



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT
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MEDIA ADVISORY

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SFWMD E-Briefing: Record Dry Season Tightens Grip on Region
Residents and businesses are urged to follow landscape irrigation restrictions to protect the public water supply



(SFWMD, 5-05-2009, Click on picture for larger version.)

The ground has cracked in this dry wetland just outside of Everglades National Park in Miami-Dade County.

West Palm Beach, FL — In an effort to keep the public informed about the dry conditions gripping much of the state, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) is issuing the following latest conditions report.

The period from November 2008 through April 2009 ranks as the driest six-month period in South Florida history based on records dating back to 1932. In April, an average of only 0.64 inches of rain was recorded across the 16-county District, increasing the 2008-2009 dry season deficit to 10.64 inches, which is only 30 percent of the historic average. Key areas such as the upper and lower Kissimmee basins, which feed Lake Okeechobee and South Florida, received no rainfall during the seven days ending on May 4.

Water levels continue to drop in the primary regional storage systems – the Water Conservation Areas and Lake Okeechobee – along with regional canals. Residents can expect to see lower canal levels in their residential areas as well.

The high regional evaporation rate (2.15 inches last week) continues to quickly draw down water levels in the conservation areas without any significant rain to counter the loss. Water levels in wells monitored by the District also declined. Dry conditions have left many areas with a high risk for wildfires and have impacted waterway navigation.

A majority of the District remains under two-day-a-week landscape watering restrictions. Emergency orders have been issued to create more stringent water use restrictions in specific areas of the District that warrant additional resource protection. For more information on the new rules, see www.sfwmd.gov/watershortage.

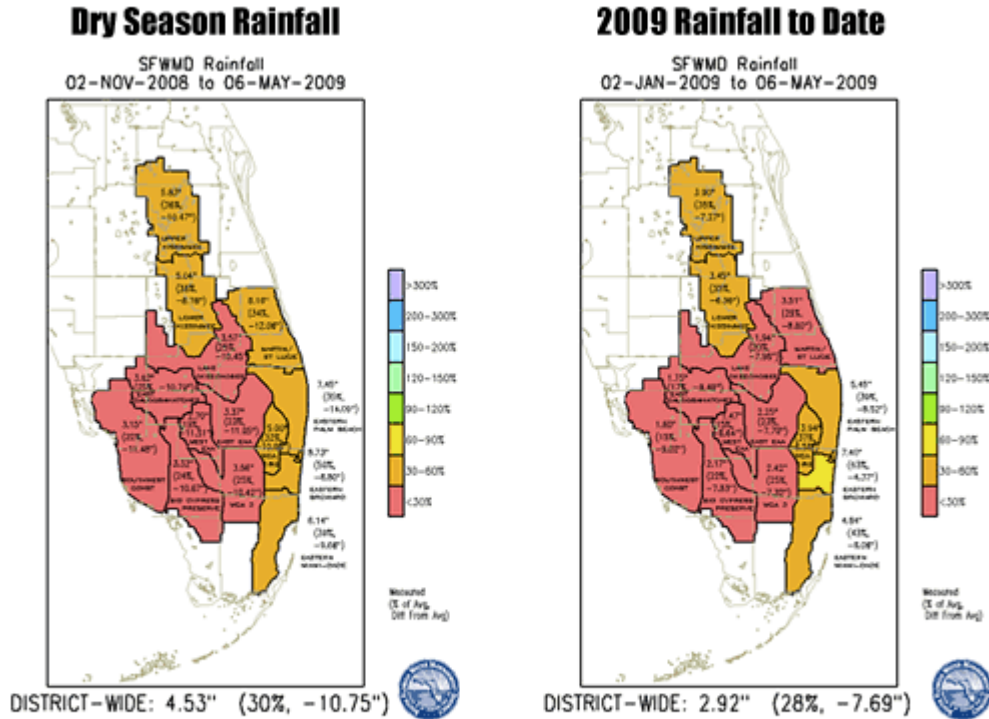
A burn ban is currently in place on District-managed public lands to protect lives, property and the environment amid the drought. The ban applies only to District-managed lands and means no fires in grills, fireplaces or fire rings provided by the District or other authorized management agencies until further notice. The use of portable camp stoves and grills, brought in by users for cooking purposes only, is allowed.

The SFWMD is closely monitoring water levels and is urging residents and businesses to conserve water and follow landscape irrigation restrictions to stretch available supplies. More information about irrigation limits by area is available on the District's [water restrictions](#) Web site. For water saving tips, visit www.savewaterfl.com.

District-Wide Averages as of May 6, 2009

RAINFALL to Date, Jan. 2 - May 6:	2.92 inches
DEFICIT to Date, Jan. 2 - May 6:	- 7.69 inches
DRY SEASON DEFICIT, Nov. 2, 2008 - May 6:	- 10.75 inches
LAKE OKEECHOBEE:	May 6, 2009: 10.93 feet NGVD

Rainfall Maps



Click on images above for higher resolution versions.

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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.