

# MEMORANDUM



**To:** Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commissioners  
**From :** Gil McRae, Director, Fish and Wildlife Research Institute  
**Date:** July 18, 2019  
**Subject:** Staff Update – Florida Bay

---

**Purpose:**

Provide an overview of Florida Bay including recent ecological conditions, recreational and other uses, restoration progress relative to increasing freshwater flow to Florida Bay, and related management issues.

**Summary:**

Florida Bay is an integral part of the south Florida ecosystem that supports significant ecological resources, marine based economies, and provides exceptional recreational opportunities such as boating, fishing and wildlife viewing. As a critical component of the south Florida ecosystem there are numerous research, monitoring, and restoration efforts underway. Florida Bay has been impacted in recent years by recurring high salinity events which have contributed to widespread seagrass and sponge die-offs and harmful algae blooms. This presentation will discuss factors contributing to those negative impacts. Improving the quantity, timing and distribution of fresh water delivered to Florida Bay remains a primary objective of the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP). Progress on restoring and increasing freshwater flow to Florida Bay will be discussed.

This presentation will include staff and invited guests from the South Florida Water Management District and the National Park Service.

**Staff Recommendation:**

This presentation is for informational purposes and any direction the Commission may want to provide.

**Staff Contact and/or Presenter:**

Gil McRae, Director, Fish and Wildlife Research Institute

**Invited Guest Presenters:**

Drew Bartlett, Executive Director, South Florida Water Management District  
Pedro Ramos, Superintendent, Everglades National Park