



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Lake Okeechobee Service Area Irrigation Permits Expiring** *Workshop scheduled to inform applicants about renewal process*

**Orlando, FL** — Holders of Water Use Irrigation Permits for withdrawals from Lake Okeechobee and its tributaries have until the end of the month to submit a renewal application to preserve their right to use the water source.

The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) Water Use Irrigation Permit renewal process has been underway since October 30, 2008, in the Lake Okeechobee Service Area, which includes portions of Palm Beach, Martin, Glades, Okeechobee, Lee and Hendry counties. All Major General (3 million to 15 million gallons per month) and Individual (more than 15 million gallons per month) permits for withdrawals from the Lake Okeechobee Basin expire February 28, 2009.

A workshop for permit holders is scheduled from 10 a.m. to noon on Wednesday, February 25, at the District's Clewiston Field Station, located at 2425 Hookers Point Road. The workshop will address the renewal process, processing fees, deadlines and any other questions permits holders might have.

In late 2003, the District began renewing all Individual and Major General water use irrigation permits within its boundaries in regional phases. The irrigation uses allowed by the permits include:

- Landscape
- Golf course
- Nursery
- Livestock
- Improved pasture
- Agriculture

The District required every permit within each basin to come up for renewal at the same time so the cumulative impact of the permits could be considered. The last permits to be reviewed are the approximately 420 that allow surface water withdrawals from the Lake Okeechobee Basin, which includes the lake, the Caloosahatchee River and the St. Lucie River/Canal.

The renewal process consists of the review and reissuance of the original permit as long as no changes in source, irrigated acreage, land use or water allocation have occurred since the original permit was issued. A permit modification is required if any of those conditions have changed. Renewal fees are based on the permit holder's allocation.

Application reviewers encourage permit holders to renew through the District's ePermitting service at [www.sfwmd.gov/ePermitting](http://www.sfwmd.gov/ePermitting). The renewal application and more information on the renewal process are also available on the District's [Water Use Irrigation Permit Renewal](#) Web site. Anyone needing further information can call (800) 547-2694.

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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.*