



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

# NEWS RELEASE

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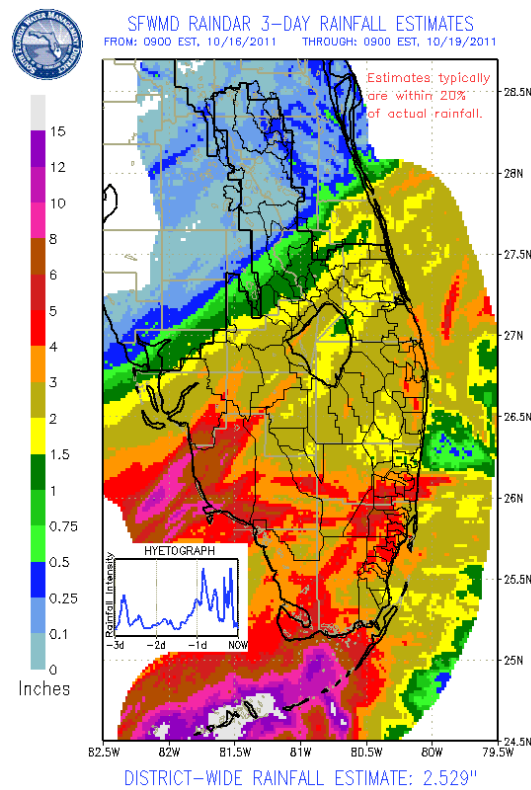
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## SFWMD Continues to Move Water from Three-Day Storm *Flood control system is operating at its maximum safe capacity*



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

**West Palm Beach, FL** — Engineers at the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) continued moving water today at the maximum safe rate from a three-day event that filled the Florida Keys with more than 21 inches of rain but largely missed a drenched Kissimmee region still recovering from a record storm.

The Sunday morning through Wednesday morning storm focused on the Southwest Florida, Monroe, Miami-Dade and Broward county areas, with Palm Beach, Martin and St. Lucie counties also receiving several inches of rain.

Early estimates show the Florida Keys experienced the largest rainfall totals, with local maximums of more than 21 inches through the three-day storm. Statistically, this is a rare event.

The 3,000-square-mile Kissimmee region, which experienced the wettest single day in the upper and lower Kissimmee basins combined in nearly 100 years on October 8, received about 0.50 inches from this event.

“Water levels were below average through much of the system before this storm so there was some room to handle the deluge. The system has performed as designed. But there is always a possibility of localized flooding when an area experiences high rainfall totals in a relatively short period of time,” said Susan Sylvester, SFWMD Chief of the Water Control Operations Bureau. “We are continuing to move water away from populated and agricultural areas as quickly as possible.”

Lake Okeechobee, which received 3.23 inches of direct rainfall during the event, continues to rise at a rate of about 1.2 inches a day. It is too early to tell how far the lake will rise. Today’s level is 12.29 feet NGVD, which is 1.93 feet higher than a month ago but is still below the historical average for this time of year of 15.05 feet NGVD.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers manages Lake Okeechobee water levels and has coordinated with the District throughout this event. At this time, the Corps has indicated there are no planned releases to the St. Lucie or Caloosahatchee rivers, as the water level will likely remain in the Water Shortage Management Band of the 2008 Lake Okeechobee Regulation Schedule. Water seen moving through the C-43 (Caloosahatchee) and C-44 (St. Lucie) canals will be from basin runoff, not water from the lake.

Most structure gates from Orlando to the Florida Keys remain open today, and several pumps are operating 24 hours a day. The District has also held daily coordination meetings with local drainage districts and municipal governments to provide water level updates and gather key information. Water managers expect to return the regional

<b>STORM TOTALS</b>	
Event Dates = October 16 - 19	
District-Wide Average = 2.52 inches	
Area	Rainfall Max
Lower Keys	21.97 inches
Miami-Dade	7.00 inches
Broward	5.88 inches
Palm Beach	4.47 inches
Martin/St. Lucie	4.14 inches
West Collier	8.88 inches
Caloosahatchee	8.14 inches
Kissimmee	0.50 inches
Okeechobee	3.23 inches

flood control system to its normal October levels, as conditions allow, during the next few days. Given a forecast of drier-than-normal conditions for the coming months, the significant boost in water levels from this rainfall event may still not be enough to keep key areas of the region out of water shortage conditions this dry season.

Facility	Status
S-61 (Lake Toho)	Closed
S-65 (Lake Kissimmee)	Closed
S-65A (Kissimmee River)	Closed
S-65C (Kissimmee River)	Closed
S-65D (Kissimmee River)	Closed
S-65E (Kissimmee River)	Closed
<a href="#">Click here for a map of the area</a>	

As a public safety measure, the locks on the Kissimmee River remain closed to navigation because of high water velocities. Boaters are urged to stay off the river because of hazardous conditions until further notice.

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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.*