# Blue Green Algae and the SFWMD

June 2016


# Versus


| MYTH | FACT |
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| ✘ **The South Florida Water Management District is not doing anything to help lessen lake releases or address blue-green algae concerns.** | ✓ **The District is holding more water in the Upper Chain of Lakes north of Lake Okeechobee.**<br>✓ **The District took extraordinary measures to decrease lake releases including storing billions of gallons of lake water in the A-1 Flow Equalization Basin.** |
| ✘ **The South Florida Water Management District is responsible for managing blue-green algae blooms.** | ✓ **The South Florida Water Management District samples water. For more information visit** http://sfwmd.link/AlgaeResponse. |
| ✘ **The South Florida Water Management District is responsible for Lake Okeechobee releases.** | ✓ **The District advises the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers but the Corps is solely responsible for authorizing and conducting lake releases to coastal estuaries for flood protection.** |
| ✘ **Lake Okeechobee is the sole contributor to blue-green algae blooms.** | ✓ **The nutrients and fresh water that can fuel growth of naturally occurring blue-green algae also comes from local stormwater runoff and septic tanks. <u>Algae blooms have occurred in past years such as 2014 when there were no lake releases</u>.** |

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|  <br><br>✘ **Large blue-green algae blooms can be treated or removed from South Florida's waterways.** |  <br><br>✓ **No effective large scale treatment method exists to remove blue green algae blooms. The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission does not recommend any form of treatment because it may release toxins.** |
|  <br><br>✘ **The algae bloom seen this summer in South Florida water bodies is an unusual occurrence.** |  <br><br>✓ **Blue green algae naturally occurs in water bodies all over the world. Large blooms have also occurred in South Florida in the past.** |
|  <br><br>✘ **Blue-green algae has been proven to cause neurodegenerative disease.** |  <br><br>✓ **No proven connection has been found between cyanobacteria and neurodegenerative disease. For more information from the Florida Department of Health, visit** http://www.floridahealth.gov/environmental-health/aquatic-toxins/_documents/cyano-faqs-pio.pdf**.** |
|  <br><br>✘ **Purchasing thousands of acres of land in the Everglades Agricultural Area south of Lake Okeechobee and building a reservoir would have prevented this year's bloom and will prevent future blooms.** |  <br><br>✓ **The proposed purchase of agricultural land for a reservoir would have taken billions of dollars away from needed restoration projects and was a bad deal.**<br>✓ **Even if the land had been purchased, a reservoir could not have been built yet due to a ten year operating lease.**<br>✓ **Any reservoir on that land would not have eliminated all need for lake releases and all possibility of algae blooms.**<br>✓ **Other projects already in the works will store water, allow more water to be moved south and reduce lake releases.** |