



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

June 1, 2010

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SFWMD Ready for Rainy Season

Preparation, public awareness are keys to protecting residents and the environment



([Graphic link](#) above available for your website)

West Palm Beach, FL — As a wetter-than-normal dry season officially comes to a close, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) is encouraging residents to prepare for the summer rainy season and hurricane season.

As part of its preparations, the District is launching a new [webpage](#) with information on the shared responsibilities of flood control in South Florida and what residents, businesses and local governments can do to prepare for a storm. The District also held a media briefing today detailing operation of the regional flood control system, preparations for the rainy season and continual maintenance to protect residents. In addition, the agency will hold its annual “Hurricane Freddy” exercise on Wednesday to once again test its emergency operations response to and recovery from a hurricane.

“South Florida’s ever present water management challenge is balancing flood control, water supply and the health of the natural system for 7.5 million residents,” said Tommy Strowd, SFWMD Deputy Executive Director of Operations and Maintenance. “While it is difficult to predict how the wet season will unfold, a focus on smart strategies, such as continual maintenance, will help us meet the challenge.”

Balancing the sometimes conflicting missions of flood control, water supply and environmental protection is a daily challenge for the SFWMD.

Maintenance: Keeping the Flow Going

Structural maintenance and upgrades, accomplished primarily during the dry season, are critical to ensuring that the regional flood control system of 2,600 miles of canals and levees operates at optimal capacity. During the past five years, the District has invested \$240 million in essential maintenance work, including:



- Hardening and overhauling pump stations
- Overhauling gated spillways
- Replacing project culverts
- Dredging canals
- Stabilizing canal banks
- Enhancing stormwater treatment areas

As the summer rainy season and hurricane season approach, many canals and lakes from Orlando to the Florida Keys are lowered, creating additional capacity to store stormwater and provide flood protection. District crews also inspect many of the approximately 1,300 water control structures and 64 pump stations.

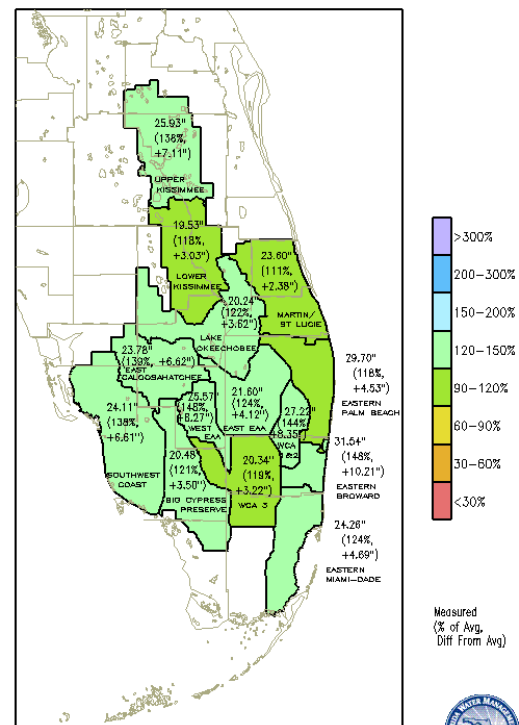
Weather: Hurricane Season Begins

South Florida's weather can transition rapidly from drought to flood, especially during hurricane season from June 1 through November 30. For example, Tropical Storm Fay brought an average of more than 7.5 inches of rain to the region over six days in August 2008, causing flooding in areas that just weeks before were parched from a two-year rainfall deficit.

Challenges for water managers have been highlighted by these recent weather extremes:

- November 2008 through April 2009 marked the driest six-month period in South Florida, according to District records dating back to 1932.
- In 2009, the sea-breeze cycle ushered in the wet season in May. With 9.04 inches of rain falling across the District, May 2009 became the wettest May on record, according to District records dating back to 1932.
- October 2009 was one of the driest Octobers on record, with only 1.16 inches of rain falling, compared to a historical average of 3.76 inches.
- After a dry start through most of November, the 2009-2010 dry season saw above-average rainfall.

SFWMD Rainfall
02-NOV-2009 to 28-MAY-2010



DISTRICT-WIDE: 23.24" (127%, +4.99")

An average of 23.24 inches of rainfall fell across the District during the 2009-2010 dry season through May 28, representing 127 percent or 4.99 inches more than the average for this time period. This included events such as a December storm that dropped up to 15 inches of rain in a 24-hour period on areas of the east coast, representing a one-in-100-year storm. At a time when evaporation typically begins to exceed rainfall, March and April instead combined this year to produce nearly half of the dry season total (11.29 inches), making the two-month period the wettest March/ April on record for the District.

Know the Flow

Flood control in South Florida is a shared responsibility between the District, county and city governments, local drainage districts and residents. Residents can do their part by:

- Knowing whether they live next to a primary canal maintained by the District or a secondary canal maintained by a municipality or drainage district.
- Making sure trees or other vegetation do not encroach on canal maintenance right-of-way.
- Reporting the location and condition of any clogged or damaged facilities to the proper authority.
- Keeping ditches, swales, drainage grates and retention lakes clear of debris, trash and other discarded material.

More tips on how residents can prepare for the rainy season are available on the District's new Rainy Season Readiness [website](#). For updates from the District in case of an emergency, follow the District's Twitter feed: [@SFWMD](#).

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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.