



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

May 21, 2009

CONTACT:

Gabe Margasak

South Florida Water Management District

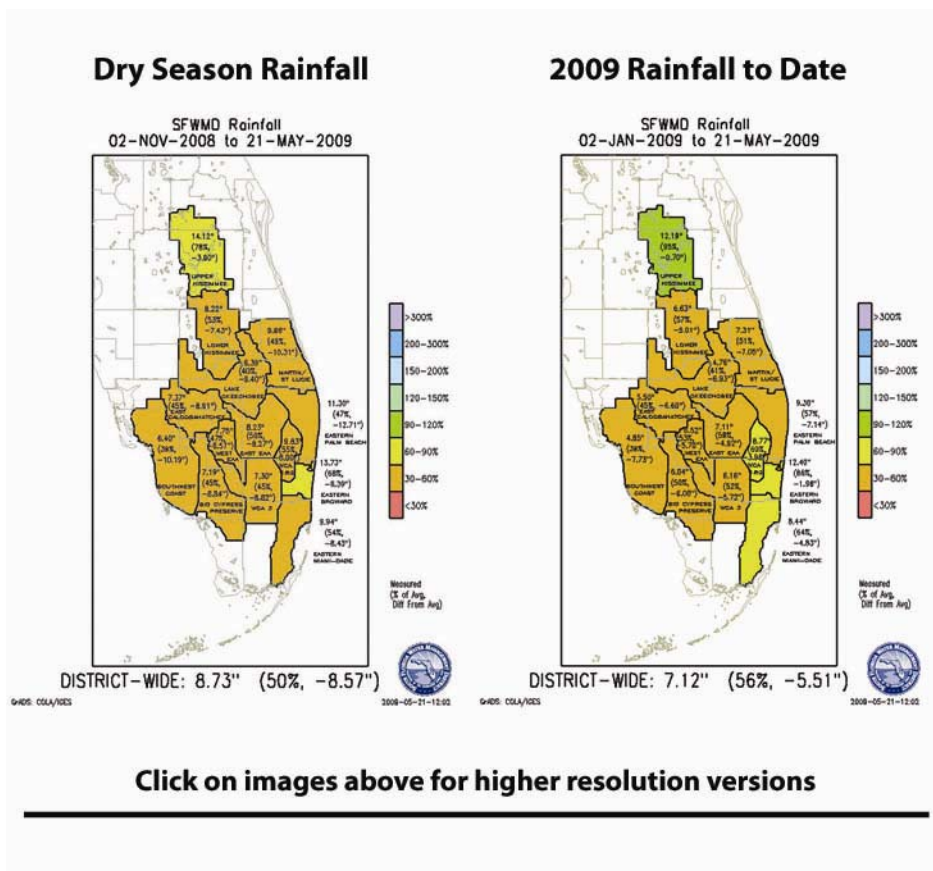
Office: (561) 682-2800 or Cellular: (561) 670-1245

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SFWMD Water Conditions E-Briefing: Rain Refreshes But Falls Short of Erasing Deficit

Welcomed rainfall does mean sprinklers should be turned off, and water conservation remains crucial



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.

Nearly all areas of the South Florida Water Management District received significant rainfall in the past week, with an average of 3.8 inches across the entire region. Localized areas received heavier rainfall since late Sunday, with up to 11 inches reported in the upper Kissimmee Basin and up to 7.5 inches reported along the East Coast. This welcomed precipitation has begun to recharge the parched system and means residents and businesses should temporarily turn off sprinklers.

One week of steady precipitation, however, will not erase a dry season deficit that today stands at more than 8.5 inches. Persistent wet season rainfall is necessary to lessen the deficit and recharge the primary regional storage systems, the Water Conservation Areas and Lake Okeechobee. The Water Conservation Areas remain low, and at 10.66 feet, the lake is about 2.5 feet below its historic average for this time of year.

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. The latest U.S. Drought Monitor report shows that much of the region is still experiencing severe drought conditions.

Water conservation remains critical, and residents and business across the 16-county region remain under landscape irrigation restrictions to protect the public supply. In recent weeks, several orders were issued to create more stringent water use restrictions in specific areas that warrant additional resource protection.

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 21, 2009

RAINFALL to Date, Jan. 2 - May 21:	7.12 inches
DEFICIT to Date, Jan. 2 - May 21:	- 5.51 inches
DRY SEASON DEFICIT, Nov. 2, 2008 - May 21:	- 8.57 inches
LAKE OKEECHOBEE:	May 21, 2009: 10.66 feet NGVD May 21, 2008: 9.76 feet NGVD
RAINFALL BASIN ESTIMATES:	MAP
U.S. DROUGHT MONITOR	LATEST REPORT

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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.