



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **SFWMD, Wellington Win Award for Everglades Restoration Project** *Partnership protects ecosystem water quality, safeguards residents from flooding*



*(Click on the picture for a larger version.)*

**West Palm Beach, FL** – The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) and the Village of Wellington recently received the 2009-2010 Outstanding Project of the Year Award from the American Society of Civil Engineers for the Acme Basin B Discharge Project to improve water quality in the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge and to increase flood protection for Palm Beach County residents.

As the first Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) project completed in Palm Beach County, the Acme Basin B Discharge Project is improving Everglades water quality by diverting the direct discharge of urban runoff away from the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge. This runoff is now directed to a 5,132-acre constructed treatment wetland, known as Stormwater Treatment Area 1 East, before it enters the Refuge. The project, completed last month, included construction of two pump stations and a 365-acre water storage area to impound flood water and provide a buffer between natural and developed areas.

“Completing this project was a significant accomplishment that is providing immediate and lasting benefits to the Everglades and residents,” said Kenneth Ammon, P.E., SFWMD Deputy Executive Director - Everglades Restoration and Capital Projects. “As the engineer responsible for South Florida restoration, I am grateful to see one of our projects receive this recognition, which also recognizes our partners in the Village of Wellington.”

Given by the Palm Beach branch of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), the award recognizes the contribution of the Acme Basin B Discharge Project to the well-being of people, communities and the environment as well as resourcefulness in engineering, planning and design.

“The ASCE is proud of the work the District is accomplishing on behalf of residents and the environment,” said Todd N. McLeod, P.E., Vice President of the Palm Beach branch of the American Society of Civil Engineers. “District engineers have demonstrated strong leadership to solve South Florida’s water management challenges.”

The District and the Village of Wellington invested approximately \$35 million in the project, which began in 2007 and was completed in March 2010. Along with its environmental and flood protection benefits, the project is also providing recreational opportunities to residents with a combination of boardwalks, educational displays and deep lagoons that will enhance the ecosystem and wildlife habitat.

“The Village of Wellington is extremely pleased with our partnership with the South Florida Water Management District, which resulted in this recognition,” said John W. Bonde, Wellington Deputy City Manager. “Together, our agencies continue to demonstrate their commitment to preserving our water resources, maintaining flood protection and developing passive recreational opportunities for all of our residents.”

ASCE award judges noted the project excelled in several criteria, including:

- Resourcefulness in planning
- Pioneering use of materials
- Innovations in construction
- Local participation (local firms built the project)

The Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) is a framework for restoring, protecting and preserving the water resources of central and southern Florida. CERP is a 50-50 partnership between the State of Florida and the federal government. The State of Florida and the South Florida Water Management District have invested approximately \$2.4 billion toward this effort, including approximately \$600 million in construction. Through December 31, 2009, 60 percent – or approximately 233,277 acres – of the estimated lands needed to implement CERP have been acquired.

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**About the South Florida Water Management District**

*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.*