work cooperatively with US Army Corps & other federal agencies to accelerate critical CERP projects, including the EAA Reservoir, C-43 Reservoir, & Lake Okeechobee Watershed Project.

- The EAA Reservoir Project will provide critical water storage, treatment, & conveyance south of Lake Okeechobee. It is imperative that the EAA Reservoir Project be included in the 2018 Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) & the necessary funds are appropriated so that construction can move forward as soon as possible.
- C-43 reservoir will provide critical storage within the watershed & needs continued funding by the State to stay on track with the Integrated Delivery Schedule (IDS). It is imperative that a treatment component be added to improve the quality of the water discharged to the river so that it meets the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) established for the River & does not contribute to the existing water quality problems. The SFWMD should immediately begin designing a water quality treatment component on lands adjacent to the reservoir.
- The Lake Okeechobee Watershed Project is critical for reducing inflows to the Lake & must to be fast-tracked. This project will help regulate the volume, timing, & quality of the water delivered to the Lake.

Key Message 2: Florida Department of Environmental Protection & Florida Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services must enforce Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLS), Basin Management Action Plans (BMAPS) & Agricultural Best Management Practices (BMPs).

- Poor water quality throughout the Kissimmee, Lake O, Caloosahatchee, & St. Lucie watersheds must be addressed immediately.
- The majority of the waterbodies located within the Central and Southern Florida Project are not currently meeting water quality standards.
- Additional water quality monitoring is needed, including additional flow sensors in eastern Caloosahatchee to determine source of runoff; & additional water quality monitoring is needed to assess BMAP & BMP implementation.

Key Message 3: SFWMD must explore every opportunity to move additional water south & overcome operational constraints that do not directly impact human health & safety.

- Following Governor Scott's Emergency Order, the water management system must be reevaluated to maximize freshwater flows south of Lake Okeechobee.
- This includes assessing & overcoming current operational constraints that do not directly impact human health & safety.

Contacts:

Governor Rick Scott

Office of Governor Rick Scott
The Capitol
400 S. Monroe St.
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001
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South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD)
Ernie Marks, Executive Director
Email: emarks@sfwmd.gov

Jaime Weisinger, Local Governing Board Rep.
Email: jweisinger@sfwmd.gov

Federico Fernandez, Governing Board Chair
Email: fefernan@sfwmd.gov

Rick Barber, Local Governing Board Rep.
Email: rbarber@sfwmd.gov

Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP)
Noah Valenstein, Secretary FDEP
3900 Commonwealth Boulevard M.S. 49
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Drew Bartlett, Deputy Secretary Ecosystems Restoration
Email: drew.bartlett@dep.state.fl.us



City of Sanibel Caloosahatchee Aerial Survey 7/17/18

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