



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

## NEWS RELEASE

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**Freedom Park to Reduce Flooding, Improve Water Quality for Naples Bay**  
*SFWMD invested \$12.3 million in the project; ribbon-cutting ceremony to be held at 10 a.m. Tuesday*



*(Click on image for larger version.)*

**Naples, FL** – Big Cypress Basin, the local arm of the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD), will join the Collier County Board of Commissioners on Tuesday, October 6, to officially open Freedom Park. The 50-acre site, formerly known as Gordon River Water Quality Park, will help reduce localized flooding and improve the quality of water bound for Naples Bay, while also providing recreational opportunities for visitors.

The \$31 million project is a partnership between the District, Collier County, the City of Naples and the Florida Communities Trust. The District invested \$12.3 million in the project, including \$11.3 million in local tax dollars through the Big Cypress Basin.

“Cooperation between our partners and the District, through the Big Cypress Basin, has produced an attractive park that will benefit the people and environment of the Naples area in a variety of ways for years to come,” said Charles Dauray, Big Cypress Basin Board Chair and SFWMD Governing Board member.

Work on Freedom Park started in late 2007 and involved construction of a pump station and creation of 15 acres of wetlands. The completed project will help alleviate flooding in parts of the Gordon River Basin and will reduce the amount of harmful pollutants entering the Gordon River and Naples Bay through stormwater runoff.

In addition, the park will provide habitat protection, educational opportunities and passive recreation to complement Fleischmann Park, an existing active recreational facility located south of Fleischmann Boulevard on Goodlette-Frank Road. Freedom Park’s features include walking trails, boardwalks, observation gazebos and educational facilities.

The ribbon-cutting ceremony will begin at 10 a.m. at the Freedom Park Education Building, 1515 Golden Gate Parkway, Naples.

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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.*