



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

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CONTACT:

Randy Smith

South Florida Water Management District

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

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Outdoor Enthusiasts Score Bull's-Eye with Expanded Game Hunting *SFWMD opens thousands of acres in Martin County, Port St. Lucie and Miami*



(Click on the picture for a larger version.)

West Palm Beach, FL — In a continual effort to expand recreation on public lands, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) is offering outdoor enthusiasts an additional 6,000 acres in Martin, St. Lucie and Miami-Dade counties for hunting and other recreational purposes.

“We have an obligation to maximize the return on the investment the public makes in acquiring land,” said SFWMD Governing Board member Kevin Powers. “Expanded recreational use where there is no conflict with restoration and conservation is a meaningful way of accomplishing this objective.”

Expanding the available acreage for hunting was recently made possible when the SFWMD Governing Board authorized the addition of 4,235 acres of restoration land to the John C. and Mariana Jones/Hungryland Wildlife and Environmental Area along the

Martin-Palm Beach County border. Formerly known as Nine Gems and the Culpepper Ranch, the additional acres purchased in partnership with Martin County have already been restored or are slated for water resource projects.

The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) will administer hunting activities on the property as part of a variety of longstanding recreational activities at the Hungryland Wildlife and Environmental Area, such as hiking, horseback riding, fishing and camping.

In addition, 1,900 acres in Miami-Dade known as Rocky Glades will be open for water fowl hunting. The site was acquired by the District for the L-31N Project to create an eight-mile-long detention basin to help prevent water from seeping out of Everglades National Park into the L-31N and C-111 canals.

“Expanding outdoor activities on District-managed public lands actually helps protect our natural resources,” said SFWMD Deputy Executive Director of Operations and Maintenance Tommy Strowd. “Hunting opportunities have helped control species such as feral hogs, which can cause extensive damage to the biological systems of South Florida.”

The SFWMD Governing Board also recently authorized the FWC to establish two Public Small Game Hunting Areas on the lands to the north and south for the 2010-11 hunting season.

- **St. Lucie County:** The Public Small Game Hunting Area will consist of three parcels of land totaling about 1,100 acres in the area of the C-23 and C-24 canals. These lands have been open to the public for small game hunting since 2006.
- **Miami-Dade County:** The FWC will lease 100 acres in the Frog Pond Detention Project Area north of State Road 9336 at no cost for five years to create a public dove field.

Water resource projects will eventually be built on both sites, but construction will not occur until sometime after the 2010-11 hunting season. In the mean time, the District is best utilizing the lands by making them available for hunting-related recreation.

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.

A map of the additional hunting acres in Martin/Palm Beach counties is available [here](#). More information on recreational opportunities on public lands is available on the District’s new interactive recreation guide at 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.