



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

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SFWMD to Conduct Levee Maintenance to Enhance Flood Protection

Crews will remove nuisance vegetation along several east coast levees

West Palm Beach, FL – The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) Governing Board recently approved a contract to manage vegetation on several South Florida levees as part of a maintenance program to ensure these vital flood protection structures continue operating as designed well into the future.

“South Florida’s complex system of levees has protected residents and businesses for many decades,” said SFWMD Governing Board Chairman Eric Buermann.

“Comprehensive inspection and continual maintenance are the keys to this longevity, and they are crucial to providing several decades more of successful flood protection.”

At present, District inspections confirm the levees are operating normally. The Governing Board investment of \$1.5 million over three years provides a cost-effective means to continue vegetation management – a key aspect of regular maintenance – and to address federal levee safety standards.

Trees and other woody vegetation can prevent adequate inspection, create obstacles to maintenance and, over time, impair structural stability. Vegetation management allows District crews to inspect and make repairs whenever needed. Plans call for removing vegetation from more than 100 miles of levees.

The levee work is part of an overall maintenance program in which the District supports more than 1,600 miles of canals and 1,000 miles of levees and berms, along with more than 500 structures, 700 culverts and 60 pump stations. The District invested nearly \$41 million in structural maintenance and upgrades to the system in 2010.

Over the last year, the District completed 37 projects spread over nearly every one of the 16 counties overseen by the agency. The projects are designed to renew and upgrade pump stations, repair and stabilize canal banks, renovate water control structures, make concrete repairs and complete a variety of other repairs and upgrades.

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About the South Florida Water Management District

The South Florida Water Management District is a regional, governmental agency that oversees the water resources in the southern half of the state – 16 counties from Orlando to the Keys. It is the oldest and largest of the state's five water management districts. The agency mission is to manage and protect water resources of the region by balancing and improving water quality, flood control, natural systems and water supply. A key initiative is cleanup and restoration of the Everglades.