



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

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RF 04-00049

April 29, 2004

Susan Bookman
Southwest Florida Watershed Council, Inc.
P.O. Box 61063
Fort Myers, FL 33906-1063

Dear Ms. Bookman,

Thank you for your February 20, 2004 letter regarding the Council's concerns associated with the timing of the proposed initial reservation of water for the Caloosahatchee Estuary, consumptive use permit renewals in the basin, and concerns that the "target storage" for the C-43 project may not be adequate to protect existing legal users. My response to these concerns is provided below:

1. The analysis to determine the initial reservation must be based on the best available information. This is being developed in association with the initial Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) update and updates of the Lower West Coast and Lower East Coast Regional Water Supply Plans scheduled to be completed by the end of 2005. Because of the interconnectiveness of the regional system, the District intends to establish all reservations for the regional system at the same time, after a full analysis of benefits and impacts. These concurrent initial reservations will include the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie estuaries, the Water Conservation Areas, Everglades National Park, Biscayne Bay and Florida Bay. It is our intent to begin the initial reservations process in early 2006 in order to take advantage of the most current information available for the basin. Irrigation permits, including agricultural permits, authorizing surface water withdrawals from the Caloosahatchee River are scheduled for renewal in 2007. At that time, the adopted reservation of water for the Caloosahatchee Estuary will be applicable for reviewing these renewal applications.
2. The project formulation associated with the C-43 Reservoir, as part of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan, will be driven in part by the availability of water to store and the ability to meet the performance measure targets for the estuary. It may not be possible to meet all the needs of the estuary from only the C-43 Reservoir. The

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ability to meet these needs will be influenced by the amount and timing of water that is available and may result in additional projects being recommended as part of the Southwest Florida Feasibility Study. It should be recognized that we would anticipate using the water from the C-43 reservoir in a timely manner due to evapotranspiration losses associated with storing water in the reservoir.

Improvements to estuary water deliveries will also be accomplished through adaptive management practices. Operations may be modified as we learn more once the reservoir is constructed and operational. However, we anticipate continued deliveries from Lake Okeechobee under WSE operations when the salinity targets in the estuary are exceeded and when there are significant water levels in the lake.

I look forward to continuing to work with you and the Watershed Council in our efforts to restore the Caloosahatchee estuary in the future.

Sincerely,



Henry Dean
Executive Director
South Florida Water Management District

HD/ss

c: Jacque Rippe
Pamela MacKie
Trudi Williams