



Lake Okeechobee Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP) Update Technical Meeting

**Nov. 19, 2024 at 2 p.m. EST
Okeechobee County Board of County Commission Chambers (BOCC)
“William L. Hendry Courtroom,” Room 270
304 NW 2nd St.
Okeechobee, FL 34972**

Agenda

- Florida Department of Environmental Protection BMAP Presentation
- South Florida Water Management District Presentation
- Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Presentation
- Poster Session/Open Discussion
- Conclusion

LAKE OKEECHOBEE BASIN MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN (BMAP) UPDATE TECHNICAL MEETING



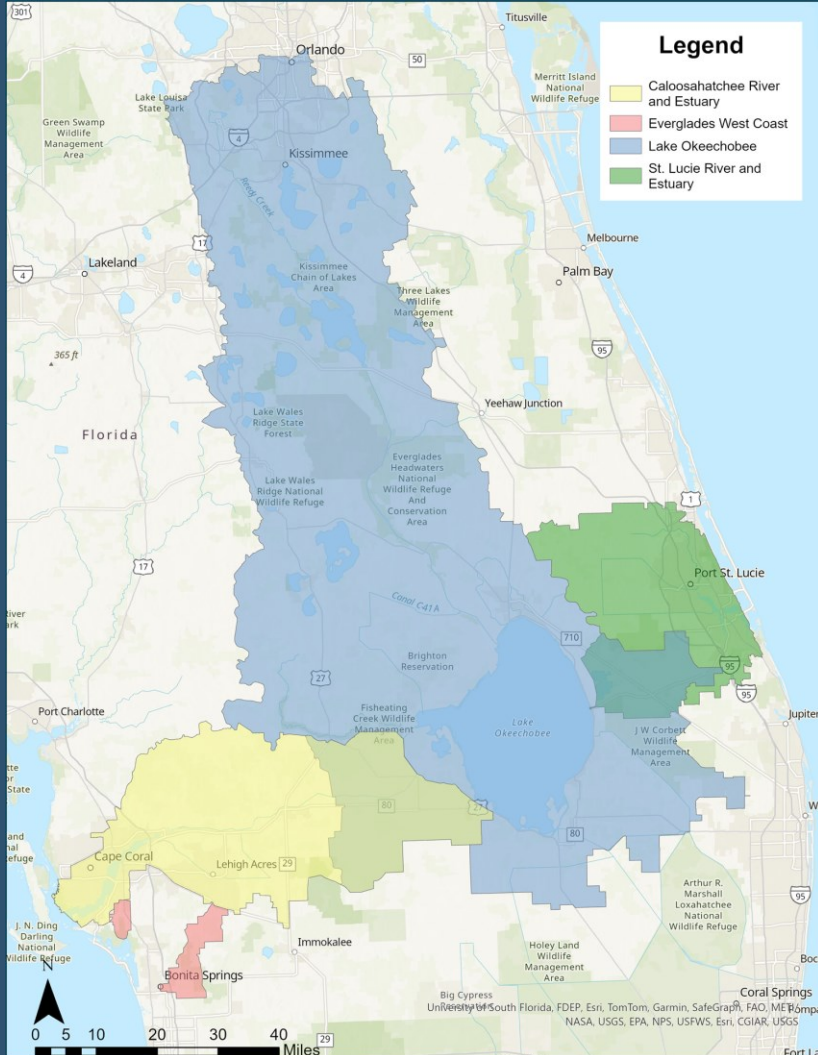
Diana Turner

Division of Environmental Assessment and Restoration
Florida Department of Environmental Protection

City of Okeechobee, FL | Nov. 19, 2024



BMAP UPDATE MEETING



Source: SFWMD



Source: SFWMD



Source: SFWMD

Agenda:

- Logistics.
- Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP) Update Highlights.
- South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) Watershed Protection Plans Highlights.
- Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACS) Update.
- Poster Session.



BMAP UPDATE COMPONENTS

- Recent legislative requirements:
 - Clean Waterways Act (2020).
 - Wastewater effluent limits changes.
 - Onsite Sewage and Treatment Disposal System (OSTDS) requirements for new systems on lots 1 acre or less.
- List of identified projects to meet five-year milestones.
- Regional projects.
- Hot spot analysis.
- Additional water quality analyses.
- Additional updates needed to the monitoring network.
- Recommendations from the Five-Year Review.





LAKE OKEECHOBEE 2024 FIVE-YEAR REVIEW



Source: SFWMD

- The Northern Everglades and Estuaries Protection Plan BMAPs (St. Lucie, Caloosahatchee and Lake Okeechobee) are required to provide a review every five years on the progress the BMAP is making (paragraph 373.4595(4)(d), Florida Statutes).
- Comments on the draft document due by Nov. 22, 2024.



UPCOMING SCHEDULE

Aug. 1, Final wastewater treatment plans and OSTDS remediation plans due.

Nov. 18, Second Annual NEEPP Public Workshop.

Nov. 19 - 21, Technical BMAP update public meetings.

Jan. 2025, Draft BMAP update public meetings.

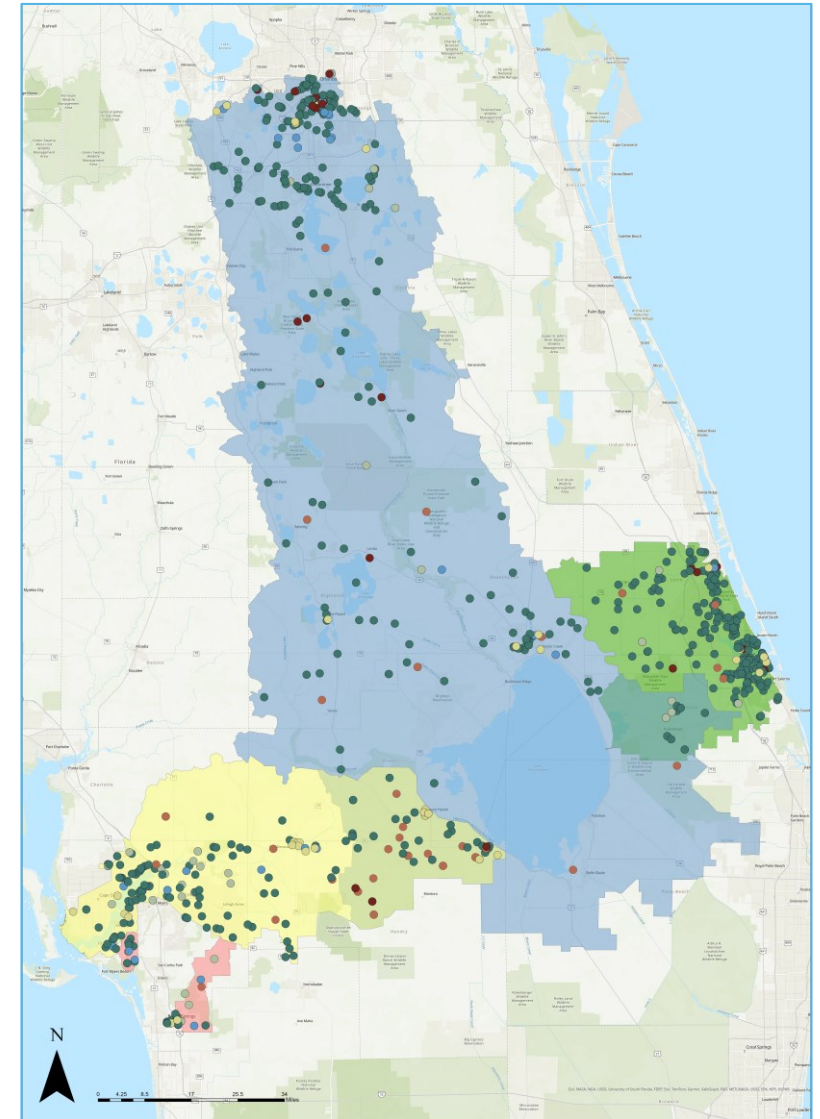
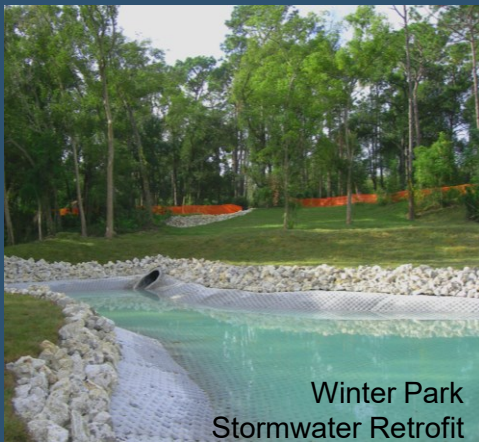
Jan./Feb. 2025, Draft BMAP update comment period.

July 1, 2025, Statutory deadline for updated nutrient BMAPs.



PROJECT PORTAL IS OPEN

- Portal will remain open through mid-January 2025 for annual reporting.
- Updates to existing projects and any newly input planned projects needed to reach next milestone have been submitted and are being compiled.



THANK YOU



Diana Turner

Division of Environmental Assessment and Restoration
Florida Department of Environmental Protection

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SFWMD Update

2025 Lake Okeechobee Watershed Protection Plan (WPP) Update

Megan Jacoby, Bureau Chief

Everglades & Estuaries Protection Bureau

Lake Okeechobee BMAP Meeting – Okeechobee

November 19, 2024

2025 Lake Okeechobee Watershed Protection Plan – *5-Year Update*

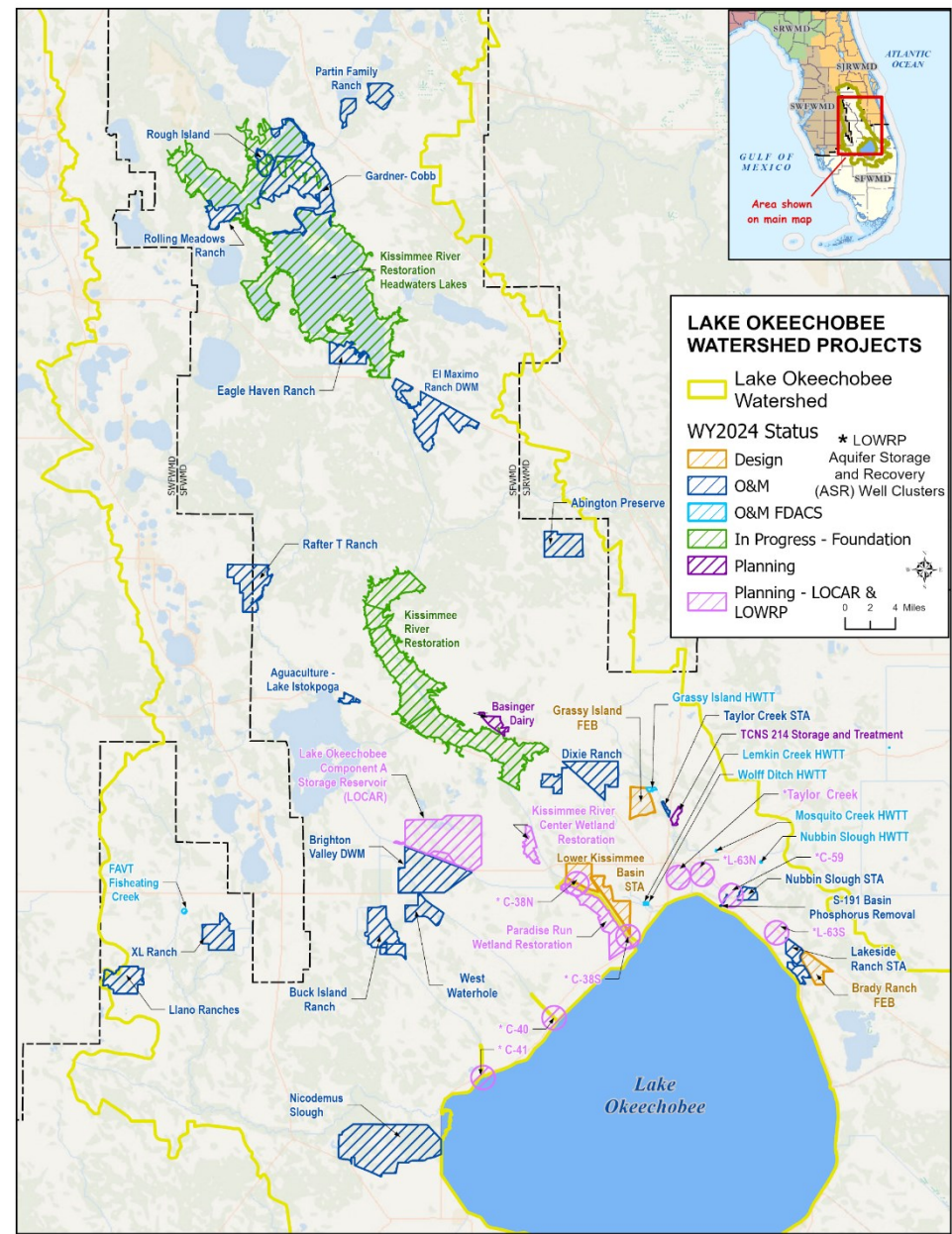
- Since 2020, SFWMD completed annual Lake Okeechobee Watershed Construction Project (LOWCP) reviews, as part of the Watershed Protection Plan (WPP) reviews
- Annual reviews are important to:
 - Maintain transparency and accountability in BMAP process
 - Assist to progressively move toward achieving state’s TMDLs
 - Consolidate into NEEPP annual progress reporting (South Florida Environmental Report, or SFER) per §373.4595(6), F.S.
 - ***Develop and update WPPs required every five years***
- Draft 2025 LOWPP Update (5-Year Update)
 - Project accomplishments through Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 (Oct. 1, 2023–Sept. 30, 2024); data evaluation/key findings through Water Year (WY) 2024 (May 1, 2023–April 30, 2024)
 - Draft 2025 SFER – Volume I, Chapter 8B (available at [SFWMD.gov/SFER](https://www.sfwmd.gov/SFER))

SFWMD Projects

- 2024 LOWCP Status:
 - 2 projects – planning
 - 3 projects – design
 - 20 projects – operations



Partin Family Ranch Project (Osceola County, Sep'24)



Water Storage Benefits

- Key DWM program benefits:
 - Reduces runoff/discharge to and stores/treats water in regional system
 - Promotes hydrologic enhancement, groundwater recharge, improves habitat
 - Avoids high cost of land purchase and keeps private lands on local tax rolls
 - Storage and/or treatment provided exceeds permit requirements
- In WY2024, 13 SFWMD-led projects provided 85,142 ac-ft of storage*
- Future projects are planned to add storage capacity of 23,070 ac-ft over the next 5 years; more than 500,000 ac-ft is also in longer-term planning

* Note: Preliminary data for WY2024

Increasing Project Storage Capacity in the Lake Okeechobee Watershed



Plus, more than 500,000 ac-ft of additional storage projects currently in planning phase.

NEEPP Model Update

- Original 2008/2009 storage targets for Northern Everglades watersheds have been confirmed to meet the NEEPP legislative goals
 - LOW storage target = 900,000 to 1,300,000 acre-feet per year
- **New! 2025 NEEPP Regional Simulation Model Update**
 - Evaluated hydrology using the Regional Simulation Model for Basins (RSMBN)
 - Current, future, and additional conceptual projects were evaluated for hydrologic performance across all three Northern Everglades watersheds
 - SFWMD is making progress toward the NEEPP storage goals—both realized and planned
- **Now Underway: 2025 Update Reviews**
 - Model overview poster today
 - Draft modeling results presented at upcoming NEEPP Public Workshop
 - Draft 2025 SFER – Volume I, Appendix 8A-1 for public review ([SFWMD.gov/SFER](https://www.sfwmd.gov/SFER))

Mark Your Calendars!



Great egret (*Ardea alba*),
at Lake Okeechobee

AVAILABLE NOW

2025 LOWPP Update

Draft 2025 SFER – Volume I, Chapter 8B

Web Release Date: November 12, 2024

Public Comment Period: through December 17, 2024

For more information, visit:

[SFWMD.gov/SFER](https://www.sfwmd.gov/SFER)



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South Florida Water Management District

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sfwmd.gov

Lake Okeechobee BMAP Public Meeting

November 19 & 21, 2024

**Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
Office of Agricultural Water Policy**

Jennifer Thera



Office of Agricultural Water Policy (OAWP)

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Best Management Practices (BMP) Manual Updates

<https://www.fdacs.gov/Divisions-Offices/Agricultural-Water-Policy/Rule-Development-Activities>

Home / Divisions & Offices / Agricultural Water Policy / Rule Development Activities

Office of Agricultural Water Policy's Rule Development Activities

Learn about recent rule development activities for Chapter 5M, Florida Administrative Code.

5M-1 Rulemaking Division of Agricultural Water Policy	5M-6 Rulemaking Best Management Practices for Florida Nursery Operations	5M-8 Rulemaking Best Management Practices for Florida Vegetable and Agronomic Crop Operations	5M-9 Rulemaking Best Management Practices for Florida Sod
5M-11 Rulemaking Best Management Practices for Florida Cattle Operations	5M-13 Rulemaking Best Management Practices for Florida Specialty Fruit & Nut	5M-14 Rulemaking Best Management Practices for Florida Equine Operations	5M-16 Rulemaking Best Management Practices for Florida Citrus
5M-17 Rulemaking Best Management Practices for Florida Dairy Operations	5M-19 Rulemaking Best Management Practices for Florida Poultry	5M-20 Rulemaking Soil and Water Conservation	5M-21 Rulemaking Best Management Practices for Florida Small Farms and Specialty Livestock Operations



Cost Share

BMP Cost Share Program



The Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services' (FDACS) Office of Agricultural Water Policy (OAWP) administers the Best Management Practices (BMP) Cost Share Program to assist eligible producers or landowners with BMPs. Project funding is on a continuous basis until program funds are fully encumbered.

OAWP will prioritize awarding first-time participants in the BMP Cost Share Program and projects that will result in the highest level of nutrient reductions to help achieve basin management action plan (BMAP) goals and conservation of water use. Funding will be based on the submittal of the necessary information on the funding request. Completed requests will be reviewed in the order in which they are received. Review of each cost share funding request will be conducted by FDACS. Additional information from the producer, including a site visit, may be requested by FDACS before a funding decision is made.

FDACS will review completed requests based on the following minimum criteria:

1. Confirmation of producer eligibility.
2. Prioritization of projects taking place in a BMAP.
3. Confirmation that the project type is on the [approved list](#), to be used for implementing a checklist item, has an adequate relative water quality benefit, and is appropriate for the size of the operation.
4. Justification and consideration of the water quality benefit or water quantity benefit and the relative size and scope of the benefit.
5. Confirmation that the project type is directly linked to the implementation of the producer's manual checklist item.
6. Confirmation that the project type has the necessary precision/technology features.
7. The level of data-reporting commitment from the producer and corresponding cost share percentage.

Producer Eligibility Requirements

When applying, producers must meet the following requirements for their funding request to be considered:

1. The property where the prospective project is located must be in production for at least one year prior to applying (regardless of ownership/lease).
2. The producer must have an active Notice of Intent to Implement Agricultural BMPs (NOI) for the property where the

Project Types Eligible for Cost Share Funding

Project types eligible for cost share funding are provided in the expandable lists below. FDACS will determine the suitability of the project type based on the cost/benefit of the project and the estimated water quality or water quantity benefit compared to the current practice.

- ▶ [Nutrient Management Project Types](#)
- ▶ [Irrigation Management Project Types](#)
- ▶ [Water Resource Protection Project Types](#)

New Project Types

Producers may request an item or project that is not currently on the list by submitting a request that:

1. Identifies the applicable BMP checklist item that will be implemented through the installation of the item or completion of the project.
2. Describes why the new project type is necessary to implement the BMP compared to the producer's current practices.
3. Quantifies the estimated water quality benefit compared to the current practice.
4. Provides justification or proof of the item having a water quality or water quantity benefit (e.g., case studies, research, demonstrations or field tests).

Project types that show potential but do not satisfy the four criteria above may be eligible for funding as "research or demonstration projects" for the purpose of becoming eligible in the future.

How to Request Project Funding or a New Project Type

To request project funding or a new project type, select the following button to create an account and sign into our BMP Cost Share Program portal:

[Request Project Funding](#)

Alternatively, you may download and complete the [Funding Request Form](#) (1.3 MB) and submit it to OAWPCostShare@FDACS.gov. **Please note:** Submitting a form may take more time to process and review.

Important: Do not begin work on a project prior to executing a cost share agreement.

Additional Funding Resources

FDACS works with multiple partners, including the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, water management districts, and soil and water conservation districts, to provide funding to assist producers in implementing Best Management Practices.

<https://www.fdacs.gov/Agriculture-Industry/Water/Agricultural-Best-Management-Practices/BMP-Cost-Share-Program>

On Website

- Producer Eligibility Requirements
- List of Project Types Eligible for Cost Share Funding
- Opportunity to apply for new types
- New Application Portal is active

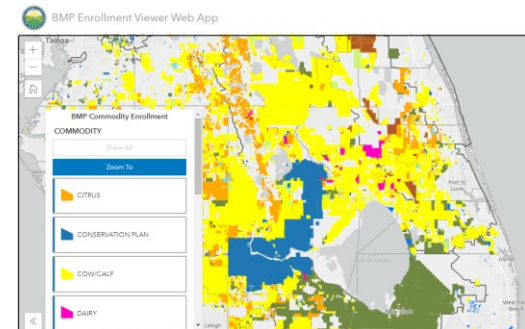


Agricultural Lands in the Lake Okeechobee BMAP

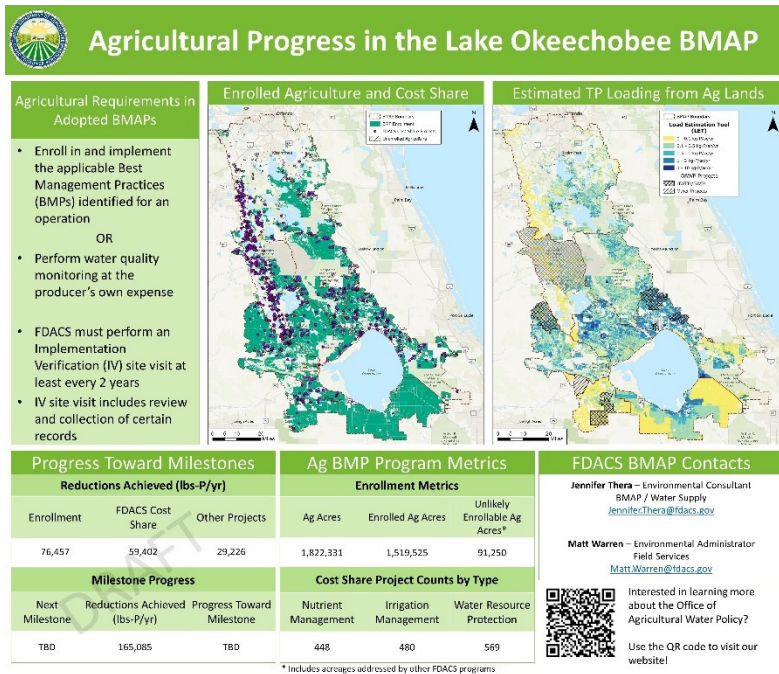
Location	Agricultural acres	Unenrolled - Unlikely Enrollable Acres	Agricultural Acres – Adjusted	Agricultural Acres Enrolled as of April 30, 2024	% Agriculture enrolled in BMP Program
East Lake Okeechobee	93,242	8,925	91,693	73,568	80%
Fisheating Creek	213,477	2,527	205,781	199,224	97%
Indian Prairie	230,095	5,930	199,199	183,395	92%
Lake Istokpoga	128,211	7,438	117,283	100,878	86%
Lower Kissimmee	263,119	7,584	230,703	206,640	90%
South Lake Okeechobee	327,062	2,944	323,196	318,767	99%
Taylor Creek/Nubbin Slough	148,107	3,935	139,577	125,735	90%
Upper Kissimmee	268,960	35,681	219,410	180,932	82%
West Lake Okeechobee	150,059	9,580	146,691	133,244	91%

BMP Enrollment Viewer Web App:

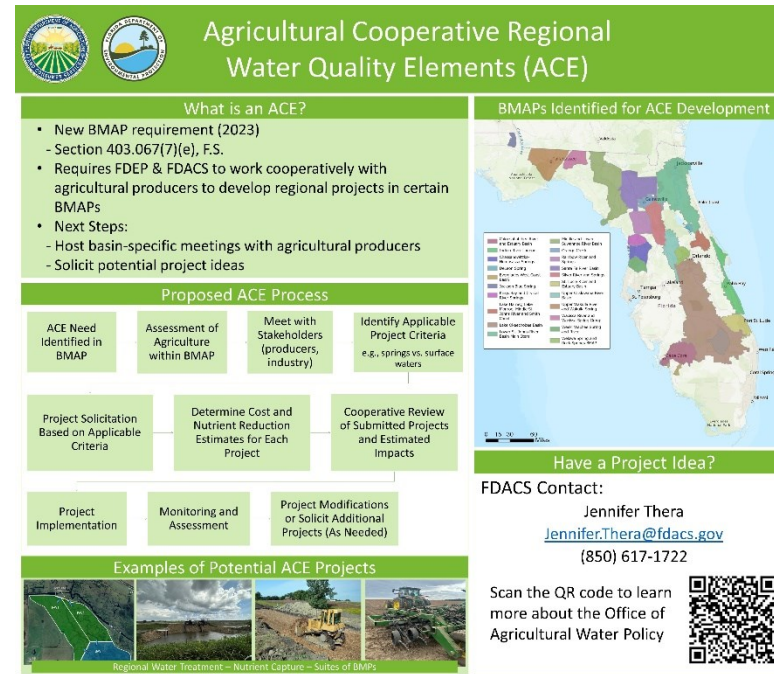
[Office of Agricultural Water Policy: BMP Enrollment Map \(fdacs.gov\)](https://fdacs.gov)



Poster #1 - BMAP Metrics



Poster #2 - Regional Projects/ACE



<http://www.fdacs.gov/Divisions-Offices/Agricultural-Water-Policy>

Thank You!



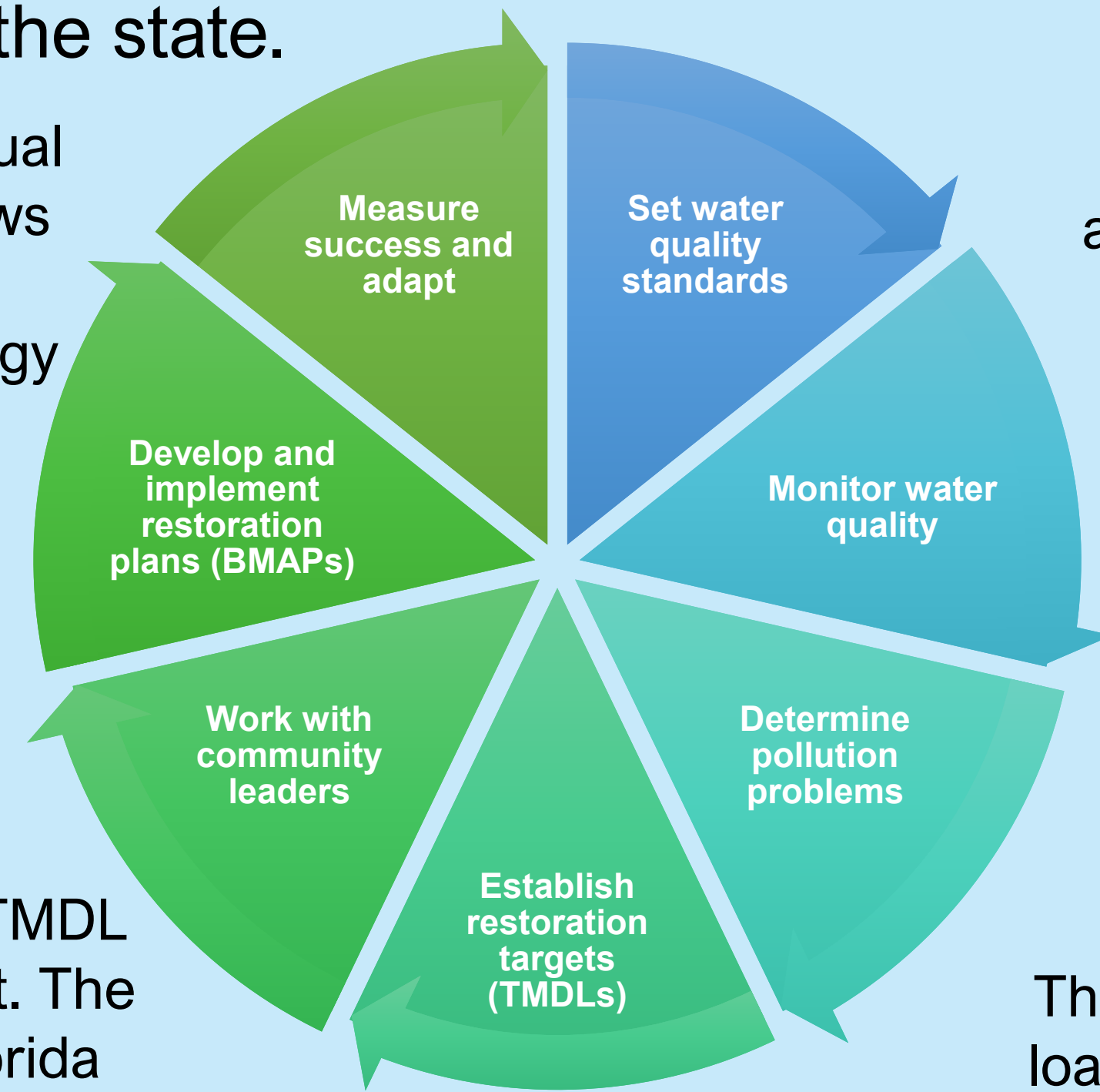
BASIN MANAGEMENT ACTION PLANS (BMAPS)

SOUTH FLORIDA BMAPS

Water Quality Restoration Cycle

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Division of Environmental Assessment and Restoration (DEAR) monitors and assesses Florida's surface water and groundwater quality across the state.

The Statewide Annual Report (STAR) shows project and management strategy implementation progress made in BMAPs.



DEP and partner agencies maintain and expand water quality monitoring networks.

BMAPs address a TMDL for a given pollutant. The BMAPs in south Florida target nitrogen and phosphorus.

The total maximum daily load (TMDL) is the water quality target

Statutory Requirements

Authority and responsibility comes from several Florida Statutes (F.S.), with some highlights described below:

Florida Watershed Restoration Act (Section 403.067, F.S.)

- Cooperative implementation of plans to restore our waters, known as BMAPs.

Northern Everglades and Estuaries Protection Program (Section 373.4595, F.S.)

- Strengthens provisions for implementing the Lake Okeechobee, Caloosahatchee and St. Lucie BMAPs.
- Clarifies the roles and responsibilities, coordination, implementation and reporting efforts among DEP, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACS) and South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD).
- Includes five-, 10- and 15-year measurable milestones and targets to achieve the TMDLs addressed by the BMAPs. If achieving the TMDL within 20 years is not practicable, the implementation plan must include an explanation of the constraints that prevent achievement, an estimate of the time needed to achieve the TMDL, and additional five-year measurable milestones.

Clean Waterways Act (2020)

- Promotes resilient wastewater infrastructure and utilities and looks at future growth.
- Requires local governments within a BMAP to develop wastewater treatment plans and/or onsite sewage treatment and disposal system (OSTDS) remediation plans to be incorporated into BMAP updates.

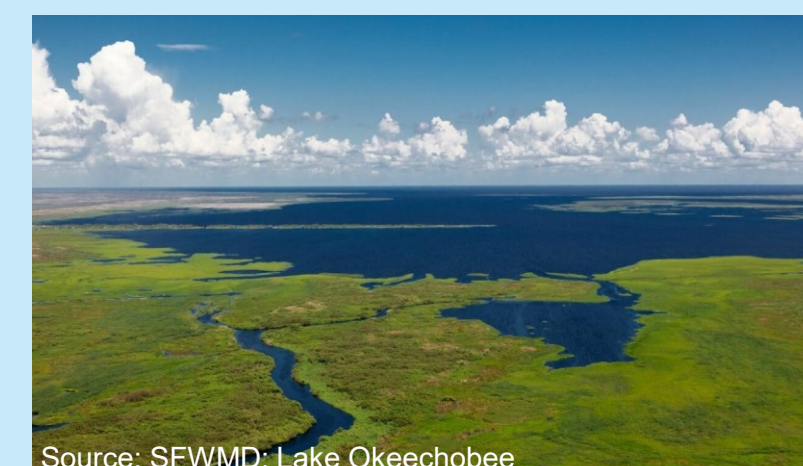
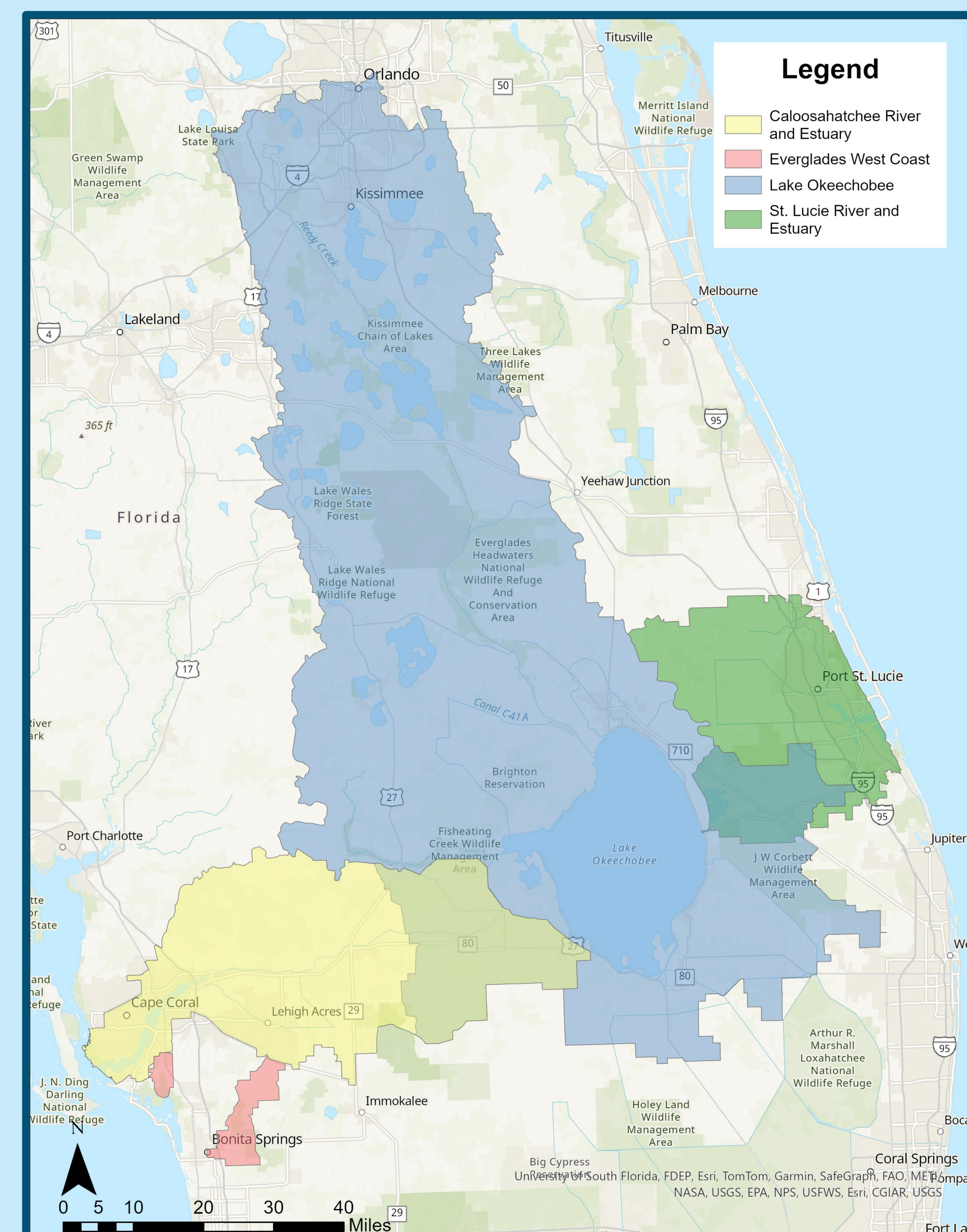
House Bill 1379 (2023)

- Requires BMAPs be assessed and updated every five years as needed to include implementation milestones and other requirements.
- Requires a list of projects and strategies that will achieve the five-year implementation milestones to meet TMDLs, as well as agricultural cooperative regional water quality improvement elements.
- Requires facilities discharging to a waterbody impaired for nutrients or subject to a BMAP or reasonable assurance plan (RAP) area to upgrade to advanced wastewater treatment (AWT) within 10 years.
- Requires applicants for new septic systems serving lots of 1 acre or less within BMAPs and RAPs must connect to central sewer if available, or if unavailable, to install an enhanced nutrient-reducing system or other wastewater system that achieves 65% reduction.
- Requires local governments to include BMAP projects in their comprehensive plans so these projects can be prioritized to achieve restoration benefits.
- Expands grant opportunities to accelerate project implementation.

House Bill 1557 (2024)

- Requires advanced treatment of reclaimed water within BMAPs.
- Requires facilities (including private) to provide information to local entities developing domestic wastewater treatment plans and OSTDS remediation plans within BMAP or other restoration areas.

South Florida BMAPs



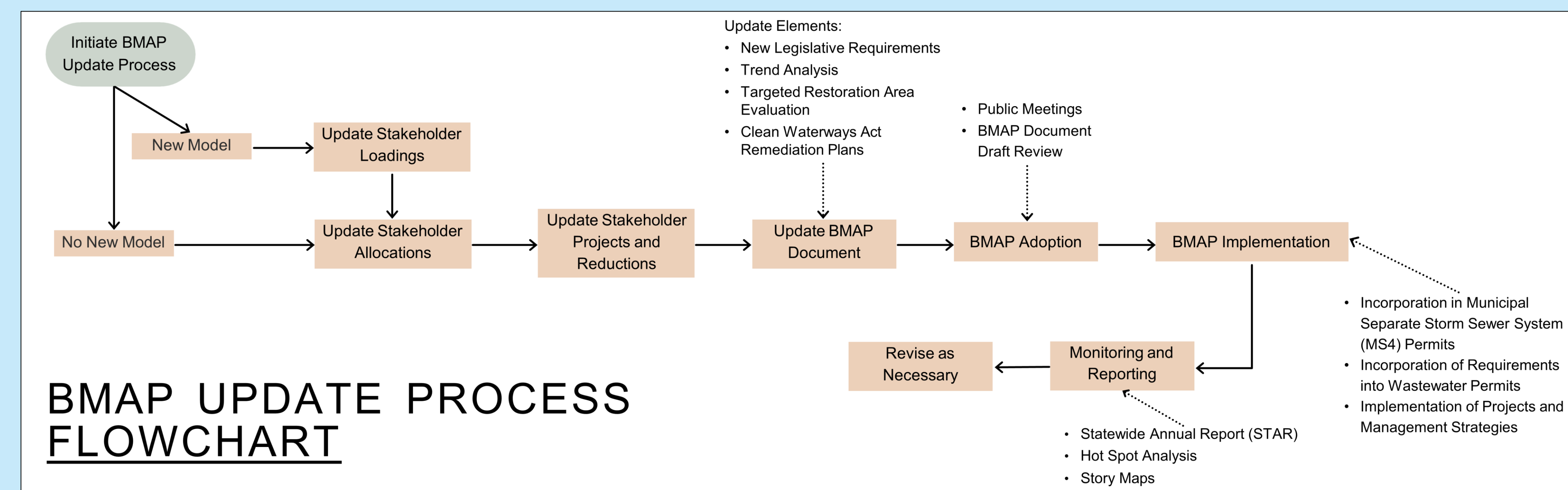
BMAP Update Process

What is a Basin Management Action Plan?

- A BMAP is a framework for water quality restoration that contains a comprehensive set of solutions to achieve the pollutant reductions established by a TMDL.
- A BMAP is developed with local stakeholders and relies on local input and commitment for successful implementation.
- BMAPs are adopted by Secretarial Order and are legally enforceable.
- BMAPs use an adaptive management approach that allows for incremental load reductions through the implementation of projects and management strategies, while simultaneously monitoring and conducting studies to better understand the water quality and hydrologic dynamics.

Key Elements of a BMAP:

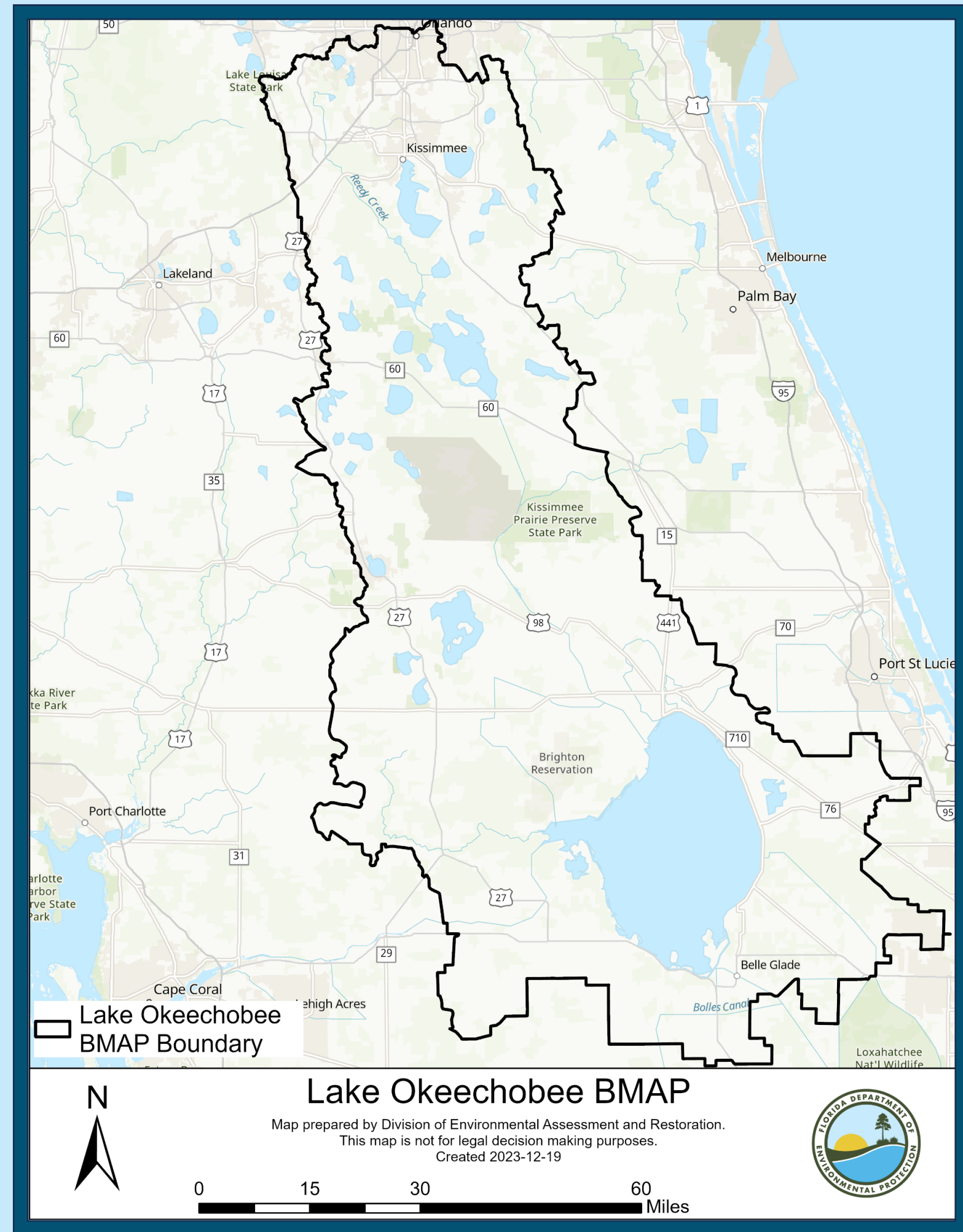
- TMDL(s) being addressed. These are the restoration targets.
- Physical description of the waterbody and contributing area.
- Description of the monitoring network and water quality.
- Identification of pollutant sources.
- Identification of responsible stakeholders.
- List of projects and strategies to reduce loading.
- Applicable legal requirements.



LAKE OKEECHOBEE BASIN MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN (BMAP)

WATER QUALITY ANALYSES

BMAP Background



Lake Okeechobee Total Phosphorus (TP) Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) adopted in 2001.

TMDL set at a total load of 140 mt/yr TP.

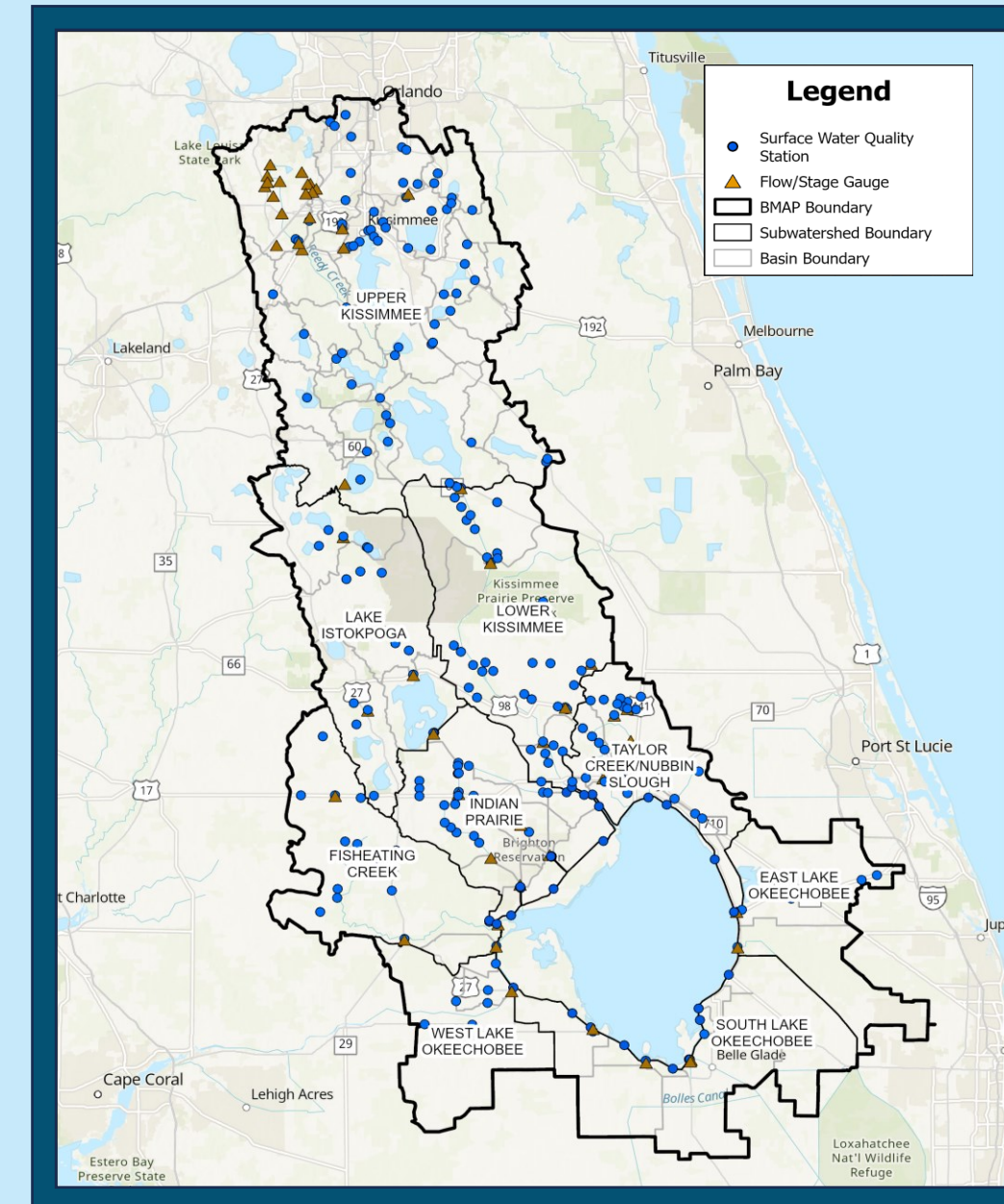
35 mt/yr falls directly on the lake.

105 mt/yr allocated to the entire watershed.

mt/yr = metric tons/year.

The watershed is composed of nine subwatersheds and 65 basins.

Water Quality Monitoring Network



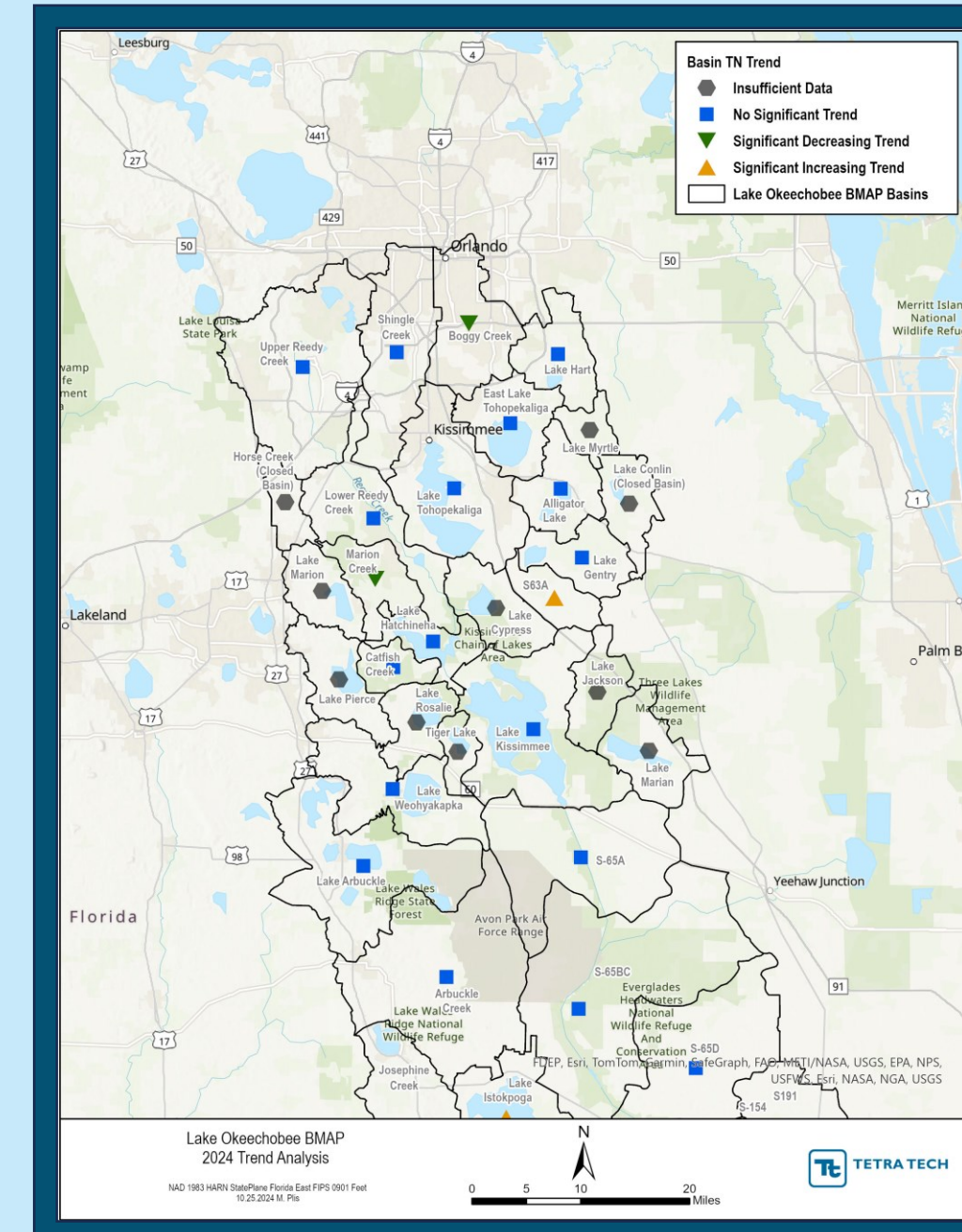
Water Quality Parameters Monitored	
Alkalinity	Nitrate-Nitrite (N)
Ammonia (N)	Total Kjeldahl Nitrogen (TKN)
Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD)	Total Nitrogen (TN)
Organic Carbon	Orthophosphate (P)
Total Carbon	pH
Chlorophyll-a	Total Phosphorus (TP)
Color	Specific Conductance/Salinity
Dissolved Oxygen	Temperature
Dissolved Oxygen (Saturation)	Total Suspended Solids
Flow	Turbidity

Water quality is monitored at 309 stations throughout the watershed.

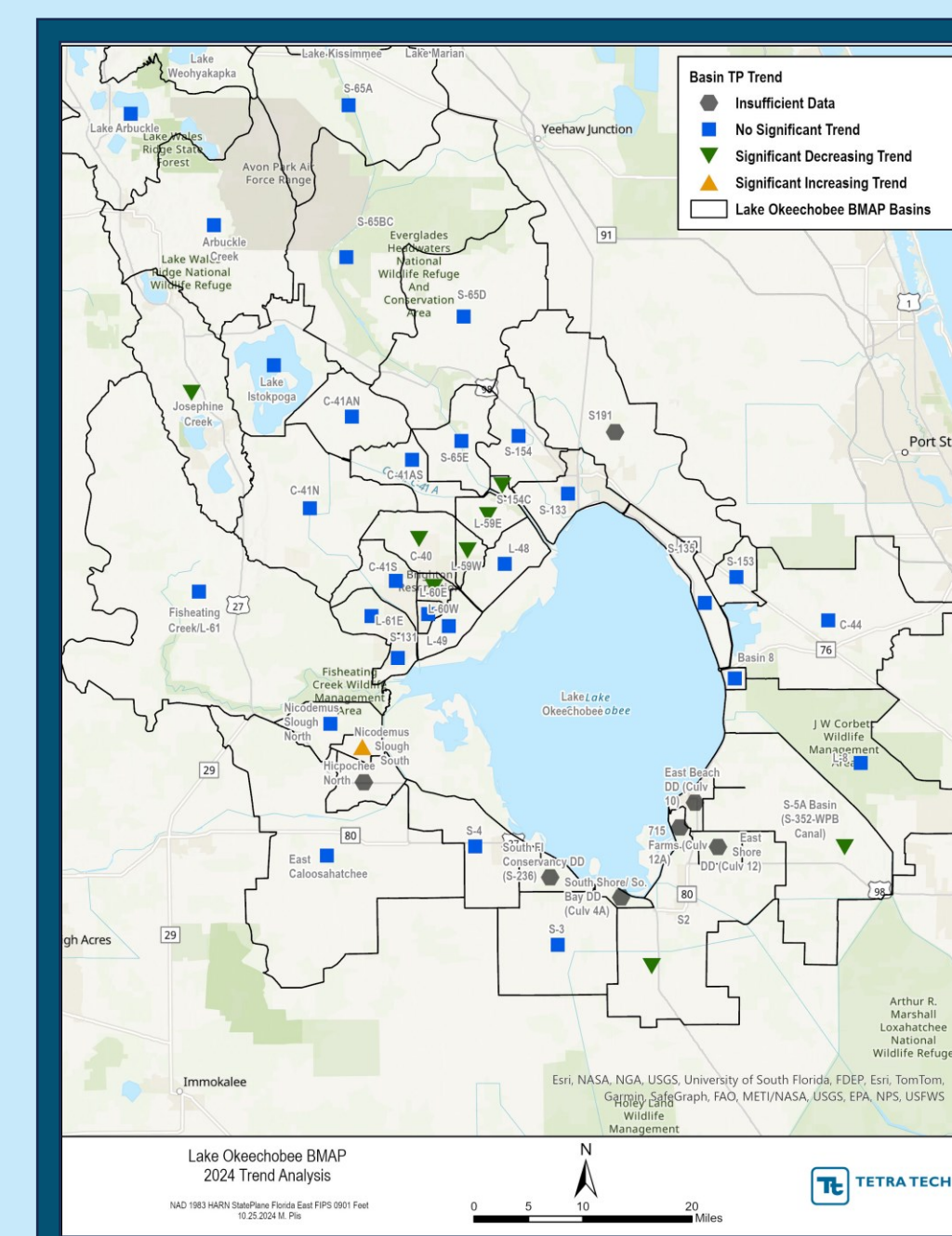
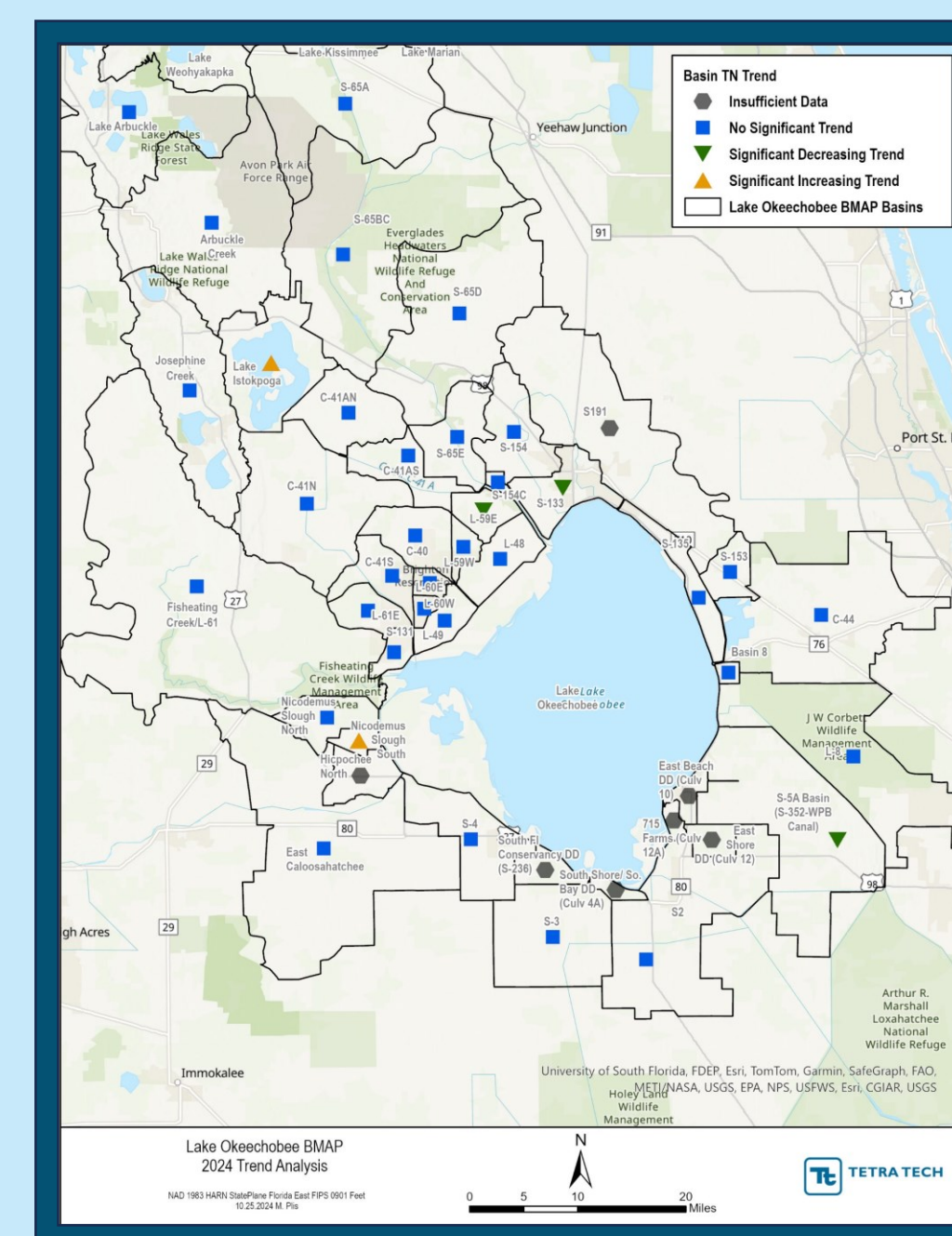
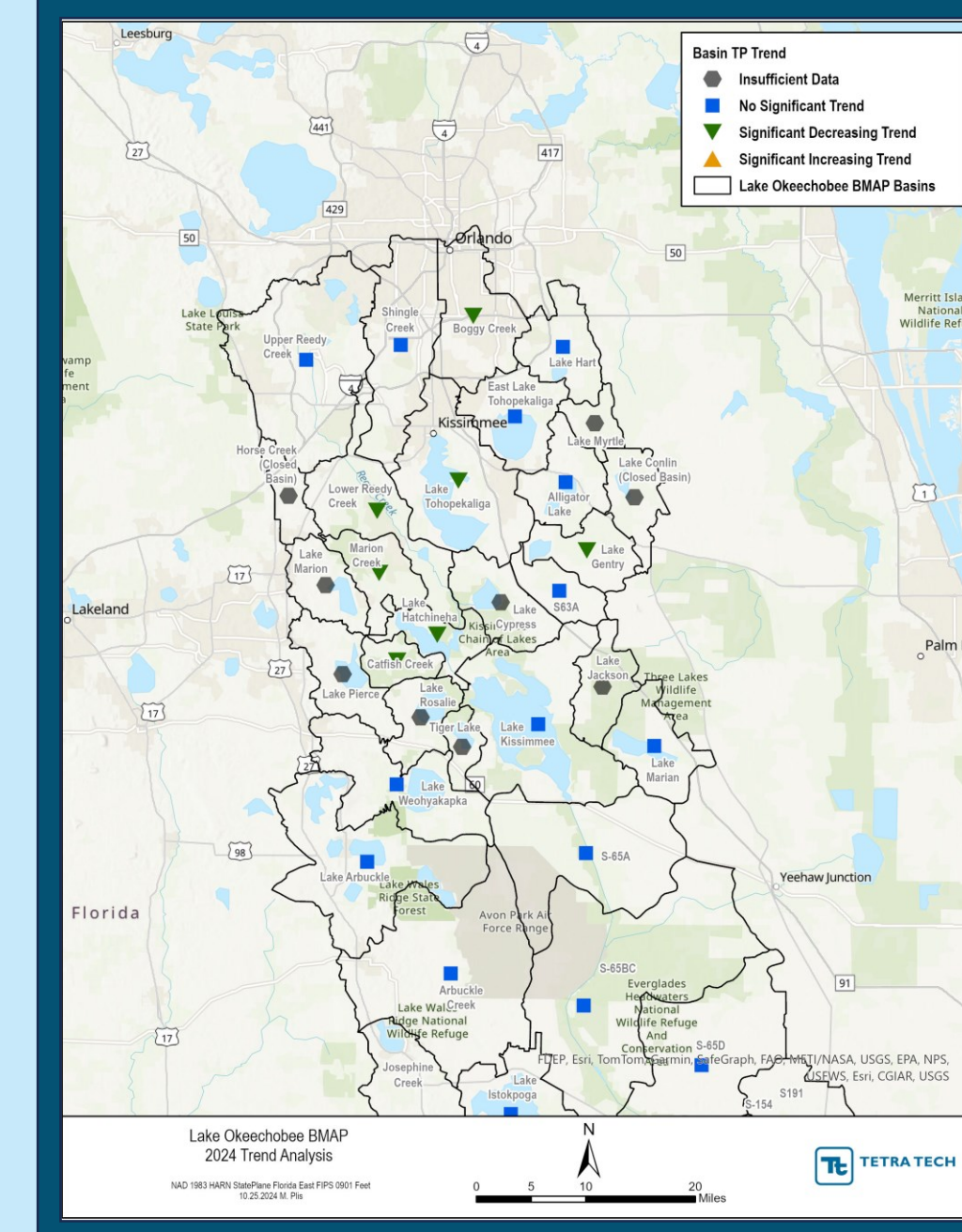
Water Quality Trend Analyses

Seasonal Kendall trend analysis investigates trends in Total Nitrogen (TN) and TP concentrations for the basins.

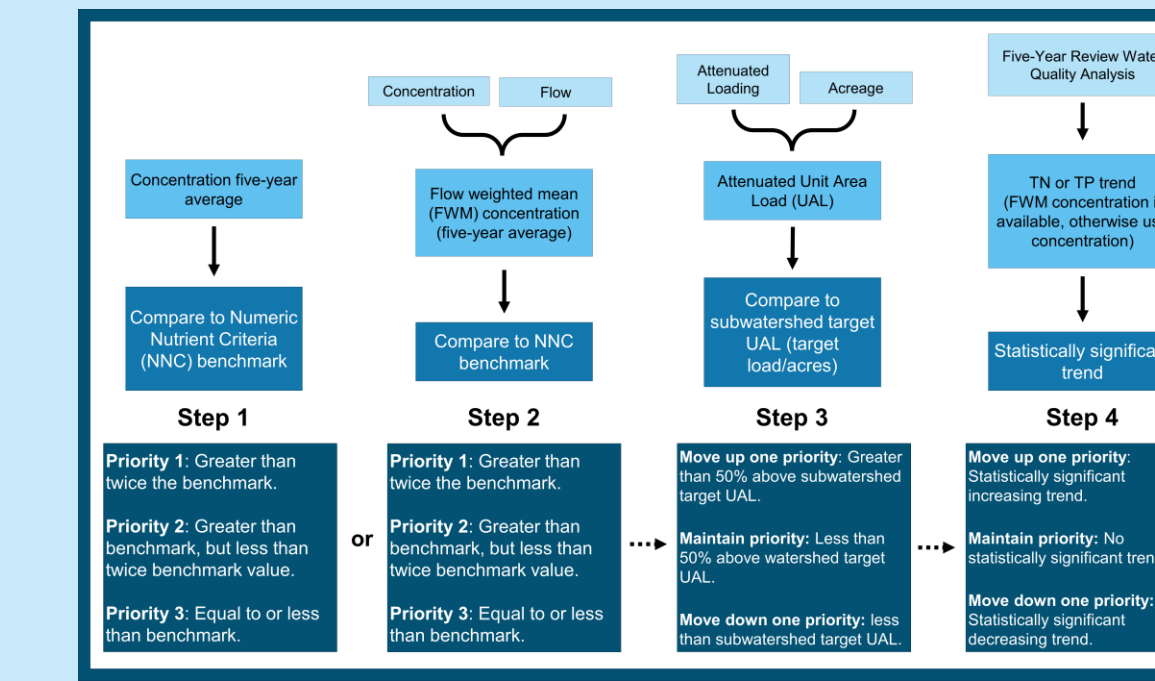
TN Trends



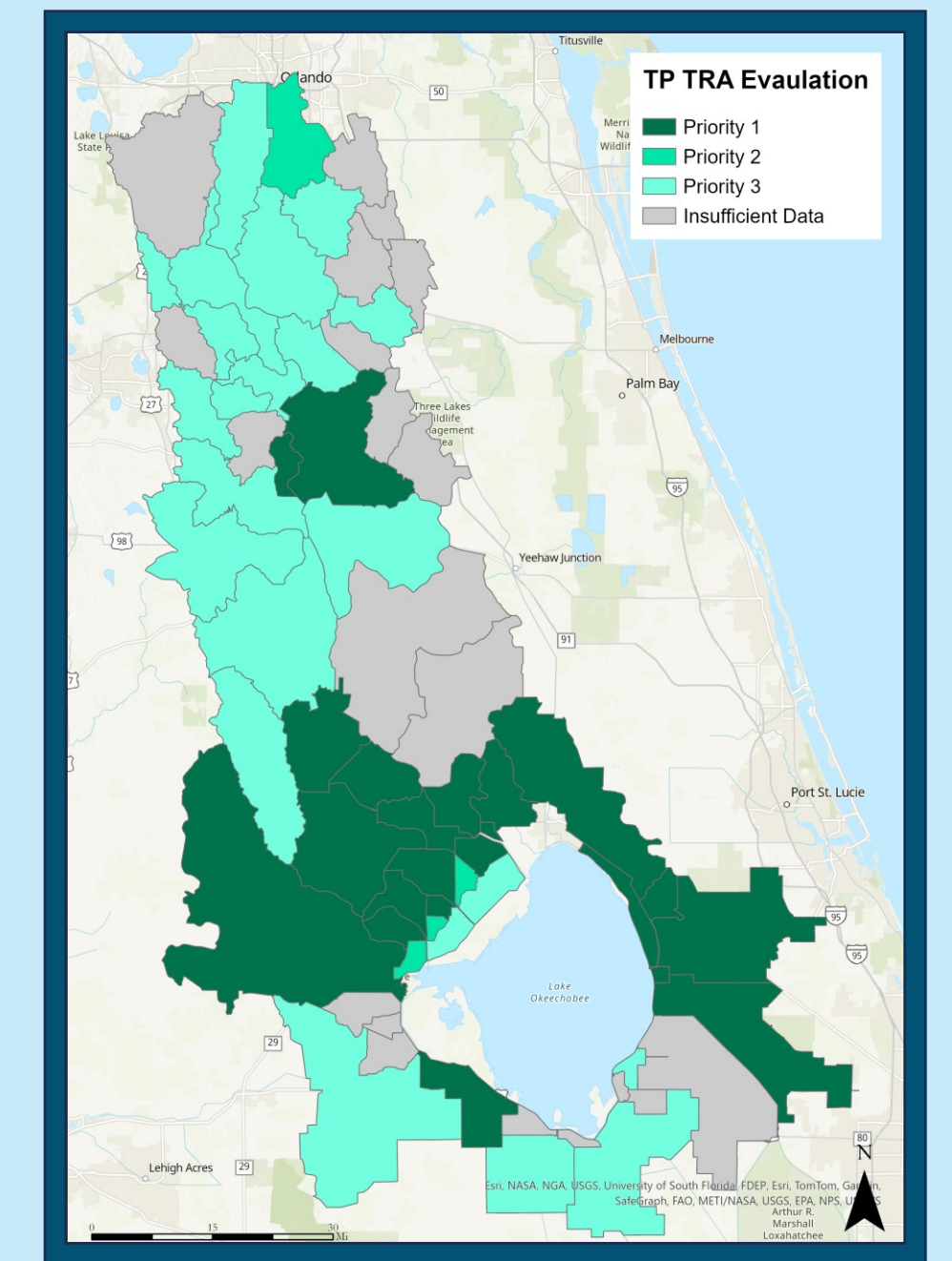
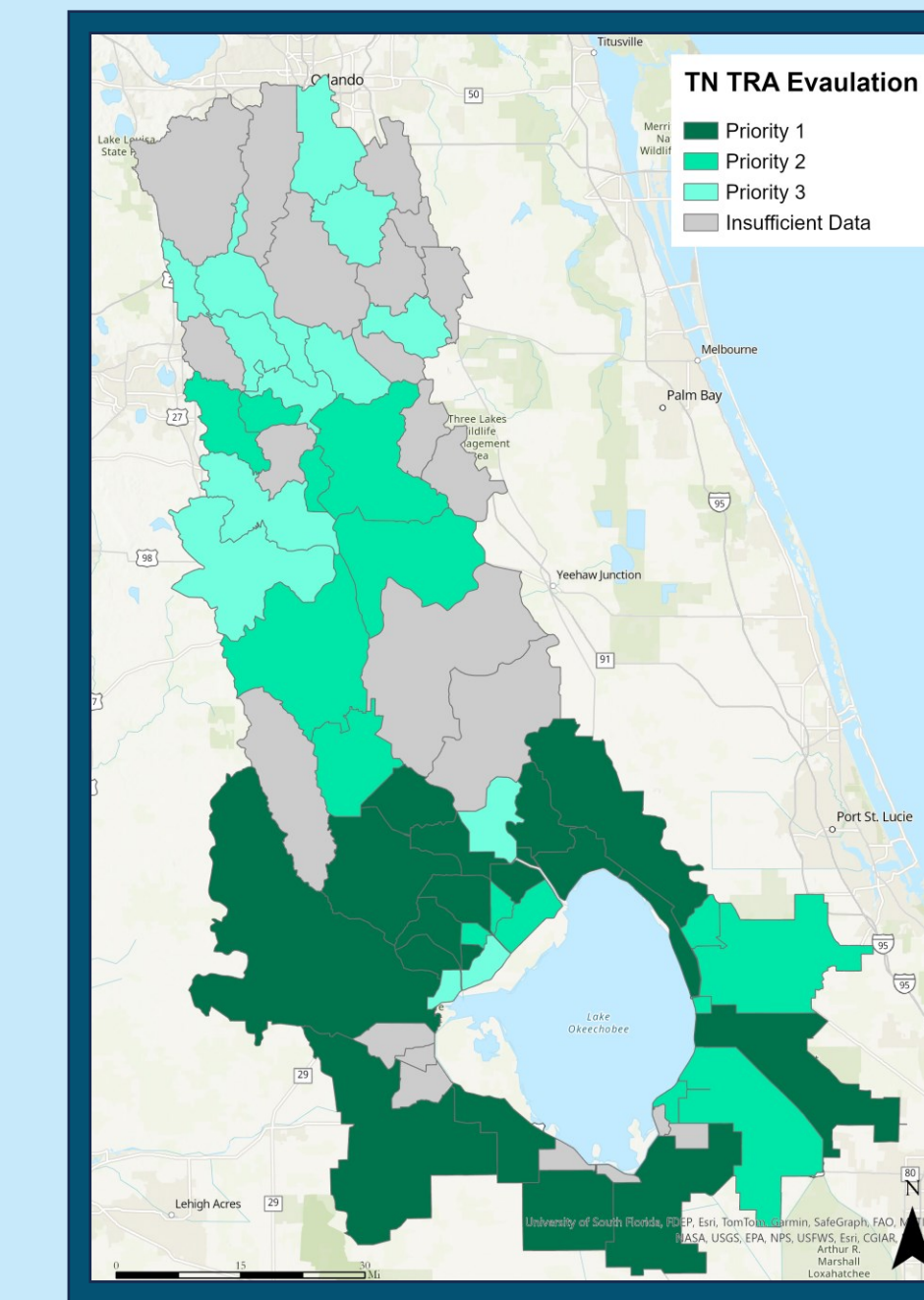
TP Trends



Targeted Restoration Area Evaluation

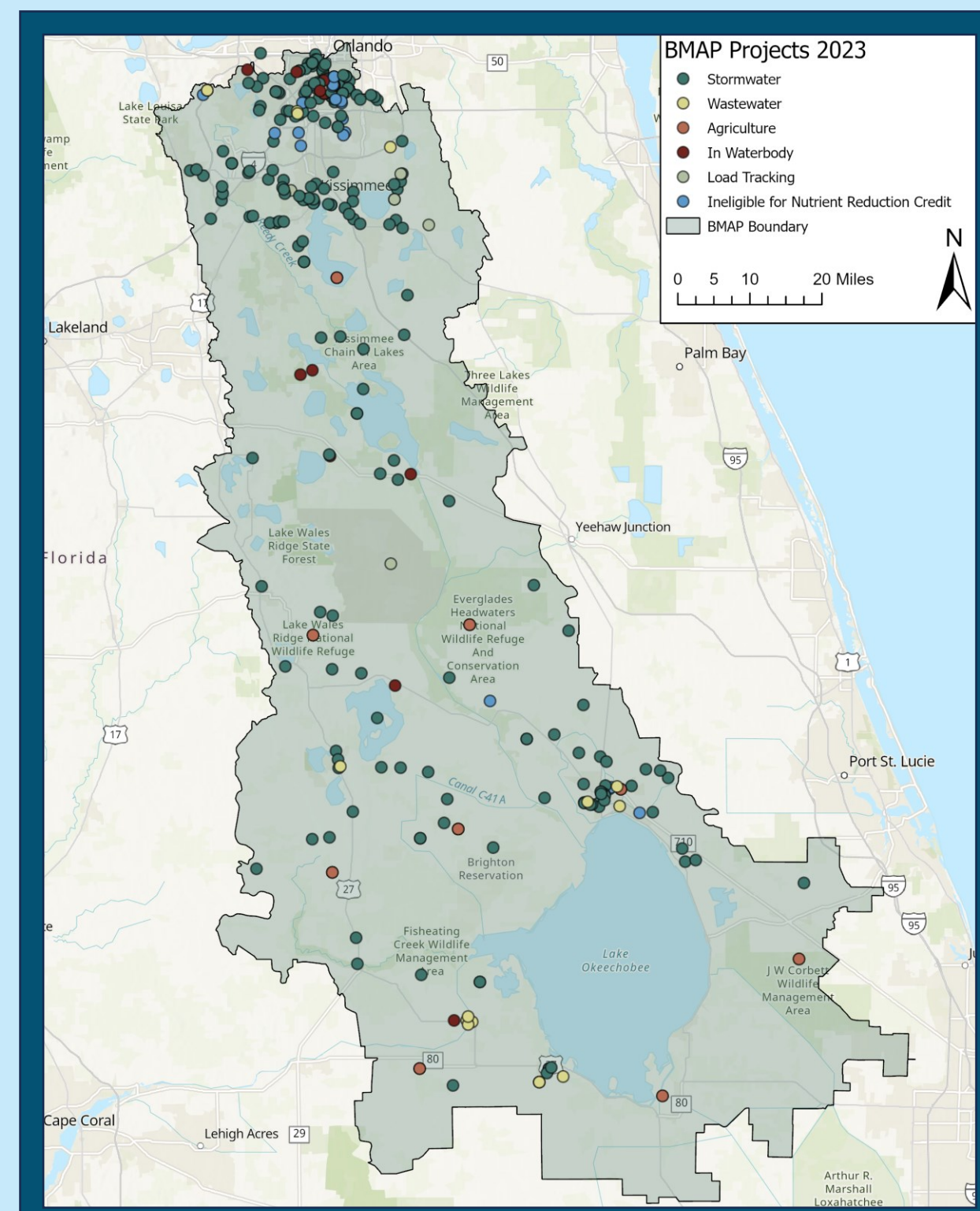


Targeted Restoration Areas (TRA) sequentially compare four parameters to determine priority basins for restoration projects.



Statewide Annual Report (STAR) 2023

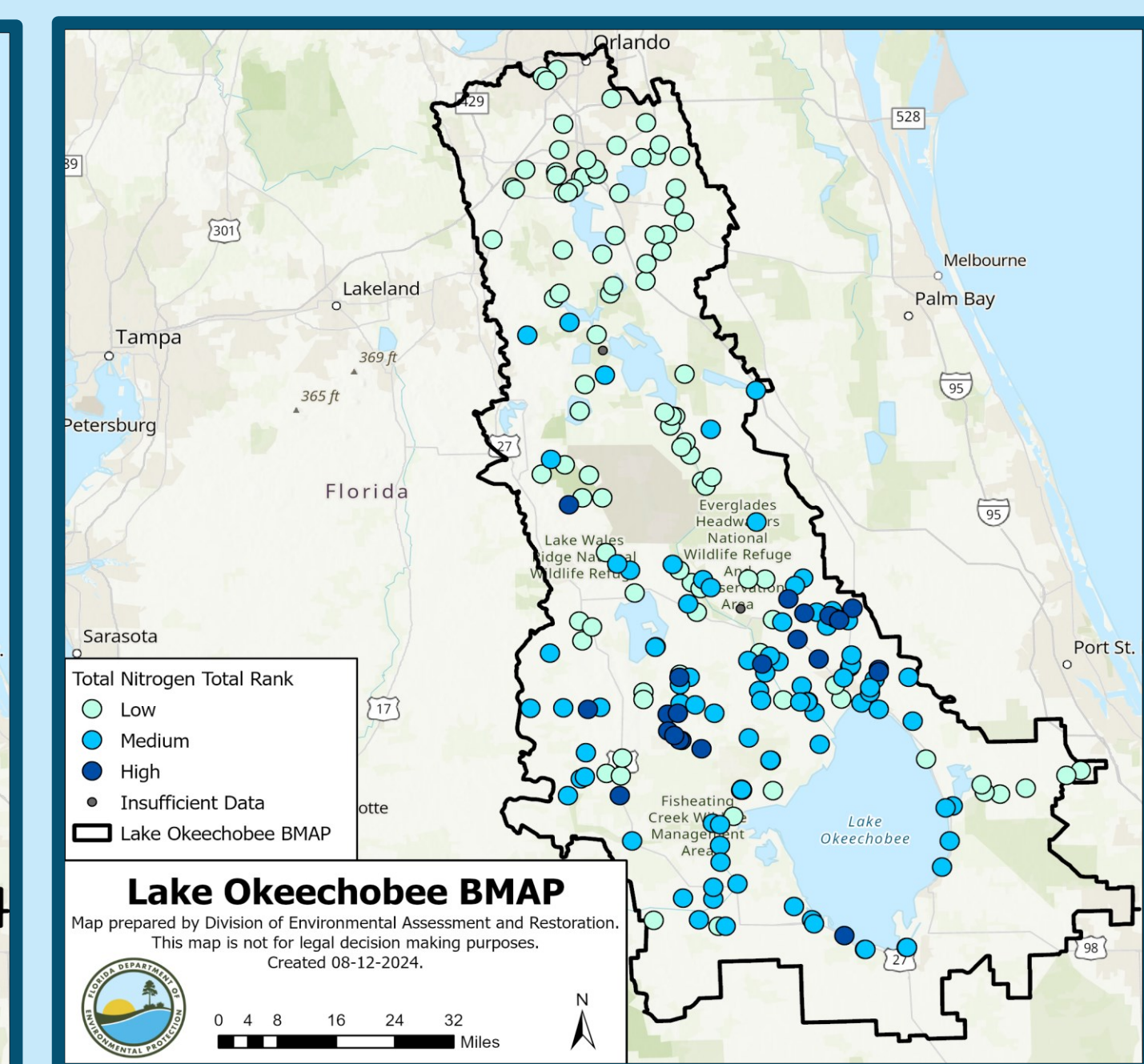
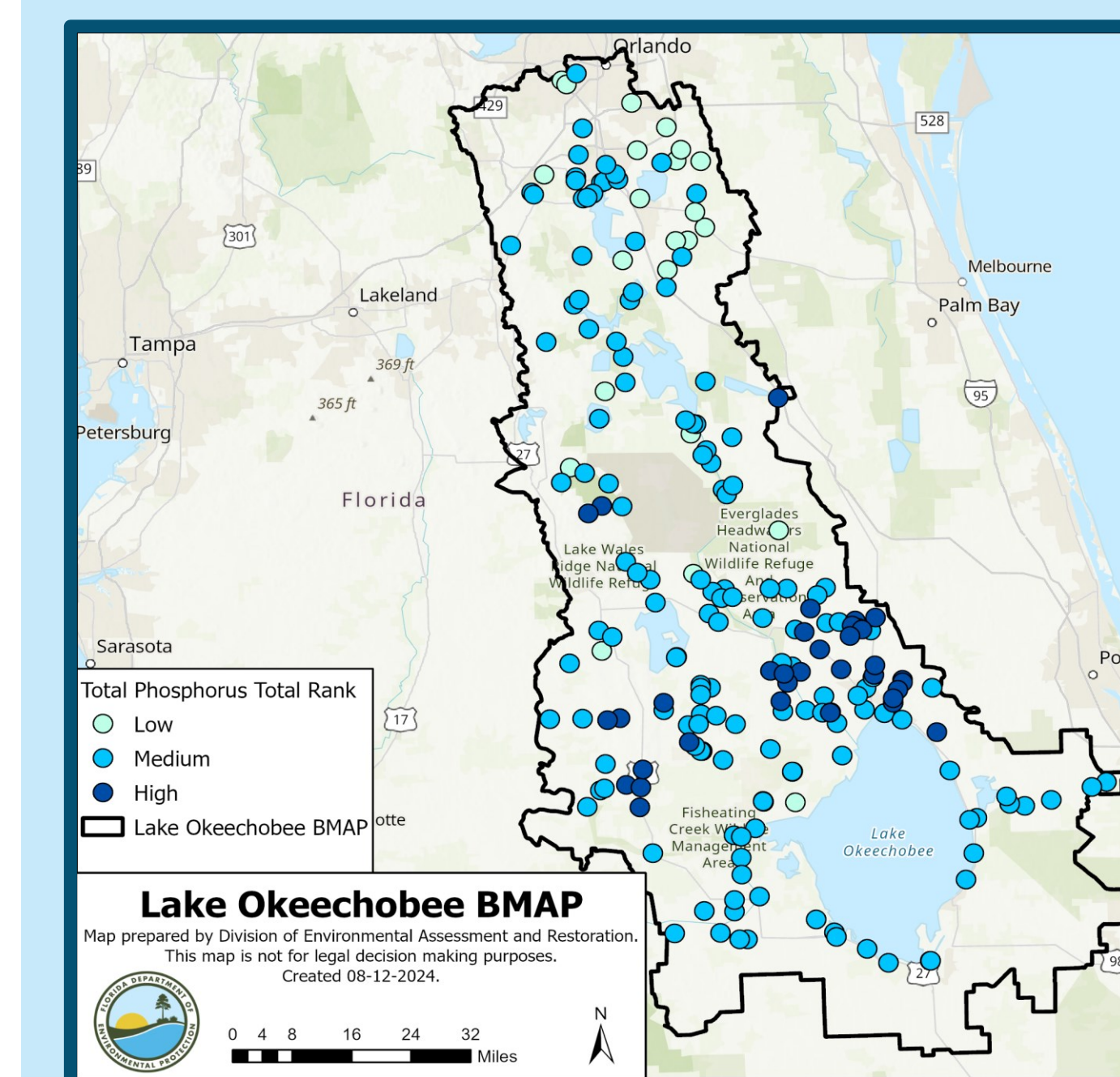
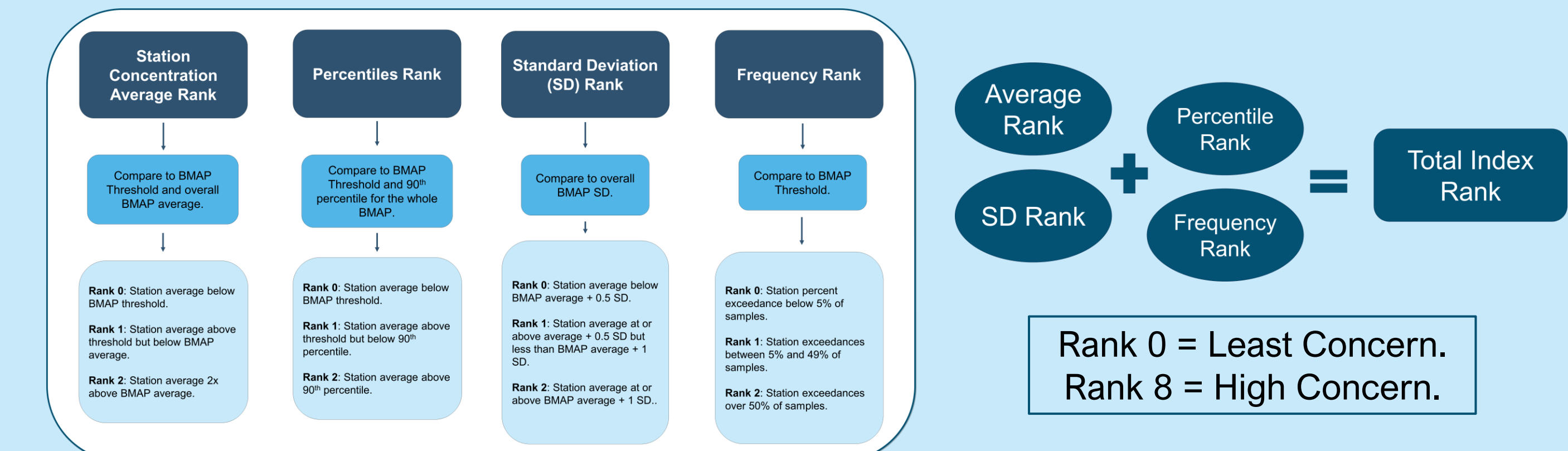
Subwatershed	TP Load Required Reduction (mt/yr)	TP Reduction Through Dec. 31, 2023 (mt/yr)	TP Reductions Achieved Through Dec. 31, 2023
Fisheating Creek	28.3	15.4	54%
Indian Prairie	22.7	22.7	66%
Lake Istokpoga	24.6	2.7	11%
Lower Kissimmee	57.1	13.5	21%
Taylor Creek/Nubbin Slough	41.6	32.3	78%
Upper Kissimmee	57.0	18.2	32%
East Lake Okeechobee	11.0	2.3	21%
South Lake Okeechobee	8.2	3.1	37%
West Lake Okeechobee	0.0	0.6	100%
Total	367.2	110.7	42%



Through Dec. 31, 2023, 343 projects in the BMAP address both stormwater and wastewater pollution sources.

Hot Spot Analysis

Analysis method for prioritization at a more local scale than the TRA analysis.



LAKE OKEECHOBEE BASIN MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN (BMAP) REQUIRED REDUCTIONS AND MILESTONES

Projects

Responsible entities are required to identify, plan, complete and report on projects that reduce the loading of nitrogen from sources.

The basin wide reductions are assessed by source and then allocated to responsible entities.

Project collection and reporting are crucial to the successful implementation and management of BMAPs. Projects are reported to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) annually through the BMAP Project Collection Portal. Project lists with associated reductions are published in the Statewide Annual Report (STAR).

Subwatershed Required Reductions

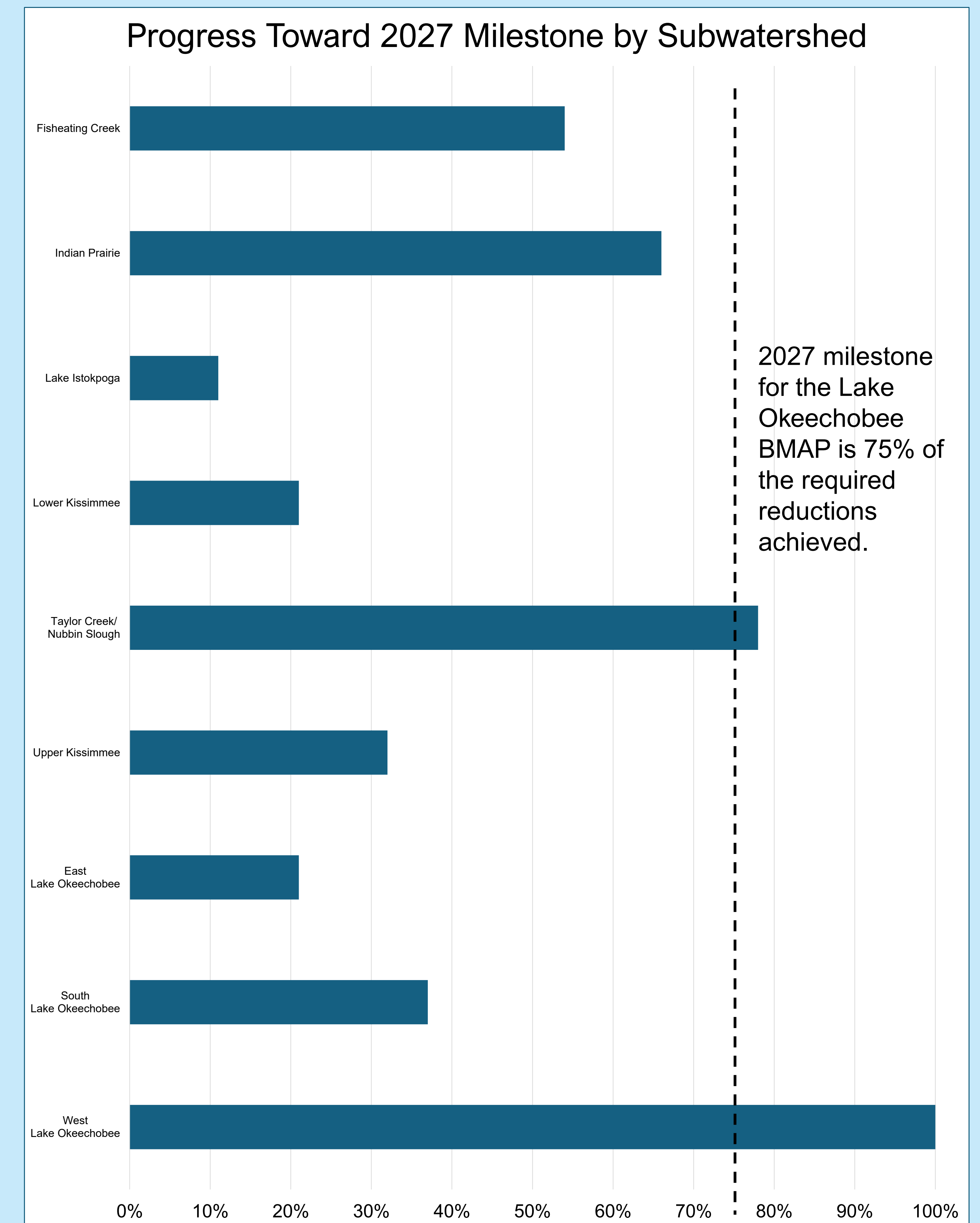
Subwatershed	Targets in 2020 BMAP				Targets Updated with 2023 SFER Data			
	WY2014 - WY2018 TP Load (mt/yr)	% Contribution of Load	TP Load Required Reduction (mt/yr)	TP Target (mt/yr)	WY2019 - WY2023 TP Load (mt/yr)	% Contribution of Load	TP Load Required Reduction (mt/yr)	TP Target (mt/yr)
Fisheating Creek	72.4	12	59.7	12.7	39.7	11	28.3	11.4
Indian Prairie	102.5	17	84.5	18.0	48.1	13	34.3	13.8
Lake Istokpoga	47.7	8	39.3	8.4	34.5	9	24.6	9.9
Lower Kissimmee	125.9	21	103.8	22.1	80.0	22	57.1	22.9
Taylor Creek/Nubbin Slough	113.6	19	93.7	19.9	58.2	16	41.6	16.6
Upper Kissimmee	90.5	15	74.6	15.9	79.8	22	57.0	22.8
East Lake Okeechobee	16.8	3	13.9	2.9	15.4	4	11.0	4.4
South Lake Okeechobee	29.0	5	23.9	5.1	11.5	3	8.2	3.3
West Lake Okeechobee	0.0	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0	0.0	0.0
Total	598.4	100	493.4	105.0	367.2	100	262.2	105.0

2027 Milestone – 75% Reduction Achieved

Responsible entities are required to provide lists of projects that demonstrate how they plan to achieve their required reductions for the next five-year milestone.

It is important that all projects needed to achieve milestone targets are included in the STAR, even if a funding mechanism is not currently identified. This information provides the state an understanding of what support is necessary to achieve BMAP goals and assists with the prioritization of projects.

Estimated reductions in the progress chart below reflect projects entered through December 2023.

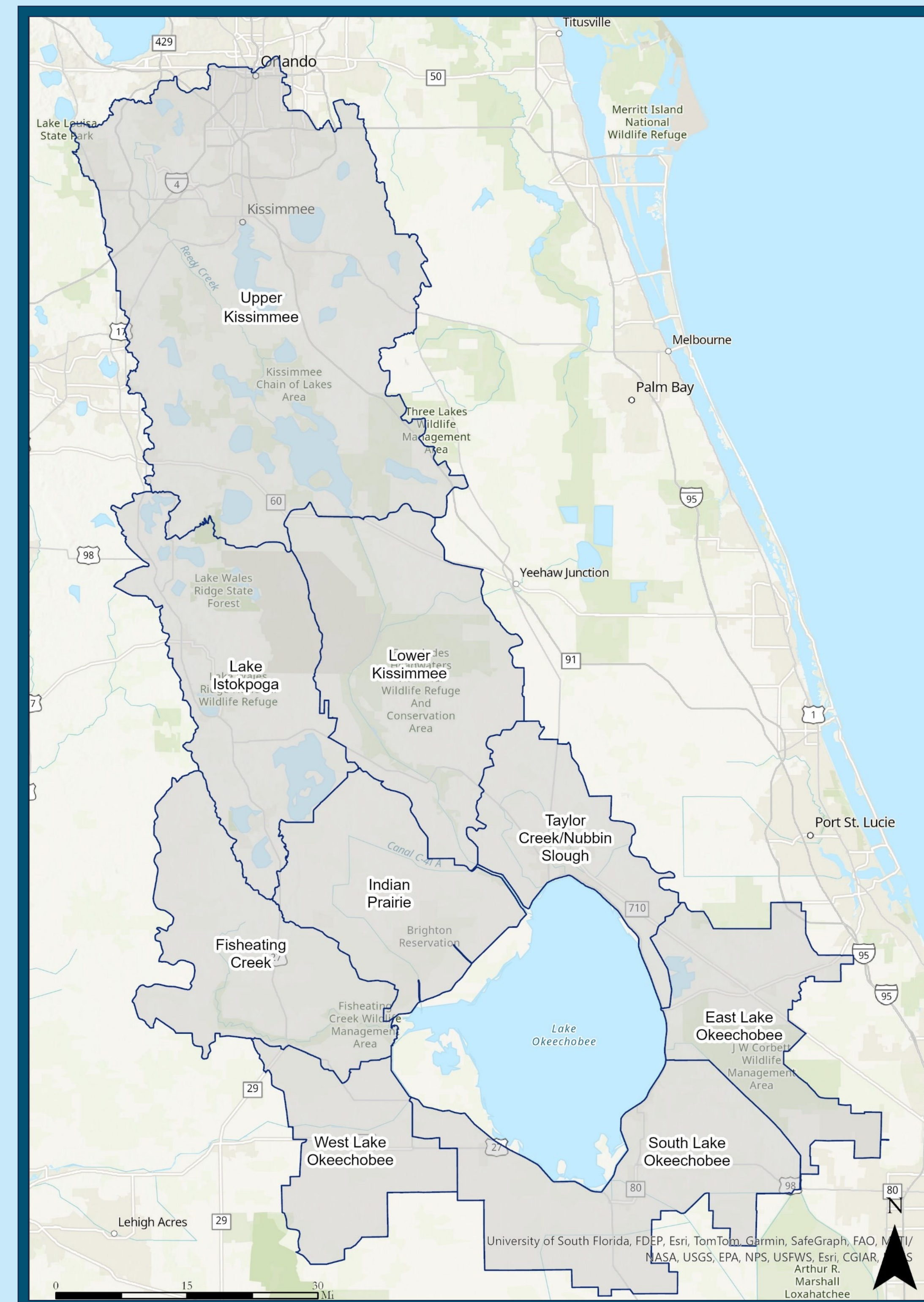


BMAP Management Strategies

Nutrient reduction credits can be earned through implementing projects addressing sources of nutrients. Reduction milestones must be met to ensure sufficient progress towards meeting the total maximum daily load (TMDL) target.

Source-Specific Management Strategies:

- **Onsite Sewage Treatment and Disposal Systems:** No new installations of conventional septic systems on lots 1 acre or less.
- **Wastewater Treatment Facilities:** Facilities must meet certain effluent limitations.
- **Agriculture Best Management Practices (BMP) Enrollment:** This program is mandatory in BMAP areas, assumes certain efficiencies as described in the BMAP.
- **Other Agriculture:** Agricultural sources that are not addressed through BMP enrollment and implementation will need to be addressed through activities such as regional projects, cost-share BMPs or innovative technologies.
- **Urban Stormwater:** Ordinances, education, street sweeping and structural stormwater improvements.



Lake Okeechobee Basin Management Action Plan (BMAP) Meeting Summary

Okeechobee County Board of County Commission Chambers Room 270

304 NW 2nd Street, Okeechobee, FL 34972

Tuesday, November 19, 2024

2:00 pm – 3:30 pm

Participants

Ernie Barnett, FLC

Evelyn Becerra, DEP

Anthony Betts, SFWMD

Linda Crane, Citizen

Lisa Diaz, Lewis Longman & Walker

Rebecca Dougherty, SFWMD

Amy Eason, Martin County

Rebecca Elliott, FDACS

Yesenia Escribano, FDACS

Jake Fojtik, Florida Farm Bureau

Marcy Frick, Tetra Tech

Paul Gray, Audubon

Christopher Guth, Federico & Associates

Ray Hodge, United Dairy Farmers

Moira Homann, DEP

Megan Jacoby, SFWMD

Shiela Kitalf, FDACS

Jacob Landfield, SFWMD

Celeste Lyon, RES

Jonathan Madden, SFWMD

Deborah Manzo, Okeechobee County

Stef Matthes, Okeechobee County

Valentina Miele, FL Oceanographic Society

Nick Muzia, Sea & Shoreline

Steffany Olson, SFWMD

Libby Pigman, SFWMD

Richard Reade, Okeechobee County

Mikayla Rogers, FFVA

Jennifer Thera, FDACS

Raychel Thomas, Pavese Law

Tony Tomalewski, DEP

Diana Turner, DEP

Lori Wenkert, SFWMD

Benita Whalen, FCA

Welcome and Introductions

Marcy Frick welcomed everyone to the Lake Okeechobee BMAP meeting, and the participants introduced themselves and the entity they represent.

Agency Presentations

Diana Turner summarized recent legislative requirements that will be included in the BMAP updates, including five-year milestones. The Lake Okeechobee BMAP does not have entity-specific allocations so the current five-year milestones for the subwatersheds will continue to be used. The Coordinating Agencies have been working on regional projects. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has been conducting water quality analyses to evaluate progress including the targeted restoration area (TRA), hotspot, and trend evaluations. She noted that the Lake Okeechobee BMAP 5-Year Review document was provided for review a few weeks ago and comments are due on Friday. Diana reviewed the BMAP update schedule, which includes technical meetings this week, draft BMAP update in January for review, another round of public meetings to present on the draft BMAP document, public comment period, and then finalization by July 1, 2025. The BMAP project collection portal was opened early for BMAP updates and it will remain open until mid-January for the Statewide Annual Report (STAR). Diana stated that the numbers on the poster for the project reductions are reflective of the last STAR through December 31, 2023, and do not include the new project information that stakeholders recently provided.

Megan Jacoby stated that the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) is conducting the five-year update for Lake Okeechobee Watershed Construction Project (LOWCP). They have been

providing updates on the projects annually in the South Florida Environmental Report (SFER) to promote transparency, provide accountability to stakeholders, and help achieve the total maximum daily loads (TMDLs). The LOWCP has 2 projects in planning, 3 in design, and 20 in operations. These are all SFWMD led projects but they also have projects in conjunction with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers including the Lake Okeechobee Component A Storage Reservoir (LOCAR) and Lake Okeechobee Watershed Restoration Project (LOWRP). She noted that the dispersed water management project benefits include reducing runoff and promoting ecological enhancement. Projects to date have provided over 85,000 acre-feet of storage, with an additional 23,000 acre-feet of storage coming online soon. SFWMD is also updating the previous model from 2008–2009, and the updated model shows the estimated storage needed for this watershed from the previous modeling of 900,000 – 1.3 million is correct. The draft 2025 SFER is available for public comment through December 17.

Jennifer Thera reviewed the staff changes at the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS). She noted that they are working to update all 12 best management practice (BMP) manuals and the FDACS website has a rule development activities webpage with the latest details on the updates. They plan to have the updates completed early next year. FDACS is also updating the cost-share program to create a system to evaluate projects and status to provide transparent information. Producers can apply for different measures and FDACS has a better tool to evaluate effectiveness to determine what projects are most needed. They also increased the cost-share limit including higher amounts if the producer agrees to monitoring. Jennifer showed the BMP enrollment status for each of the Lake Okeechobee BMAP subwatersheds. The FDACS website includes an interactive map showing enrollment, commodity type, and last implementation verification visit.

Poster Session

After the agency presentations, a poster session was held to allow participants to have one-on-one discussions with the agency staff, ask questions, and provide comments. No comment cards were submitted during the meeting.