

*Marjory Stoneman Douglas briefly discusses sheet flow:*

Interviewer: Can you tell us something more about the sheet flow?

MSD: Well Lake Okeechobee is really quite shallow and it's the rainfall which, incidentally, we get our rainfall from three sources - on the prevailing westerlies, we get them from the Atlantic and thunderstorms in the summer, and then approximately a third from the evaporation of the wet Everglades themselves. That evaporation goes up as water vapor and in the clouds is shed as the clouds blow around they shed as rain. Now that Everglades water is not all the water we get. People don't seem to understand that. We just have the idea of the Everglades rainfall getting through their heads. But it is not all the rain we get. We get it, as I said, from the prevailing westerlies and from the Atlantic because it would rain anyway whether we had any land there or not. But we get a large part of our rain from the evaporation of the Everglades and that is the most important reason of all why we should not drain the Everglades completely.

Well, Lake Okeechobee is filled from the rainfall. It evaporates and the rainfall fills it up again. The extra water that flows over the southern rim comes from the Kissimmee valley. The Kissimmee valley is a meandering stream that collects the rainwater and brings it down into Lake Okeechobee. That excess water flows out again down the sheet flows towards what is now the Everglades National Park and the 10,000 islands.

In 1906 when they began to put in the drainage ditches they began to run the water off without realizing that that was all the drinking water there for people, and the more they laid bare the soil and used it up the less water there was for the growing cities.

That has been the problem because people have not understood the basic problem of the Kissimmee-Okeechobee-Everglades basin that people have got to get it through their heads. I don't think it is very complicated. I think they can understand it if they put their minds on it. Or they can see it by looking at any map.