



Audubon of Florida News

[Caloosahatchee Received Beneficial Pulses of Fresh Water Last Week](#)

posted on April 7, 2009 in [Lake Okeechobee](#), [Media](#), [Water Issues](#)



As beneficial pulses of fresh water from Lake Okeechobee to the Caloosahatchee River began last week; Audubon of Florida commended the Army Corps of Engineers and called upon the federal agency to continue the water releases until June.

“The Army Corps is treating the environment right, and we applaud them for this new change in water management,” said Dr. Paul Gray, Audubon Lake Okeechobee Watershed Science Coordinator. “This marks another chapter in the Corps continuing book of improving management of the greater Everglades ecosystem.”

Pulses to the Caloosahatchee resumed Saturday, March 28, 2009, and continued through Saturday, April 4. Audubon is advocating that environmentally beneficial pulses continue through June 2009.

Following pressure from agricultural interests, the South Florida Water Management District decided to ration the Caloosahatchee while continuing to provide full water supplies to all other Lake Okeechobee users. Audubon communicated to both the District and the Army Corps on March 19 that the decision was fundamentally unfair to water users along the estuary, and would lead to complete loss of plant and associated animal communities, which would require years to recover.

Fresh water pulses to the Caloosahatchee are important to mix with salt water and decrease the salinity in the river. Too much salt water kills eel grass beds, which are nursery grounds for spawning fish. In drought conditions, it is imperative to balance water needs and share the adversity amongst all users.

Audubon believes that until agriculture and other users are subjected to water rationing out of Lake Okeechobee, the Caloosahatchee should continue to receive its critical flows. The threat of water rationing remains low, and if it does occur, should not last long and should have relatively small impact on growers.

Continuing pulses to the Caloosahatchee also benefits the St. Lucie estuary. The releases are expected to lower the lake level by approximately three inches. Lowering lake levels now decreases the possibility that large and environmentally damaging water releases to the St. Lucie will be necessary during the rainy season this summer.



No Comments

No comments yet. Be the first!

[RSS feed for comments on this post.](#)

Sorry, the comment form is closed at this time.