

Can One Lake Be Everything to Everyone? The Challenge of Managing Lake Okeechobee for Multiple Users.

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Lake Okeechobee occupies a central place in the water management system for South Florida. The Lake has been tasked with providing flood control, water supply, and environmental benefits for a watershed area of over 3.5 million acres and is also tightly linked with the health of the coastal estuaries to the east and west. Ensuring a healthy lake, while meeting these multiple objectives, is an ongoing challenge for the South Florida Water Management District and partner agencies.

This presentation will focus on the evolution of Lake Okeechobee management, with a focus on the ecology of the Lake. Extremes of high and low lake levels impact the Lake differently, although the solutions to these problems are inter-related. Two scenarios will be described, including the management actions taken by the District, to illustrate the complexity of the system.

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