



NEWS RELEASE

December 2, 2010

CONTACT:

Randy Smith

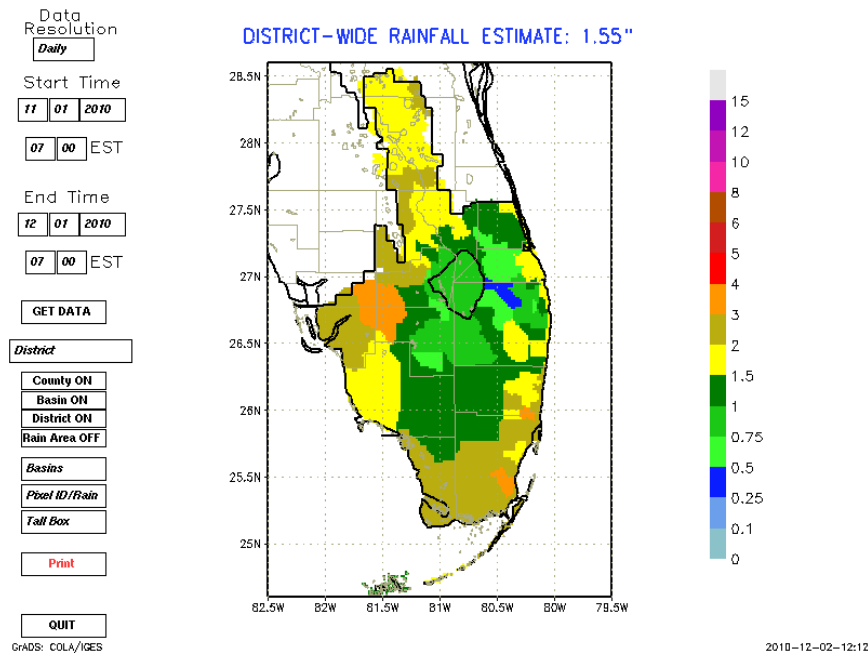
South Florida Water Management District

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

www.sfwmd.gov/news

follow us on

Second Extremely Dry Month Opens the Annual Dry Season *Long-term forecasts calling for continued dry conditions*



(Click on the map for a larger version.)

West Palm Beach, FL – On the heels of a drier-than-normal wet season and the driest October on record, meteorologists from the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) reported another month of below-average rainfall for South Florida in November.

“The below-average rainfall during the wet season, and the reality of less rainfall from the current below-average dry season is causing groundwater and surface water levels to show areas of significant decline,” said Tommy Strowd, SFWMD Deputy Executive Director of Operations and Maintenance. “The existing situation and the long-term forecast for continued extreme dry conditions make water conservation efforts imperative.”

For the month of November, rainfall for the District's 16-county region measured 1.55 inches, or 58 percent of the historical average rainfall recorded for the month.

The least amount of rain occurred in the Everglades Agricultural Area, where less than an inch fell on average. In some areas, the rainfall amounts for November were lacking by more than 2 inches.

Areas of the Upper East Coast saw rainfall amounts about 30 percent of average, with Martin and St. Lucie counties posting monthly rainfall deficits of two and a half inches.

Rainfall totals in Miami-Dade County were close to average, with two and a half inches or 80 percent of average.

Rainfall amounts for the District's Southwest Coast were closest to normal at about 96 percent of average. In the Kissimmee Valley north of Lake Okeechobee, 1.8 inches of rain fell, giving the region 78 percent of average rainfall for the month.

Lake Okeechobee rainfall totaled 1.4 inches, or 61 percent of average rainfall. The lake water level is currently 12.97 feet above sea level, nearly two feet lower than its average for this time of the year. Without recharge from considerable rainfall, the lake is expected to continue on its accelerated decline, emphasizing the ongoing challenge of balancing environmental and water supply needs.

In October, the National Weather Service declared an earlier than usual start to the dry season along with the forecast for the strongest La Niña for this time of year since 1955. La Niña is a weather phenomenon that generally creates exceptionally dry conditions.

While about 12 inches of rain falls on average across the District's 16-county region from November through March, La Niña-influenced dry seasons often produce only about two-thirds of the average during this five-month period.

The extreme dry conditions follow the driest wet season since 1984 in South Florida. An average of 27.31 inches of rain fell between June 1 and October 31, representing 82 percent of the normal amount and a deficit of 6 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 Certainty of Unpredictability

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 produced an approximately 6 inch deficit.

- **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.
- **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](#)

#

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.