



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

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SFWMD Observes April as Water Conservation Month

Conservation is key to stretching water supplies, protecting natural resources in parched conditions and year round

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West Palm Beach, FL — The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) Governing Board today joined the State of Florida in recognizing April as Water Conservation Month, passing a resolution that has so far received support from more than 130 South Florida communities.

"Awareness of the significance of water conservation is clearly becoming a smart ethic among Floridians," said SFWMD Governing Board Chairman Eric Buermann. "We applaud their efforts and ask that everyone continue protecting and conserving one of our state's most valuable resources."

Floridians consume more than 7.9 billion gallons each day of fresh water, with more than 90 percent of it supplied by underground aquifers. South Florida's unique environment and economy depend on the continued availability of these shared water resources.

Year-round water conservation has many benefits in meeting the growing demands on South Florida's limited water supply. Outdoor landscape irrigation accounts for up to half of the 179 gallons used per person per day by South Florida residents — the highest water usage in the state. Limiting lawn watering to two days a week, as required by current restrictions across most of the District, could reduce household water use up to 10 percent. In some cases, water conservation may allow utilities to delay or defer investment in capital improvements that would have otherwise been necessary to meet the demands of future growth.

Conservation is especially critical now. The region is experiencing the third-driest dry season since recordkeeping began in 1932, with a rainfall deficit of 8.27 inches as of

March's end. Dry conditions are expected to continue. Residents are asked to continue protecting the water supply by following current landscape irrigation restrictions.

Throughout Water Conservation Month, the District is sponsoring a broad range of local and regional campaign events to raise awareness and promote wise water use amid enduring dry conditions. As part of the public outreach effort, a series of [public service announcements](#) promoting water conservation has debuted on local radio stations and in movie theaters.

Among the many events planned throughout the District in April are:

- The historic Platts/Backus House in Fort Pierce is receiving an “*Extreme Yard Makeover*” to transform its outdoor spaces into an attractive Florida-friendly landscape.
- The Water Symposium 2009, presented by the District's Big Cypress Basin Service Center, will demonstrate to interested condominium associations ways to reduce water use and maintenance costs.
- *The Landscape Challenge: 2009* in West Palm Beach will encourage best management practices in Florida's nursery and landscape industry.
- On the west coast, the District is sponsoring *What's Up Wednesdays?* in partnership with Lee County Parks and Recreation, Florida Yards and Neighborhoods and Lee County Master Gardeners. The series consists of five weekly workshops that will feature local experts who will offer advice on implementing water saving techniques at home.
- During the 3rd Wonder of Water High School Program, approximately 100 students from Olympia High School will visit the Orange County Utilities facilities to learn about ground water, water treatment, distribution, water quality, water conservation and careers.
- The District is leading by example during the month by conducting audits of its facilities that will focus on indoor water use. The results of the audits will be used to identify opportunities for implementing water conservation measures.

The District has taken a lead role in developing a [Comprehensive Water Conservation Program](#) that will encourage more responsible use of water resources. Numerous stakeholders worked with the District to study ideas for new regulatory, voluntary and incentive-based programs and in-depth education and marketing plans.

The District is also moving forward with the public process for proposed year-round landscape irrigation measures to help foster a conservation ethic among the approximately 7.5 million residents the SFWMD serves.

For additional information on water conservation, including [50 Ways to Be Water Smart](#) and the District's Comprehensive Water Conservation Program, visit www.savewaterfl.com.

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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.