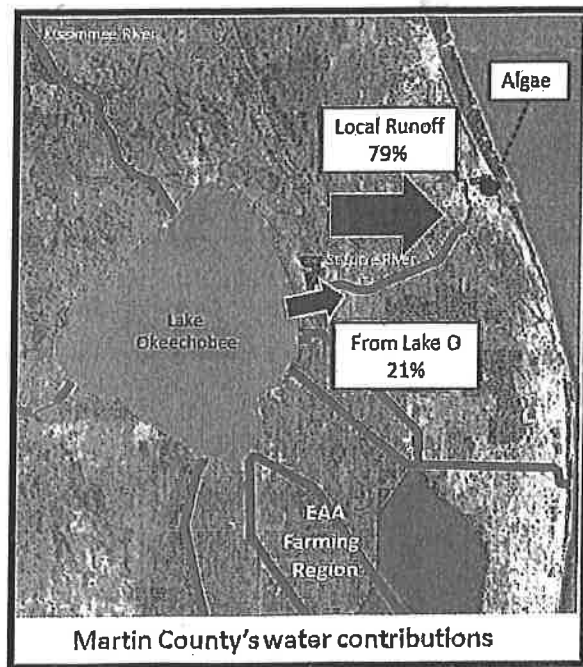


*Rodney Brown*  
*Save Our Farms*



Farms south of Lake Okeechobee are not responsible for the algae that has bloomed on the Treasure Coast. We would like to take a moment to share the facts with you.

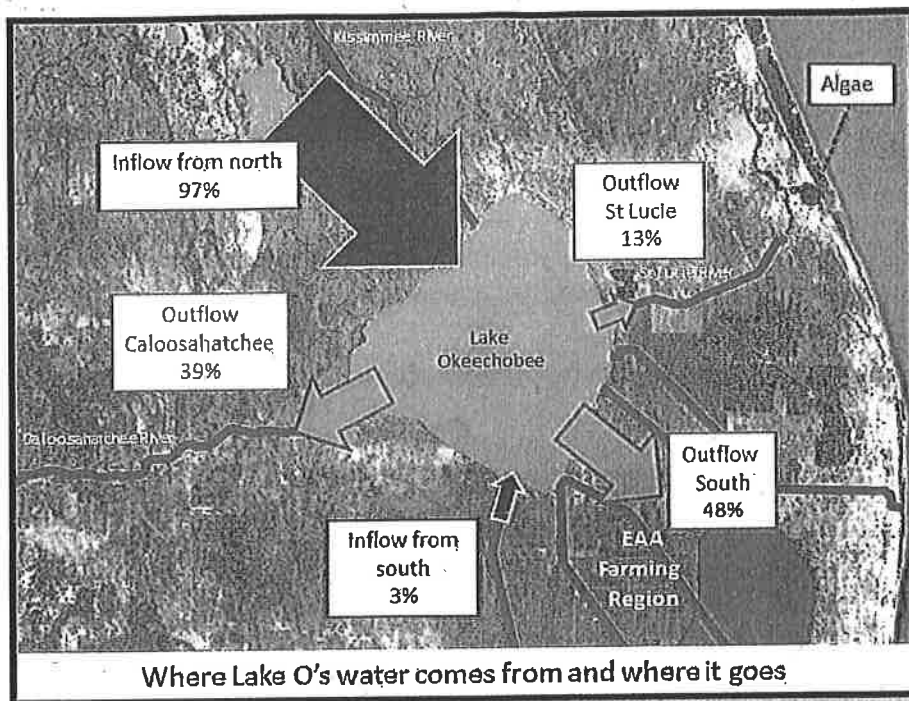
The algae is blooming in the St. Lucie River and Estuary, northeast of the Everglades Agricultural Area (EAA). Water flows south in Florida.



Growth of algae is a terrible, but common, occurrence during Florida's hot and sunny summers, and nutrients in the water will worsen the blooms. The water flowing to the St. Lucie River and Estuary does not come from the EAA. It is from Martin County's local runoff.

From 2011-2015, Martin County's local basin runoff contributed 79 percent of the water entering the St. Lucie River. The other inflow comes from Lake Okeechobee when the Army Corps of Engineers releases water for flood-control purposes.

Almost all of the water, 97 percent, in Lake Okeechobee comes from the Kissimmee basin north of the lake. Over the past 5 years, only 3 percent of the water in Lake Okeechobee came from the basin south of the lake, which came during flood-control efforts for the Glades communities.



Compounding Martin County's problem, more than 200,000 septic tanks line its waterways. A 2015 study by Florida Atlantic University's Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute said these septic tanks are the primary source of the pollution in the St. Lucie River. Rain washes waste from the septic tank drain fields' into the river. Testing by Florida's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the Health Department has shown that the nutrients in the waterways come from humans not farms. These nutrients exacerbate the growth of algae, causing widespread blooms.

Media reports have also blamed Lake Okeechobee discharges for the blooms, but the South Florida Water Management District has noted there were no Lake Okeechobee discharges in 2014 when algae blooms similarly occurred on the Treasure Coast.

The EAA is regulated and monitored by the South Florida Water Management District and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection as part of the Everglades Forever Act. Our water quality meets the strictest standards in the nation. We have a proven track record for the past 20 years.