



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

## NEWS RELEASE

October 19, 2010

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### **SFWMD, Big Cypress Basin Celebrate Completion of Canal Improvements**



*(Click on the picture for a larger version.)*

**Naples, FL** — The South Florida Water Management District's (SFWMD) Big Cypress Basin Board, local elected officials and community leaders today celebrated the completion of the Golden Gate Main Canal Weir No. 3 project. The new water control structure allows more flexibility for water supply and flood control in the Golden Gate Estates area.

“Our focus is to restore historic flow-ways and improve local bays and estuaries. We are taking proactive steps and working in coordination with local partners to accomplish the needed improvements to our watershed,” said SFWMD Governing Board member and Big Cypress Basin Board Chairman Charles Dauray. “This project is one of many that will allow us to store additional water, recharge groundwater during the dry season and reduce freshwater discharges to improve water quality in Naples Bay.”

Located south of 31st Avenue Southwest, approximately 1 mile east of Collier Boulevard, this project will make it possible to divert a portion of the Golden Gate Main

Canal flows into Henderson Creek through a diversion canal to be built by 2013. This diverted flow will increase water supply to Rookery Bay as well as the City of Marco Island's well fields.

The existing Golden Gate Canal weirs were originally constructed by Gulf America Land Corporation in the early 1960s as part of the overall stormwater system for Golden Gate Estates. With its automated control, the newly designed weir replaces a structure that was inadequate to meet the current water management objectives of dry season storage for water supply and control of freshwater discharges for water quality protection of Naples Bay.

Since 1985, the Big Cypress Basin has adopted an aggressive capital improvement program to modify the water control structures in the Golden Gate Canal and its tributaries to achieve better water management objectives. During this period, 16 water control structure have been upgraded in the Golden Gate system alone.

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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.*