

# Glades County north reservoir could cut Lake Okeechobee discharges up to 68 percent

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The South Florida Water Management District is considering four options for water control projects north of Lake Okeechobee that could significantly cut discharges to the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee rivers.

Residents where the project's reservoir would be built also want the district to consider the threat of deadly flooding.

If the proposed reservoir's dike breaks, said Glades County Commissioner Tim Stanley, "It could kill 5,000 people in their sleep."

The Buckhead community on the north shore of Lake O would be "trapped" between the dike holding back a 15-foot-deep reservoir and the Herbert Hoover Dike holding back the 730-square-mile lake, Stanley told the district board Thursday.

Board member Brandon Tucker, of Palm City, echoed the concern, reminding his cohorts, "Our first priority is flood control."

Taking land for the publicly owned reservoir off the Glades County property tax rolls would cost the county about \$30,000 a year, Tucker said.

All the proposed reservoir sites are west of the southern end of the Kissimmee River, the lake's primary water source.

## Catch and store

The project's goal is to catch and store water before it reaches Lake O. Less water in the lake means there's less need to send excess lake water east to the St. Lucie River and west to the Caloosahatchee River.

The four options of the project would reduce discharges to the St. Lucie from 32 percent to 59 percent and discharges to the Caloosahatchee by 59 to 68 percent, according to data from the water district.

**MORE:** [Lake Okeechobee discharging into St. Lucie River. Indian River Lagoon | Graphic \(/story/news/local/indian-river-lagoon/health/2017/06/20/lake-okeechobee-discharges/413556001/\)](#)

Water stored north of the lake also would be available during dry periods.

The district and the Army Corps of Engineers are looking at several options involving a combination of:

- Reservoirs ranging in capacity from 63.5 billion gallons to 117 billion gallon
- 65 to 110 shallow wells that can hold water and bring it back when needed and store from 118 billion to 200 billion gallons a year.

The project would cost from \$1.7 billion to nearly \$3.2 billion.

District staff expects to choose one of the options in time for the board's December meeting. The Corps is a partner on the project and would have to agree.

# Keeping water out of the St. Lucie

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Here's a look at the four options for the Lake Okeechobee Watershed Restoration Project:

	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3	Option 4
Reservoir capacity	64.5 billion gallons	117 billion gallons	90 billion gallons	63.5 billion gallons
Annual well capacity	146 billion gallons	200 billion gallons	128 billion gallons	118 billion gallons
Reduces discharges to St. Lucie	41 percent	59 percent	39 percent	32 percent
Reduces discharges to Caloosahatchee	60 percent	68 percent	62 percent	59 percent
Cost	\$1.8 billion	\$3.2 billion	\$2.4 billion	\$1.7 billion

SOURCE: South Florida Water Management District

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