



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

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Winter's Dry Weather Poses Fire Threat on District Lands *Land managers urging outdoor enthusiasts to follow fire safety tips*

West Palm Beach, FL – As South Florida enters one of the driest periods of the year, land managers are urging visitors on South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) managed lands to remain mindful of the threat of wildfire during the region's drier months.

Florida's winter months are an ideal time to enjoy the many recreational opportunities available on thousands of acres of District land, but they also mark the peak of the dry season. In past years, the threat of wildfire was so extreme that land managers banned campfires on District property. So far this dry season, conditions have not warranted such measures, but the District is encouraging fire safety.

"These are public lands managed to provide a variety of recreational opportunities," said SFWMD Director of Land Stewardship Steven Coughlin. "It is important, however, that people are aware of current fire conditions and take the necessary precautions to prevent wildfires from occurring on these properties."

Here are some fire safety tips for hikers, campers, hunters and other outdoor enthusiasts planning to visit public lands:

- Avoid parking vehicles in areas of dead grass, brush or other vegetation, such as pine needles and dead leaves. Vehicle catalytic converters get very hot and can quickly ignite dry vegetation.
- Avoid driving vehicles on roads with tall, dead grass.
- Dispose of cigarettes and other smoking materials properly.
- Where fires are permitted, use existing fire rings.
- Keep fires small and manageable.
- Do not cut down trees or bushes for firewood.

- When extinguishing a fire, pour water on it to extinguish all embers. If water is not available, use dirt. Mix the water or dirt around until all the material in the pit is cool. Remember, if it is too hot to touch, it is too hot to leave.

The District manages 1.35 million acres of public land throughout its 16-county area. The District is the sole steward on more than 380,000 acres, while nearly a million acres are managed through partnerships with local, state and federal agencies.

These lands were acquired primarily for environmental restoration and to protect and preserve water resources, but many public uses are compatible with that mission. Activities available at District recreation sites include hiking, camping, fishing, bird watching and horseback riding.

To learn more about the variety of recreational opportunities on District lands, please visit www.sfwmd.gov/recreation.

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About the South Florida Water Management District – [Celebrating 60 Years \(1949-2009\)](#)

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.