



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

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SFWMD, Partners to Restore Manatee Pocket Watershed
Final phase of Manatee Pocket dredging to benefit the St. Lucie Estuary

Stuart, FL – One of Martin County’s most scenic inlets in the St. Lucie Estuary, known as Manatee Pocket, will soon benefit from extensive sediment removal to enhance marine habitat, protect wildlife and improve navigation. The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) approved funding for the \$13.2 million dredging project, which will include matching funds from Martin County, the Port Salerno Community Redevelopment Agency and the Florida Inland Navigation District.

“We are pleased to have so many supportive partners on this critically important effort,” said SFWMD Governing Board Chairman Eric Buermann. “The improvement of Manatee Pocket directly benefits the health of the St. Lucie Estuary, one of our priority watersheds for environmental restoration.”

More than 250,000 cubic yards of muck and sediment will be removed in a 47-acre aquatic area of Manatee Pocket. The project was recommended by the St. Lucie River Issues Team, whose members work together to prioritize issues, procure federal and state funding and implement “turn-dirt” projects that have quantifiable benefits to the St. Lucie Estuary and the Indian River Lagoon.

Over the last ten years, Martin County, with funding from the District, State and other partners – plus assistance from the St. Lucie River Issues Team – has completed \$10.2 million in stormwater retrofit projects to improve the quality of water flowing into Manatee Pocket from surrounding neighborhoods and tributaries. The dredging project is part a comprehensive plan to restore the entire Manatee Pocket watershed in Port Salerno, a community near Stuart.

The St. Lucie River Issues Team was initiated by State Senator Ken Pruitt nine years ago and comprises representatives of 17 different agencies and organizations. To date, the

Issues Team has invested more than \$63.7 million from the Florida Legislature, more than \$65.7 million from local partners and an additional \$2 million from the federal government in environmental improvement projects. The program has successfully funded more than 114 individual projects, totaling more than \$131.4 million, to benefit the St. Lucie River ecosystem in Martin and St. Lucie counties.

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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.