



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

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Significant Rainfall Still Required for Recovery from Drought

Water levels begin rising but remain well below average



(Click on the pictures to view a photo gallery of dry conditions.)

West Palm Beach, FL — Following one of its latest starts in two decades, the wet season has finally arrived to begin recharging regional groundwater levels, lakes, rivers and canals across the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD). However, significant time and rainfall will be necessary for this short-term relief to bring long-term improvement from months of record drought conditions.

The 16-county region averaged 5.92 inches of rainfall in June, which still represents a deficit of about 2 inches District-wide for the month. The June deficit for the coastal areas of Palm Beach, Broward and Miami -Dade counties ranged from 4 to 5 inches.

“While it is encouraging to report that the Upper Kissimmee and Caloosahatchee basins received nearly 100 percent of their historic June rainfall, we need to see this daily rainfall pattern continue across large portions of South Florida before key areas such as Lake Okeechobee and the Water Conservation Areas begin to reach normal water levels,” said Susan Sylvester, SFWMD Chief of the Water Control Operations Bureau.

“While relief is in sight, certain portions of the District are still facing rainfall deficits of

more than a foot and, without adequate rainfall during the wet season, we could enter the next dry season still in a deficit.”

Much of June’s rainfall fell during the past week, with an average of 3.5 inches District-wide. Some localized areas received a maximum of about 9 inches. Lake Okeechobee rose more than two inches to 9.77 feet NGVD on Friday. Eastern Palm Beach County, one of the areas hardest hit by the drought, averaged 2 to 4 inches of rain in the past week. The Southwest Coast averaged 3 to nearly 5 inches, while Martin and St. Lucie counties averaged 2 to 4 inches.

However, signs of the driest October-to-mid-June period on record in South Florida remain. Groundwater levels are still significantly below average for this time of year. There is currently little to no flow down the Kissimmee River to Lake Okeechobee. The lake remains more than 3 feet below its historic average for this time of year. Other key storage areas, such as the Water Conservation Areas, are also still below their optimal water levels.

The U.S. Drought Monitor lists much of the region in extreme to exceptional drought conditions, the driest on the scale.

A burn ban remains in place on SFWMD public lands because of the remaining threat of wildfires. The ban means fires in grills, fireplaces or fire rings are not permitted.

The SFWMD is closely monitoring water levels and is urging residents and businesses to conserve their water use and continue to closely follow landscape irrigation restrictions.

Water Shortage Orders:

- [Two-Day Landscape Irrigation and Golf Course Order](#)
- [Broward and Palm Beach Order](#)
- [Bypass Structure Order](#)
- [South Dade Order](#)

More information is available at:

- [SFWMD Weather/Rainfall Data](#)
- [National Weather Service Dry Season Forecast](#)
- [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.