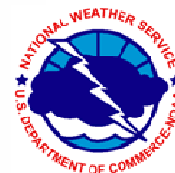




SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE



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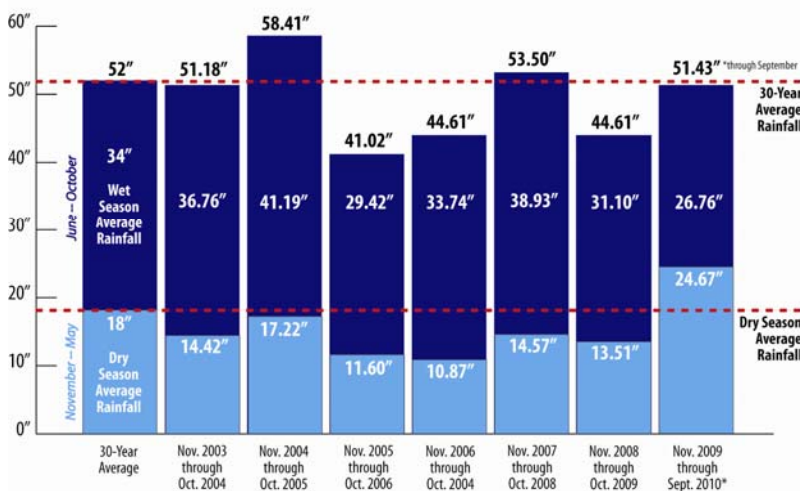
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SFWMD Water Managers Brace for Dry Conditions

Water conservation can help meet challenges of roller coaster weather extremes

Wet and Dry Season Rainfall Comparison



(Click on the graphic for a larger version.)

West Palm Beach, FL – With the strongest La Niña for this time of year since 1955 forecast to create exceptionally dry conditions, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) joined the National Weather Service today to brief the public and encourage water conservation as a measure to guide the region through the 2010-2011 dry season.

“Weather extremes are a fact of South Florida living. While there is a level of uncertainty with seasonal forecasts, as water managers we do take this information into account when making operational decisions,” said Susan Sylvester, the SFWMD

Director of the Operations Control and Hydro Data Management Department. “We continuously strive to balance flood control, environmental protection and water supply during both droughts and deluges with dedicated maintenance of the system and by encouraging a water conservation ethic among residents.”

Wise water use will be especially crucial to protect the public water supply in the coming months as La Niña, or colder than normal ocean surface temperatures in the equatorial Pacific, drives dry weather into South Florida. A strong La Niña suppresses cloudiness and rainfall in the region, especially during winter and spring.

While about 12 inches of rain falls on average across the district from November through March, La Niña-influenced dry seasons often produce only about two-thirds of the average during this five-month period. A late-season tropical storm is still a possibility that could significantly impact rainfall amounts.

Regional well levels have already begun to fall with the end of the rainy season sea breeze cycle. Notably, the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes is falling below regulation schedules. In particular, Lake Istokpoga is heading toward water shortage conditions for water users in its immediate area. These conditions also threaten to create a potentially severe wildfire season, according to the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

Predictions of abnormally dry conditions follow a below average South Florida wet season. An average of 26.91 inches of rain fell between June 1 and October 15, representing 86 percent of the normal amount and a deficit of 4.24 inches. This was also the hottest summer on record in Southeast Florida and the second hottest in Naples, according to the National Weather Service.

“The expected presence of La Niña into next spring means that South Florida will likely have a drier-than-normal dry season,” said Robert Molleda, warning coordination meteorologist for the National Weather Service. “Previous La Niña events during the last 60 years have contributed to an average dry season rainfall amount of about 60 to 65 percent of normal across South Florida.”

In fact, the National Weather Service’s Climate Prediction Center is forecasting record La Niña conditions for each month from October to April, along with several related dry season predictions, including:

- 1 to 2 winter storms over Florida for the dry season, which is 4 to 5 below normal.
- La Niña pattern produces lower risk for tornadoes across the Florida peninsula compared with El Niño years.
- Latest long-range model projects a warmer-than-normal winter, though freezes are still a possibility.
- Average winter temperature predicted to be 64-66F interior/west to 67-69F east.

Weather Roller Coaster

Forecasts of a drier-than-normal dry season once again showcase South Florida's weather extremes and water management challenges.

- **Normal:** Florida receives an average of 52 inches of rainfall a year, with 70 percent falling during the five-month wet season from approximately June through October.
- **Drier than Normal:** The 2010 wet season so far has produced an approximately 4-inch rainfall deficit, despite localized rainfall that totaled 3 inches or more in some areas.
- **Wetter than Normal:** The 2009-2010 dry season recorded 131 percent of average dry season rainfall, representing 5.88 inches above normal from the beginning of November through the end of May.
- **Record Wet Conditions:** 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.
- **Drier than Normal:** The 2008-2009 South Florida dry season was the third driest on record as of March 1, 2009.
- **Near-Record Dry Conditions:** 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.
- **Record Dry Conditions:** November 2008 through April 2009 marked the driest six-month period in South Florida, according to District records dating back to 1932.

Water Conservation Remains Key

The South Florida Water Management District's Comprehensive Water Conservation Program was approved by the Governing Board in September 2008 to encourage more consistent use of water resources throughout South Florida. Numerous stakeholders worked with the District 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. The program includes Year-Round Landscape Irrigation Conservation Measures that took effect in March 2010.

The SFWMD continues to closely monitor water levels and is urging residents and businesses to conserve water and follow landscape irrigation restrictions in effect. More information about irrigation restrictions by area is available on the District's water restrictions website. For water-saving tips, visit www.savewaterfl.com.

For more information:

- [SFWMD Weather/Rainfall Data](#)
- [National Weather Service Dry Season Forecast](#)
- [Climate Prediction Center FAQ on La Niña](#)
- [Climate Prediction Center Precipitation Forecast](#)

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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.