



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

## NEWS RELEASE

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**Florida Sportsmen, SFWMD Thank Veterans With Kissimmee River Trip**  
*Wounded warriors offered rest and relaxation with spring turkey hunt on restored river*



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

**West Palm Beach, FL** – A group of wounded veterans from across the country set out today for a weekend of “R&R” on the scenic Kissimmee River during a spring turkey hunt sponsored by the Florida Sportsmen’s Conservation Association. With support from the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD), the trip is intended to honor their service and sacrifice.

“The brave men and women serving in our nation’s military risk their lives every day across the world so that we have the freedom to enjoy treasures such as the Kissimmee River here at home,” said SFWMD Executive Director Carol Ann Wehle. “It is our duty to take every opportunity to say, ‘Thank You.’”

Volunteer sportsmen will guide six wounded veterans, who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, on a turkey hunt during a weekend filled with camping and air boating along the restored river. The [Wounded Warrior Project](#), whose purpose is to raise

awareness and enlist the public's aid for the needs of severely injured service men and women, helped bring the veterans together for the trip.

The experience is the latest in a series of events hosted by the local community of outdoor enthusiasts, with District support, to honor military veterans.

In 2008, the District partnered with the United Waterfowlers – Florida Inc. to construct a waterfowl hunting/bird watching platform in the Everglades for disabled soldiers and residents alike. The project was undertaken because of an e-mail from a wounded veteran who asked for greater access to public land for disabled South Florida residents.

The SFWMD and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission sponsored the first hunt in December 2008, when several hunters lent their hunting permits to disabled veterans so they could enjoy the platform located in Stormwater Treatment Area (STA) 5 in Hendry County.

The South Florida Water Management District is steadily increasing recreational access to public lands while continuing to manage them to support environmental restoration, water supply, water quality and flood control missions. At present, the District owns 621,000 acres of land that are open to the public. Many of these properties are in their natural state or have enhancements such as picnic tables, informational kiosks, campsites and hiking trails. For more information on recreational opportunities throughout the District's 16-county region, visit [www.sfwmd.gov/recreation](http://www.sfwmd.gov/recreation).

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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.*