



NEWS RELEASE

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South Florida Water Management District

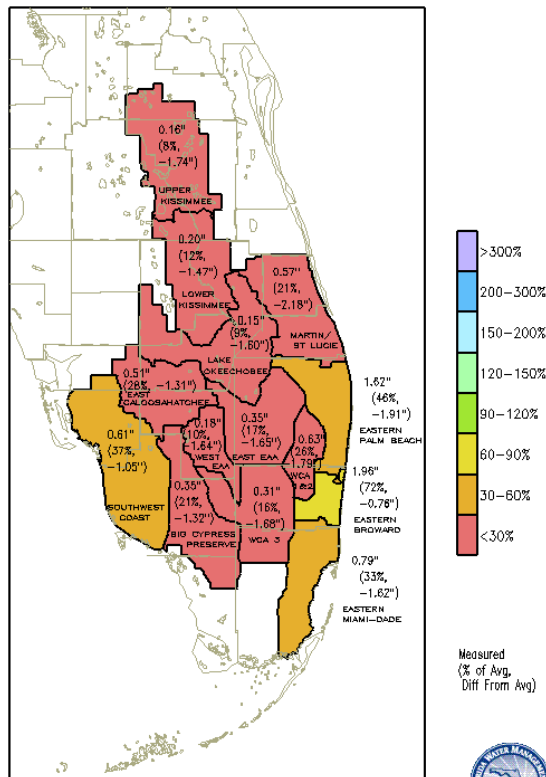
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SFWMD Monitors Fast-Falling Water Levels Across South Florida *Water managers concerned about dry conditions, resuming weekly e-briefings*

SFWMD Rainfall
02-NOV-2009 to 24-NOV-2009



DISTRICT-WIDE: 0.48" (24%, -1.56")

GRIDS: COLA/ICES

2009-11-24-15:02

(Click on picture for a larger version.)

West Palm Beach, FL — With the dry season under way and negligible rainfall from Orlando to the Florida Keys during the past week, water levels across South Florida are falling rapidly. Additionally, last month was the fourth-driest October in South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) records dating back to 1932.

District-wide rainfall for this month is 0.48 inches through November 24, which is only 24 percent of the average for this time period. Lake Okeechobee stood at 13.6 feet

NGVD on Tuesday, which is 0.74 feet lower than a year ago. High salinity levels in the Caloosahatchee River and low canal water levels in Martin and St. Lucie counties are already causing some concern.

“The beginning of the dry season has been disappointing with regard to rainfall across the region. The wet season ended early, and November has so far received only about a quarter of its average rainfall. As a result, conditions are drier than expected,” said Susan Sylvester, SFWMD Director of the Operations Control and Hydro Data Management Department. “While the climate outlook does indicate a higher chance for above normal rainfall, it is still too early to tell how much of an impact the rain will have on the already dry system.”

The District is taking numerous steps to respond to these conditions and maintain protection for South Florida’s water resources:

- The SFWMD Governing Board in November adopted a Year-Round Water Conservation Rule that will place permanent limits on landscape irrigation throughout the region.
- The SFWMD is closely monitoring water levels and is urging residents and businesses to conserve water and follow current landscape irrigation restrictions.
- To assist agricultural stakeholders on the Upper East Coast, the District has already activated an automated e-mail system that delivers daily information about canal levels. Growers in the area are familiar with the system and have partnered with the District to best respond to changing water conditions.
- The District will continue working in partnership with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to seek authorization in the 2010 Congressional Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) for the C-43 reservoir, a key component of the recovery plan for the Caloosahatchee Estuary. The reservoir will store water during wet times and deliver water to the estuary during dry times for environmental purposes.

Beginning next week, the District will resume weekly e-mail briefings for the media in an effort to keep the public informed about the latest regional water supply conditions.

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.

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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.