



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

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SFWMD Adopts 2012 Budget That Reflects Core Mission Focus
70 percent of \$576.1 million budget invested in Everglades restoration and flood control

West Palm Beach, FL – At a public hearing tonight, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) Governing Board adopted a \$576.1 million budget for [Fiscal Year 2012](#) (Oct. 1, 2011 – Sept. 30, 2012). The annual budget funds the agency's core flood control and water supply missions as well as its continued progress to restore the South Florida ecosystem, which includes America's Everglades.

"The District successfully built a fiscally sound budget focused on core responsibilities to protect the quality of life for 7.7 million South Floridians and benefit a unique environment," said SFWMD Governing Board Chairman Joe Collins. "This austere budget lowers taxes for South Florida property owners while allowing the District to move forward with important projects that will restore and improve the South Florida ecosystem, including Lake Okeechobee and the Everglades."

The approved \$576.1 million budget contains a significant investment in the environment, including \$26 million appropriated by the Florida Legislature to help keep Everglades restoration progress on track. A full 70 percent of the FY2012 budget is dedicated to benefit restoration, protect South Florida's resources and enhance flood control operations.

Key highlights of the budget include:

- \$50 million for refurbishment of the regional flood control network of 2,600 miles of canals and levees.
- \$10.3 million to complete construction of stormwater treatment areas to further improve the quality of water flowing into the Everglades. Since 2006, the District has invested more than \$270 million to expand the state's 45,000-acre network of treatment wetlands south of Lake Okeechobee by an additional 13,500 acres.
- \$38 million to initiate pump construction that will deliver water to help restore the Loxahatchee River and enhance water supplies.
- \$14.3 million to provide water storage in the northern Everglades through public-private partnerships.

- \$3.7 million to complete construction of the \$35.8 million Lakeside Ranch Stormwater Treatment Area that will clean water flowing into Lake Okeechobee.
- \$930,000 to substantially complete construction of the C-111 Spreader Canal and the first phase of the Biscayne Bay Coastal Wetlands project. The District has invested close to \$36.5 million to construct these restoration projects that will benefit Biscayne Bay, Florida Bay and the Everglades.
- \$2 million to begin water quality treatment and storage projects in the Caloosahatchee watershed.

The District's annual budget is funded by a combination of ad valorem (property) taxes, and other sources such as federal, state and local revenue; licenses; permit fees; grants; agricultural taxes; investment income and bond proceeds. About 47 percent of the total FY2012 budget comes from property taxes.

The approved tax rates represent 43.6 cents per thousand dollars of value in 15 of the District's 16 counties (the Okeechobee Basin). For example, a home with a taxable value of \$100,000 (assessed value of \$150,000, less the \$50,000 homestead exemption) would see a total District tax bill of \$43.63. For Collier County and mainland Monroe County (the Big Cypress Basin), the tax rates represent 34.2 cents per thousand dollars. A similar home in this region would see a tax bill of \$34.18.

For the 19th consecutive year, the District has been recognized by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) with its Distinguished Budget Presentation Award – the highest form of professional recognition in governmental budgeting.

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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.