



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

April 29, 2010

CONTACT:

Randy Smith

South Florida Water Management District

Office: (561) 682-2800 or Cellular: (561) 389-3386

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SFWMD Introduces Florida Water StarSM to South Florida
Program recognizes new and existing homes for water-saving measures



West Palm Beach, FL – As part of its ongoing efforts to encourage efficient water use, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) has introduced the Florida Water StarSM building certification program to South Florida.

Created by the St. Johns River Water Management District and now being implemented in both South and Southwest Florida, Florida Water StarSM is a points-based recognition program that encourages water efficiency in household appliances, plumbing fixtures, irrigation systems and landscapes. The SFWMD is piloting the program in counties along its northern boundary, which border its Florida Water StarSM partners.

“Florida Water StarSM shows how we are working with our fellow water management districts to bring the best water conservation ideas and proven programs to all Floridians,” said SFWMD Governing Board Vice Chairman Jerry Montgomery. “Creative thinking and cooperative spirit generates innovative solutions for water conservation and helps us protect our state’s limited water resources for the long term.”

Conservation-minded developers, builders and homeowners who sign up for the program agree to meet water-efficiency criteria that address landscaping, irrigation and indoor features. After upgrades have been installed, a SFWMD-trained certifier verifies that the building meets all the necessary prerequisites and has achieved enough points in each of the three categories to qualify for Florida Water StarSM certification.

The number of points necessary for certification varies by tier. The Gold and Silver criteria detail water-efficient options for new single-family residential construction, with the Gold tier conserving more water. Developed in late 2009 by the South Florida and St. Johns River water management districts in conjunction with water conservation professionals, the Bronze tier recognizes owners of existing homes for taking water-saving steps, such as installing high-efficiency toilets and planting Florida-friendly vegetation.

“Development of the Bronze tier opens an already successful program to a new group of homeowners interested in conserving water while reducing their utility bills,” said SFWMD Executive Director Carol Ann Wehle. “The entire Florida Water StarSM program will play a vital role in fostering a lasting water conservation ethic in South Florida.”

Florida Water StarSM can be effectively integrated into building projects along with other programs, such as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s ENERGY STAR, the Florida Green Building Coalition’s green standards and the U.S. Green Building Council’s LEED program. While many of these programs provide general guidelines for water efficiency, Florida Water StarSM specifically addresses uses relevant to Florida, further enhancing effectiveness of the other programs.

As part of the program, SFWMD water conservation officers are training Florida Water StarSM certifiers for all three residential tiers. The first Florida Water StarSM Residential Certifier Training in South Florida was held in October 2009 in West Palm Beach, and 16 of the trainees from that workshop subsequently passed a three-hour exam on their way to becoming official certifiers.

Another free two-day training workshop is scheduled for June 10 and 11 at the SFWMD St. Cloud Field Office. Attendees should be familiar with other green building programs or have basic knowledge of irrigation systems, landscape design and/or indoor water use.

Introduction of Florida Water StarSM to South Florida is a component of the SFWMD Comprehensive Water Conservation Program, which encourages more responsible use of water resources throughout the region. Numerous stakeholders worked with the SFWMD to define specific regulatory, voluntary and incentive-based programs and in-depth education and marketing plans that will help foster a year-round conservation ethic. For details on the Comprehensive Water Conservation Program and water-saving tips, please visit www.savewaterfl.com.

More information on Florida Water StarSM is available at www.floridawaterstar.com. Anyone interested in registering for the upcoming certifier training workshop should contact Jesus Rodriguez, SFWMD lead water conservation officer, at jerodrig@sfwmd.gov or (561) 682-6060.

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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.