



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

## NEWS RELEASE

November 15, 2011

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### **Lakes Park Restoration Project Moves Forward**

*The investment will improve water quality and restore natural systems*



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

**Lee County, FL** – The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) Governing Board approved a partnership with Lee County to complete the Lakes Park restoration project that is expected to have far-reaching benefits to water quality and natural systems in the region.

The Lakes Park project entails construction of 40 acres of filter marsh connecting the east lake to the west lake, resulting in a flow way that reduces nutrients, improves oxygen content and enhances conditions for native wildlife. As a result of this restoration work, cleaner water will be discharged from the lake to improve water quality in Hendry Creek and Estero Bay, Florida's first Aquatic Preserve.

“By improving water quality within the park, downstream water bodies will also benefit,” said Daniel DeLisi, SFWMD Governing Board member. “This project exemplifies the District’s mission to restore watersheds and estuaries through local partnerships.”

This project was initially identified as an element in the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan to enhance water quality in Hendry Creek and Estero Bay.

Lakes Park is a former rock quarry currently managed by Lee County as a 279-acre recreational area, with 158 acres of lakes. Stormwater from surrounding neighborhoods and commercial areas flow into the lakes.

The District and Lee County have worked cooperatively to address water quality concerns within the watershed. Prior projects in the park include:

- Reconstruction of water control structures
- Installation of aeration fountains
- Exotic plant removal
- Design and permitting of the filter marsh

The total cost for the District’s contribution in Fiscal Year 2012 is \$1.5 million, which is being matched by Lee County. The District has invested \$435,000 to date in the project.

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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.*