



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

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Billy's Creek Preserve Recognized with Stormwater Project Award *Project to improve water quality in Caloosahatchee River tributary*



(Click on the photo for a larger version.)

Fort Myers, FL — A new preserve built to treat stormwater before it enters Billy's Creek was recently recognized by the Florida Stormwater Association (FSA) with a 2010 Stormwater Project Award for Outstanding Achievement. The FSA Awards recognize stormwater projects that demonstrate creativity in cooperating with other jurisdictions and show an outstanding commitment to best stormwater management practices that benefit the environment and local communities.

The City of Fort Myers, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) and Lee County partnered to build Billy's Creek Preserve as part of a larger plan to improve water quality throughout Fort Myers. The District provided technical assistance to the city throughout the project and invested \$977,000 for design and construction.

"Billy's Creek Preserve will help protect and restore the Caloosahatchee Watershed, a goal shared by the District, the City of Fort Myers and Lee County," said SFWMD Governing Board member Charles Dauray. "Fort Myers residents will benefit for years

to come from improved water quality and flood protection provided by the preserve while enjoying many recreational and educational opportunities at the site.”

Structures at the preserve direct stormwater runoff from the Billy’s Creek watershed into two constructed filter marshes. Native plants in the marshes remove phosphorus and other nutrients from the water before it is moved into Billy’s Creek, which eventually flows into the Caloosahatchee River.

In addition to its water quality benefits, Billy’s Creek Preserve provides additional water storage that helps recharge groundwater supplies and reduce the risk of potential downstream flooding. In early June, the city also added several recreational and educational facilities as part of the project, including bilingual educational signs, benches, a launch area for kayaks and canoes and 1.5 miles of walkways for skateboarding, hiking and bicycling.

For more information on the Florida Stormwater Association and the 2010 Stormwater Awards, please visit www.florida-stormwater.org.

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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.