

Lake Okeechobee approaching historic low

by UPI

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. - Lake Okeechobee, the source of water for the Florida Everglades, is at its lowest April level since measurements have been made.

If the drought in South Florida continues, water managers expect the lake level to drop below 8.97 feet, the all-time low recorded in May 2001, The South Florida Sun-Sentinel reported. On Monday, the lake was at 10.09 feet, the Army Corps of Engineers said.

Okeechobee gathers the waters from the Kissimmee River Basin in central Florida and spills them into the River of Grass, the wide, shallow, slow-moving stream that used to flow unimpeded to Florida Bay. The lake is so low that gravity is no longer spilling water into the irrigation canals in the agricultural area south of Okeechobee.

Jesus Rodriguez, a spokesman for the South Florida Water Management District, said that the area cannot depend on Okeechobee for drinking water at its current level.

In March, watering in the Everglades water management area was restricted to three times a week. More stringent limits on water use could be imposed this week.

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