



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

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**SFWMD 2015 Budget Includes Major Support from the State to
Protect and Restore the Everglades and Coastal Estuaries**
Nearly 80 percent of budget to provide environmental and flood control benefits

West Palm Beach, FL – At a public hearing tonight, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) Governing Board adopted a \$720.4 million budget for Fiscal Year 2015 (Oct. 1, 2014 – Sept. 30, 2015). The annual budget funds the agency’s core flood control and water supply missions as well as its continued progress to restore and protect the South Florida ecosystem.

“This budget allows us to continue operating and refurbishing the regional water control system and puts state funding to work to benefit our state’s natural areas, including the Kissimmee River, Lake Okeechobee, coastal estuaries and the Everglades,” said SFWMD Governing Board Chairman Daniel O’Keefe. “With our agency-wide commitment to efficient operations, District millage rates have been reduced for the fourth year in a row.”

Nearly 80 percent of the District’s FY2015 budget is dedicated to flood protection efforts and natural systems restoration:

- \$202.2 million to operate and maintain South Florida’s regional flood control system, and other associated works, including \$52.4 million toward refurbishment of the primary network of canals, levees, structures and pump stations.
- \$362.5 million to build projects and implement programs to help restore America’s Everglades – from the Kissimmee headwaters to Florida Bay.

State Support for Everglades and Estuaries

The approved budget contains a significant infusion of state revenues, \$137.8 million, appropriated by the Florida Legislature this year to continue and to accelerate the pace of restoration progress.

In total, the FY2015 approved spending plan includes \$71.4 million to implement the next phases of Governor Scott's Restoration Strategies plan for improving the quality of water flowing into America's Everglades. In 2015, these funds will be used to:

- Continue construction on two Flow Equalization Basins.
- Increase existing stormwater treatment area capacity.
- Construct additional conveyance features.
- Continue implementation of the Science Plan.
- Plan, design and initiate construction on the Mecca shallow impoundment and the Lainhart and Masten dams in the Loxahatchee watershed.
- Implement additional source control activities.

The FY2015 budget also invests more than \$120 million in projects to benefit the St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee estuaries, including:

- Continued construction of the C-44 Reservoir and accelerated construction of the C-44 Stormwater Treatment Area, discharge system and pump station in the St. Lucie watershed.
- Water quality treatment and storage projects in the Caloosahatchee watershed, including initial work on the C-43 Reservoir to provide additional interim storage on the project site.
- Continued construction on the Kissimmee River restoration project and Headwaters revitalization, which will create more upstream storage.
- Expansion of the District's Dispersed Water Management program to hold more water on public and private lands.

Another \$36.6 million is dedicated to other key environmental projects designed to reestablish more natural water flows, including:

- Cost-sharing construction of the north detention area for the C-111 South Dade project with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.
- Picayune Strand Restoration manatee mitigation construction, acquisition and operational testing/monitoring of the Merritt and Faka Union pump stations.

The District's annual budget is funded by a combination of ad valorem (property) taxes and other revenues such as state appropriations, federal and local sources, balances, fees, investment earnings and agricultural privilege taxes. For FY2015, \$265.9 million (about 37 percent of total revenues) is provided by property taxes and \$143.1 million is from accumulated ad valorem reserves.

The approved millage rates for FY2015 represent \$38.42 per \$100,000 of taxable value in 15 of the District's 16 counties (the Okeechobee Basin). In Collier County and mainland Monroe County (the Big Cypress Basin), the tax rates represent \$30.97 per \$100,000 of taxable value.

For More Information:

- [Just the Facts: FY2015 Budget](#)

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.