

Major Everglades restoration project to break ground this year

April 22 2021, by David Fleshler, South Florida Sun-Sentinel



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A key project in the restoration of the Everglades moved forward Thursday with the signing of an agreement between Florida and the federal government to construct a huge reservoir south of Lake

Okeechobee.

Gov. Ron DeSantis, who had made the reservoir a priority, came to the edge of the Everglades in western Palm Beach County to sign the agreement with the Army Corps of Engineers that will allow construction to begin on an above-ground storage facility designed to provide fresh, clean water to the Everglades.

Under South Florida's current water control system, originally designed to dry out land for cities and farms, much of that water gets discharged into the Gulf of Mexico and Atlantic Ocean, where it has fueled [algae blooms](#) that killed fish, fouled beaches and driven away tourists. Meanwhile, the vast wetlands of the Everglades suffered from a lack of moisture, deprived of the historic flow of water south from the lake.

Since taking office, DeSantis has pressed for work to move forward on the 10,500-acre reservoir, which is intended to store water that would otherwise be lost to the ocean, allowing it to be delivered to the wetlands that need it.

"We think this project is absolutely essential to reduce harmful discharges to the northern estuaries and to help us send more clean water south to the Everglades," DeSantis, a Republican, said.

The Army Corps of Engineers expects to start construction of the reservoir this year, with completion scheduled for 2028, spokeswoman Erica Skolte.

The other component of the project is a belt of wetlands that will cleanse the [water](#) coming out of the reservoir, ensuring that [clean water](#) is delivered downstream to the Everglades.

The wetlands component, under construction by the South Florida Water

Management District, is under construction a year ahead of schedule.

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Citation: Major Everglades restoration project to break ground this year (2021, April 22)
retrieved 12 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2021-04-major-everglades-ground-year.html>

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