

# Chapter 1: Introduction to *Volume I*

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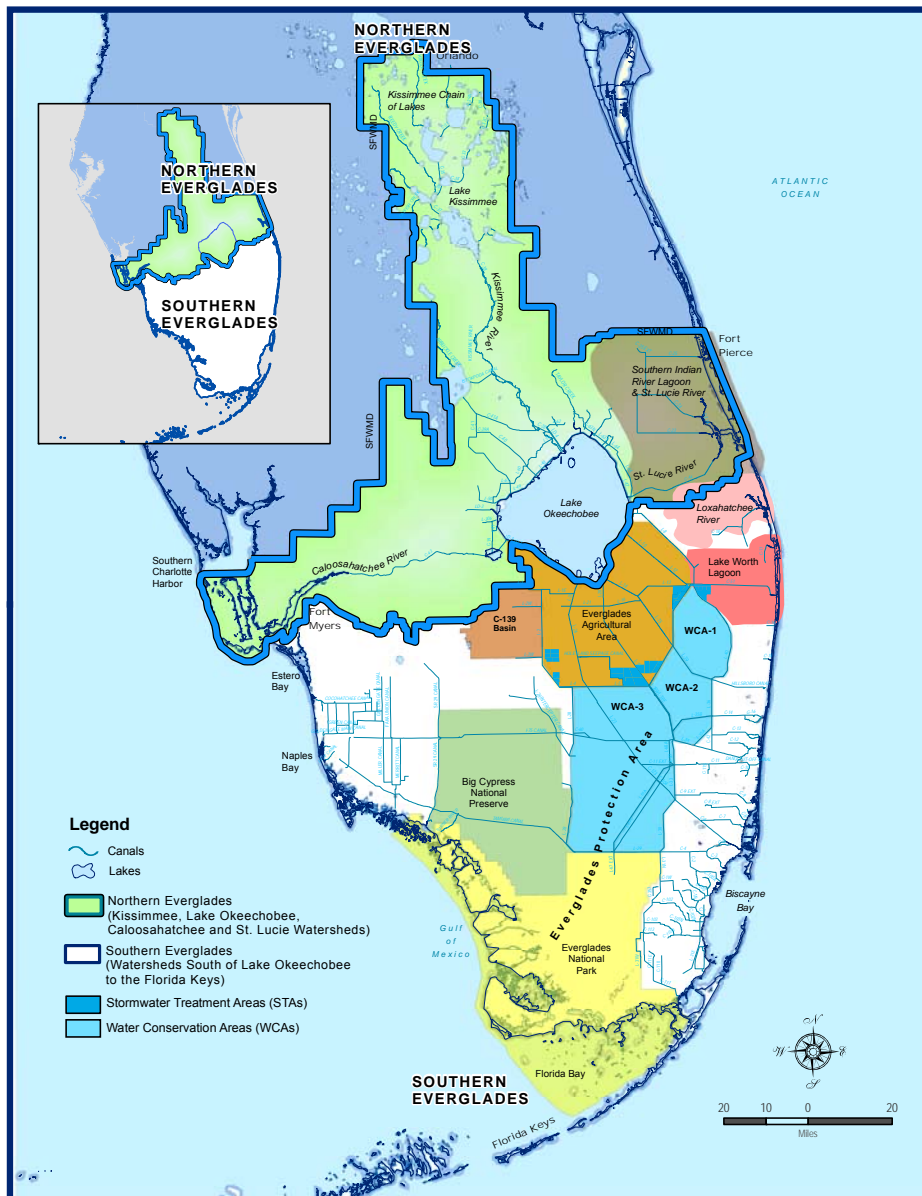
Prepared by the South Florida Water Management District in cooperation with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, the *2012 South Florida Environmental Report* (SFER) unifies dozens of individual mandated reports and plans into a single document, pursuant to Chapter 2005-36, Laws of Florida, and Subsection 373.036(7), Florida Statutes (F.S.). Other agency reporting requirements, including those mandated in federal and state-issued permits, are also incorporated to enhance efficiencies of this consolidation. While providing effective communication, the annual SFER updates key results and findings as well as fiscal information for the reporting period. Overall, this information supports restoration, management, and protection activities associated with the Kissimmee Basin, Lake Okeechobee, the Everglades, and South Florida's coastal ecosystems. The 2012 SFER comprises three volumes in the Main Report:

- *Volume I, The South Florida Environment*, provides status updates and data summaries for various research and monitoring efforts in the South Florida region during Water Year 2011 (WY2011) (May 1, 2010–April 30, 2011). This volume also includes required financial reporting on Fiscal Year 2011 (FY2011) (October 1, 2010–September 30, 2011) for the Everglades Forever Act (EFA), Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP), and Lake Okeechobee.
- *Volume II, District Annual Plans and Reports*, covers the FY2011 update for eight annual plans and reports required under various mandates for Florida's water management districts. These include the Annual Work Plan Report, Priority Water Bodies List and Schedule, Five-Year Capital Improvements Plan, Five-Year Water Resource Development Work Program, Alternative Water Supply Annual Report, Florida Forever Work Plan Annual Update, Land Stewardship Annual Report, and Mitigation Donation Annual Report.
- *Volume III, Annual Permit Reports*, expands consolidated reporting and maximizes the process for submitting annual permit reports to state and federal agencies. This volume fulfills 2011 permit-related reporting associated with the Clean Water Act, Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan Regulation Act, Everglades Forever Act, Northern Everglades and Estuaries Protection Program, and Environmental Resource Permitting projects and Emergency Orders.

In accordance with the EFA (Section 373.4592, F.S.), peer review of the draft Volume I was conducted during September–October 2011. An overview of this year's peer-review process is presented in Appendix 1-1. From postings on the SFER WebBoard, panel and public comments are provided in Appendix 1-2, and authors' responses to these comments are included in Appendix 1-3. CERP and EFA financial reports are covered in Appendices 1-4 and 1-5, respectively. An overview of the South Florida Water Depth Assessment Tool, which was also peer-reviewed by a special panel, is included in Appendix 1-6. Under separate cover, the 2012 SFER Executive Summary highlights key findings and accomplishments over this year's reporting period. The complete final 2012 SFER—Main Report (Volumes I-III), Executive Summary, and Consolidated Project Report Database—is available at [www.sfwmd.gov/sfer](http://www.sfwmd.gov/sfer).

## THE SOUTH FLORIDA ENVIRONMENT

South Florida is characterized by its unique, diverse ecosystems from the Kissimmee Region in the north through the Florida Keys in the south (**Figure 1-1**). To enhance agency reporting on the many programs and projects throughout South Florida, the area is categorized into two primary sub-regions — the Northern and Southern Everglades. These sub-regions are delineated across regional watershed boundaries, with the Northern Everglades covering the Kissimmee, Lake Okeechobee, Caloosahatchee, and St. Lucie watersheds, and the Southern Everglades encompassing the watersheds south of Lake Okeechobee through the Florida Keys. The main features in the Northern Everglades include Kissimmee area lakes and rivers, Lake Okeechobee, and the Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie rivers and estuaries. Key features in the Southern Everglades include the Water Conservation Areas, Big Cypress National Preserve, Everglades National Park/Florida Bay, and coastal bays and estuaries south of Lake Okeechobee.



**Figure 1-1.** Major geographic features of the South Florida environment within the South Florida Water Management District’s boundaries.

## VOLUME I CONTENT AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Building on previous years of consolidated reporting, this year's SFER is focused on further streamlining while still fulfilling the District's reporting needs and legislative mandates. Specifically in Volume I, there is a strong focus on presenting annual data and status updates relating to required reporting requirements that are aligned with agency programs/projects and strategic initiatives in the South Florida region. The volume highlights major results and findings for the WY2011 and FY2011 reporting period, while more routine and background information covered in earlier consolidated reports is cross-referenced, as appropriate. This year's volume contains 11 chapters along with 33 appendices of supporting data and more detailed information that comply with specific mandates. An overview of the Volume I key content and associated statutory reporting requirements is presented on **Table 1-1**.

**Table 1-1.** Cross-reference for Volume I content and reporting requirements in the *2012 South Florida Environmental Report (SFER)*.

Coverage in Volume I	Key Report Elements/Titles	Reporting Requirements
Chapter 1 Appendices 1-1 – 1-6	SFER Peer-Review Reporting; CERP Annual Report – 470 Report; EFA Annual Financial Report South Florida Water Depth Assessment Tool	§373.036(7), F.S. §373.470, F.S. §373.45926(3), F.S. §373.4592(14), F.S. §11.80(4), F.S.
Chapter 2 Appendices 2-1 – 2-7	Regional Hydrology	§373.4592(13), F.S. §373.4595(6), F.S.
Chapter 3A; Appendices 3A-1 – 3A-6 Chapter 3B	Water Quality in the Everglades Protection Area; Mercury and Sulfur Environmental Assessment	§373.4592(4)(d)5, F.S. §373.4592(13), F.S.
Chapter 4 Appendices 4-1 – 4-4	Nutrient Source Control Programs (Northern Everglades, ECP including EAA and C-139, and non-ECP Basins)	§373.4592(13), F.S. §373.4595(6), F.S. §11.80(4), F.S.
Chapter 5 Appendices 5-1 – 5-5	Performance and Optimization of Everglades Stormwater Treatment Areas; Long-Term Plan for Achieving Water Quality Goals	§373.4592(4)(d)5, F.S. §373.4592(13), F.S. §11.80(4), F.S.
Chapter 6 Appendix 6-1	Everglades Research and Evaluation; South Florida Wading Bird Report	§373.4592(4)(d)5, F.S. §373.4592(13), F.S.
Chapter 7	Status of Nonindigenous Species	§373.4592(13), F.S. §373.4595(6), F.S.
Chapter 8 Appendices 8-1 & 8-2	Lake Okeechobee Protection Program; Cross-Reference List for NEEPP Reporting; Northern Everglades Annual Work Plan	§373.4595(6), F.S.
Chapter 9	Kissimmee River Restoration and Basin Initiatives	none; strategic only
Chapter 10 Appendices 10-1 & 10-2	Coastal Priorities; St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee River Watershed Protection Plan Updates	§373.4595(6), F.S. §373.4595(4)(b)3d, F.S.

CERP – Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan  
EAA – Everglades Agricultural Area  
ECP – Everglades Construction Projects  
EFA – Everglades Forever Act

F.S. – Florida Statutes  
NEEPP – Northern Everglades and Estuaries Protection Program  
Non-ECP – Non-Everglades Construction Projects