

NEWS RELEASE

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Brighton Valley Northern Everglades Water Project Breaks Ground

New public-private partnership will keep thousands of acre-feet of stormwater runoff out of the estuaries

A public-private partnership project between Lykes Brighton Valley LLC, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD), Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS) and Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) is officially breaking ground and starting construction on the Brighton Valley Northern Everglades Public Private Partnership Project. This project will treat water in the Lake Okeechobee watershed over the next decade.

"Every gallon stored counts to help alleviate high water conditions in South Florida," said SFWMD Governing Board member Brandon Tucker. "This Governing Board is thankful to Lykes Brighton Valley for stepping up and helping reduce nutrients in the Lake Okeechobee watershed."



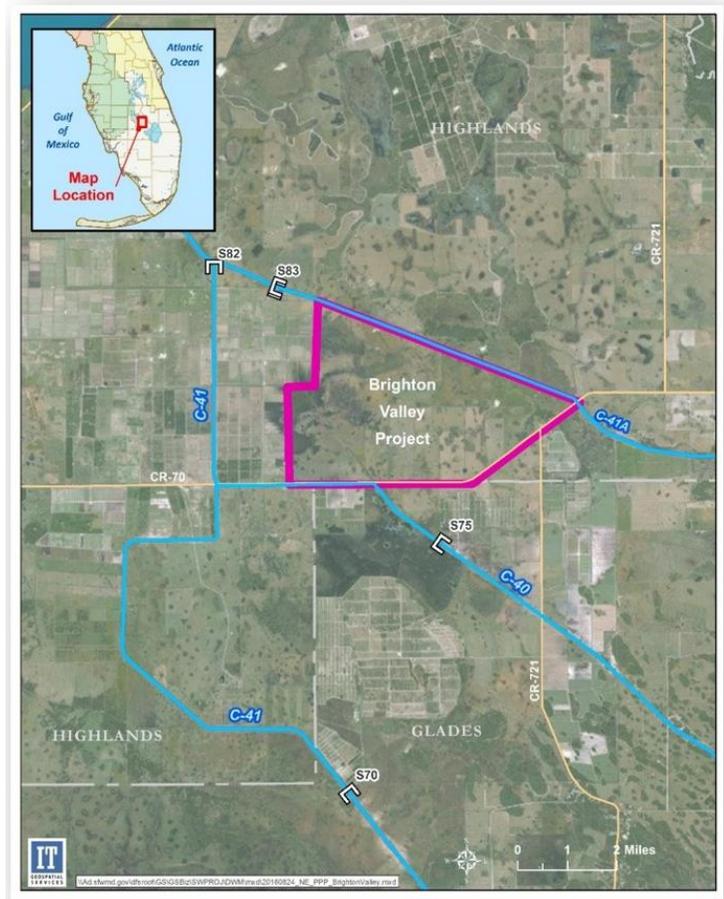
*Brighton Valley pre-construction.
Photo: Linda McCarthy, Lykes Bros. Inc.*

The Brighton Valley Project will create a slow and controlled flow across the project, discharging an average of 40,000 acre-feet of treated water per year, through approximately 8,200 acres of private land on a portion of the Lykes Ranch in Highlands County. That water will be pumped from the C-41A Canal during excess water conditions and conveyed across the project land to reduce nutrients in the water.

The project includes flow-through cells that will help remove nutrients such as phosphorus from the water before it is discharged to the C-40 Canal. The project is expected to remove an average of 3.2 metric tons of phosphorus and 27.3 metric tons of nitrogen from the water annually. Construction of the project will take about 12 months to complete.

The funding for the project comes from a 2016 appropriation by the Florida Legislature specifically for public-private partnerships to benefit the Northern Everglades. "The state is doing its part to finish major restoration projects that will protect the estuaries long-term," Tucker said. "Private landowners are giving us the flexibility needed to store and treat water in the short-term, while helping to reduce damaging discharges to the estuaries."

SFWMD has utilized its Dispersed Water Management program to store and treat water on public lands and has partnered with private landowners to do the same. Brighton Valley will be the third public-private water project on the Lykes Ranch which is located upstream of Lake Okeechobee. Lykes-SFWMD joint projects are relatively low cost and highly efficient, employing a strategic cooperative approach to water quality and storage goals in the Northern Everglades.



Brighton Valley Project location