

May 2013

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## Chairman's Message

**Daniel O'Keefe, Governing Board Chairman**



Florida's 2013 legislative session ended earlier this month, with notable support in the legislative budget for Everglades restoration and water resource initiatives throughout the state. At our May meeting, the Governing Board was updated on highlights in the state's 2014 budget, which, notably, includes \$70 million for Everglades restoration. Pending approval by Governor Scott, these funds will be directed toward the District's Restoration Strategies water quality improvement projects (\$32 million); the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (\$35 million); and projects in the Northern Everglades (\$3 million).

This is an exceptional show of support from our elected leaders in Tallahassee, and I know that the Board and District staff are both committed to implementing these projects to benefit Florida's citizens and the environment.

Also at the May meeting, the Governing Board approved a memorandum of understanding related to the proposed C-51 reservoir in Palm Beach County. The concept for this reservoir is to expand water storage for utilities serving lower east coast communities. The memorandum establishes the framework of responsibilities for design, permitting, construction and operation of the reservoir's first phase. The District's role will be regulatory and operational, with the business owner of the reservoir site investing in design and construction.

May's arrival also signals our annual recognition of the many benefits of water reuse, with the Governing Board declaring May 19-25 as 2013 Water Reuse Week. Reclaimed water, after being treated and disinfected, is carried in purple-colored pipes and used for landscape irrigation, industrial processes, groundwater recharge and other beneficial uses.

More than 100 reuse systems within the District's 16-county region are already producing 269 million gallons of reclaimed water per day. Even more impressive is the fact that Florida leads the nation in water reuse.

Reclaimed water helps to reduce demands on freshwater supplies and also reduces coastal discharges. This water management tool is an important one, as it allows Florida communities continue to grow and thrive without damaging the water resources we all depend on.

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## SFWMD Water Levels Positioned Well for NWS Forecast of 'Average' Wet Season

***Water resources are managed to balance the needs of residents and the environment***

With the latest official forecast calling for an average 2013 wet season, water levels across 16 counties from Orlando to the Florida Keys are positioned to provide adequate water supply for residents and the environment, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) and the National Weather Service reported May 16 at a joint briefing.

"An average wet season would benefit water managers in the challenging effort to balance the needs of 7.7 million people and South Florida's unique ecosystems," said Susan Sylvester, SFWMD Chief of the Water Control Operations Bureau. "Still, we remain vigilant because Florida has unexpected weather extremes that can dramatically impact water conditions across large areas."

Released May 16, the National Weather Service's 2013 wet season forecast calls for:



- Near-normal precipitation through October
- Near- to above-normal temperatures
- Lack of either El Niño or La Niña conditions through the summer, which can lead to higher variability in rainfall across the area

### **Current Conditions**

Through mid-May, South Florida had seen 12.93 inches of rain during this dry season, which is 81 percent of average, or a deficit of 3.04 inches. Key placed and well-timed rainfall events during this time period, however, stabilized regional water supplies during the driest portions of the dry season. This included the second wettest April on record since 1997.

Because of this rainfall, water levels in managed areas are on target with or near their regulation schedules. These federally authorized operating plans are designed to set water levels, based on a host of factors, to help balance competing demands on a resource such as a lake or reservoir and to achieve the lowest desirable water levels going into the hurricane/wet season. The hurricane season officially begins on June 1 and ends on November 30.

Lake Okeechobee stood at 13.44 feet NGVD on May 17, which is 0.15 feet above its historic average for this time of year. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which is responsible for managing the lake's levels, has been making regulatory releases to help meet the lake's established regulation schedule.

### **South Florida Wet Season Facts**

- On average, South Florida's wet season begins around May 20 and ends around October 13, lasting for about 21 weeks.
- Typically, about two-thirds of annual rains fall during the wet season, or approximately 35 inches out of 52 inches.
- Since 1932, virtually all wet seasons have produced 2 to 4 feet of rainfall.
- June is usually South Florida's wettest month.
- The wet season has three general phases:
  - Memorial Day weekend through July 4 weekend, which is typically the wettest six weeks of the year
  - Early July through mid-August, which is hotter and often drier
  - Late August through October, which is characterized by highly variable rainfall mainly due to tropical activity and cold fronts

More information is available at:

- [Landscape Irrigation Days and Times by County](#)
- [SFWMD Weather/Rainfall Data](#)
- [Climate Prediction Center Precipitation Forecast](#)

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## **SFWMD Launches Review of West Coast Region for Land Assessment**

### ***Public is invited to submit comments on District lands in the region through May 28***

As part of its ongoing comprehensive land assessment, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) is evaluating agency lands in the West Coast Assessment Region, which includes parts of Lee, Collier, Hendry and Glades counties.

The West Coast region is the fourth of five geographic areas being reviewed in the assessment of approximately 750,000 acres of fee-owned lands — properties in which the District has full ownership rights. As part of a broader effort to maximize its resources to meet mission-critical responsibilities, the District is conducting the assessment to ensure



that each parcel owned by the agency is being put to its most effective use.

To gather all relevant information for a thorough analysis, the District is seeking public feedback on the use of its lands within the West Coast region. Stakeholders and the general public can examine detailed land portfolios and submit comments on specific properties through May 28 at [www.sfwmd.gov/landassessment](http://www.sfwmd.gov/landassessment). In addition, a regional public

workshop will be held at the SFWMD Lower West Coast Service Center in Fort Myers on May 22.

### Status of Other Regions

At the same time that the public comment period is open for the West Coast region, District staff has been moving forward with the assessment of three other regions:

- **Upper Lakes:** Presented final staff recommendations to the SFWMD Governing Board on May 9 for this region, which includes parts of Orange, Osceola and Polk counties. The District accepted public comments on a preliminary version of the recommendations from April 19 through May 6. In addition, District staff hosted a public workshop in St. Cloud to receive further public input and presented the preliminary recommendations during the May meeting of the Water Resources Advisory Commission (WRAC).
- **Kissimmee/Okeechobee:** Developing preliminary staff recommendations for lands in this region, which includes the Upper and Lower Kissimmee basins and the Lake Okeechobee watershed. Recommendations — scheduled to be posted on the land assessment website by May 24 — will be based on nearly 200 public comments, feedback received during a pair of March public workshops, input from SFWMD subject matter experts and a variety of land-related data. All submitted comments are available for review on the land assessment website.
- **East Coast:** Analyzing public and internal feedback submitted for this region, which includes parts of Palm Beach, Martin and St. Lucie counties. The District accepted nearly 200 public comments for this region from March 22 through April 22 and held a public workshop in West Palm Beach to gather additional input.

In the staff recommendations for each region in the land assessment, current uses of District lands will remain in place for parcels that are determined to contribute fully to the agency's core mission of balancing and improving flood control, water quality, natural systems and water supply. To provide the most benefit to taxpayers and South Florida's water resources, lands that do not directly support the District's core mission may be considered for alternative uses or possible surplus.

### Timeline and Next Steps

The District-wide land assessment for all fee-owned lands is scheduled for completion by mid-2013. A review of the agency's approximately 700,000 acres of non-fee-owned lands is planned to begin in late 2013. Reassessments of all District lands will be conducted as needed, potentially every three to five years.

To submit public comments on lands in the West Coast Assessment Region, visit [www.sfwmd.gov/landassessment](http://www.sfwmd.gov/landassessment). Other information featured on the website includes:

- [Regional Land Portfolios, Staff Recommendations and Other Materials](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Land Assessment Objectives and Evaluation Criteria](#)
- [Land Assessment Schedule \[PDF\]](#) – updated May 6, 2013

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## Purple Prevails During Water Reuse Week

### *SFWMD hosted biennial U.S. Drought Monitor Forum*

The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) Governing Board is recognizing May 19-25, 2013, as Water Reuse Week to promote the benefits of using reclaimed water as part of a continuing effort to protect regional water supplies.



Governor Rick Scott has **proclaimed** Water Reuse Week throughout the state, and dozens of South Florida communities and organizations have made similar declarations. The shared goal is to continue raising awareness of the benefits of reclaimed water.

Reclaimed water eases demand on traditional sources of water and reduces discharges into the ocean. Florida leads the nation in water reuse. Within the District's 16-county region, more than 100 reuse systems produce and reuse 269 million gallons of reclaimed water per day.

Water reuse involves treating domestic wastewater and using the resulting high-quality reclaimed water for a new, beneficial purpose. Extensive treatment and disinfection ensures that public health and environmental quality are protected.

Reclaimed water can be used for many purposes, including:

- Irrigation of golf courses, parks, residential properties, highway medians and other green space
- Aesthetic landscape features, such as decorative lakes, ponds and fountains
- Agricultural irrigation
- Environmental restoration and wetland creation
- Groundwater recharge
- Industrial uses, including equipment wash down, processing water and cooling water

As a long-term benefit, communities that reuse water can continue to grow in size while minimizing or even reducing their impact on the water resources around them. Use of reclaimed water is exempt from landscape irrigation restrictions and also allows communities to postpone or minimize capital investments in developing new, more costly water sources and supplies.

Florida and the SFWMD recognize Water Reuse Week each year during the third full week of May, just as the dry season is coming to an end.

For more information, see:

- [SFWMD's Water Reuse webpage](#)
- [Department of Environmental Protection's Water Reuse webpage](#)
- [SFWMD's Comprehensive Water Conservation Program and water-saving tips](#)

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## Florida Water Star Shines in South Florida

### ***Water conservation in homes helps reduce demand on freshwater sources***



The end of Water Conservation Month in April served as a timely reminder that the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) continues to administer the Florida Water Star certification program for homes and businesses that implement water conservation practices.

Water Star-certified homes use 20 to 40 percent less water than average homes by meeting fundamental criteria for efficiently using water in irrigation, landscape design and indoor water fixtures and appliances.

"Florida Water Star recognizes efficient water use practices indoors and outside the home," said SFWMD Director of Water Resources Terrie Bates. "This program is just one example of the District's long-term commitment to water conservation."

Through this program, the District has achieved several conservation-related milestones in the past year. Highlights include:

- The first commercial Water Star building in South Florida: a new fire station in Martin County.
- The first certified home in a planned 3,000-home development built by Lennar Home Builders in Orange County. When built, Champions Gate West would be the largest group of homes to be certified as Water Star in Florida.

- A Water Star-certified laboratory: the Vaccine and Gene Therapy Institute of Florida in Port St. Lucie.

Florida Water Star can be integrated into other environmental certification programs such as Energy Star, the Florida Green Building Coalition's green standards and the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED program.

Developed by the St. Johns River Water Management District, Florida Water Star was adopted by the SFWMD in 2010 and is now a statewide program. In South Florida, 22 single-family homes are currently certified, along with 156 multi-family units.

The District trains independent conservation professionals to inspect and certify homes and businesses that meet the criteria for Gold, Silver, Bronze or Commercial status. Both new structures and retrofits of existing structures are eligible to participate in the program.

### **Water Conservation**

Year-round water conservation is essential to reduce demand on freshwater sources. When water shortage orders are not in place, the District follows Year-Round Water Conservation Measures that target outdoor irrigation, which accounts for up to half of the water used per person per day in South Florida. The Year-Round Landscape Irrigation Rule is just one of many initiatives implemented under the District's Comprehensive Water Conservation Program.

For more information:

- To determine watering days and times in your area, contact your local government or visit [www.sfwmd.gov/2days](http://www.sfwmd.gov/2days).
- Tips on how to save water are available at [www.savewaterfl.com](http://www.savewaterfl.com).
- For a calendar of workshops for industry professionals on designing, building and certifying Florida Water Star projects, [click here](#).

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