



# NEWS RELEASE

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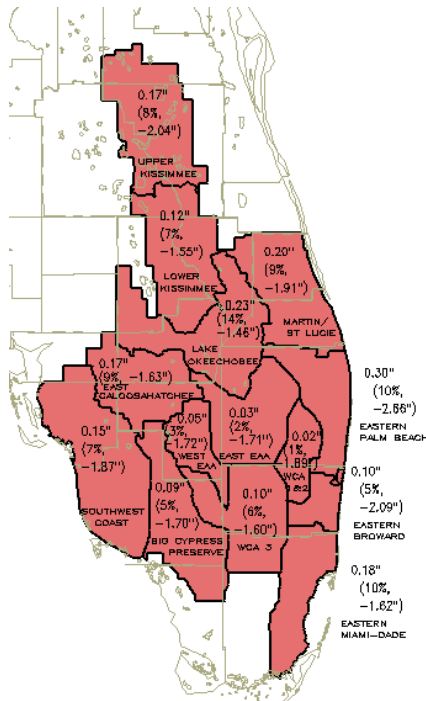
South Florida Water Management District

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## SFWMD Reports Water Levels Adequate Despite Record-Dry January *Conservation remains essential with dry months ahead*



- **January 2012 Rainfall (District-Wide) = 0.16 Inches**
- **January Average (A typical January) = 1.93 Inches**
- **Percent received of January's Average Rainfall = 8 percent**

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

**West Palm Beach, FL** – South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) meteorologists reported today this was the driest January in the agency’s 16-county region since recordkeeping began in 1932. Water levels remain adequate at this time for regional water supply because of the significant boost from record October rainfall.

“While January did set a record, it is still early in the dry season,” said Susan Sylvester, SFWMD Chief of the Water Control Operations Bureau. “We are closely monitoring water levels because the entire region is likely to experience several more months of dry weather.”

For January, a total of 0.16 inches of rain fell across the District, representing only 8 percent of the average for this time of year, or a deficit of 1.77 inches. The entire region received below-average rainfall for the month. The second driest January was recorded in 1949, with 0.21 inches of rainfall across the District.

Unlike the water supply impacts from record dry conditions in 2010, water levels so far this dry season have been receding slowly. Lake Okeechobee stood at 13.26 feet NGVD today, which is below its historical average for this time of year. The 730-square-mile lake, which serves as a backup water supply for South Florida, received a major boost from October rains and remains above its water shortage management zone.

Below-average rainfall is forecast for the rest of the dry season. As a result, a water shortage warning remains in place across the entire 16-county District and residents are reminded to conserve water and follow the Year-Round Landscape Irrigation Rule.

### **Year-Round Landscape Irrigation Rule**

Adopted by the SFWMD Governing Board in November 2009, the Year-Round Landscape Irrigation Rule established a permanent two-day-a-week landscape watering schedule throughout the region, with a three-day-a-week provision for some counties.

***Reminder: Customers of the West Palm Beach and Lake Worth utilities remain under local orders limiting landscape irrigation to one day per week.***

Utilizing the rule's flexibility, some city and county governments have adopted alternative landscape irrigation ordinances or emergency actions based on local water demands or system limitations. For many areas, landscape watering schedules remain the same under year-round conservation measures as they were under water shortage restrictions.

Details on landscape irrigation limits are available by contacting your local government or by visiting [www.sfwmd.gov/2days](http://www.sfwmd.gov/2days).

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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.*