



NEWS RELEASE

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South Florida Water Management District

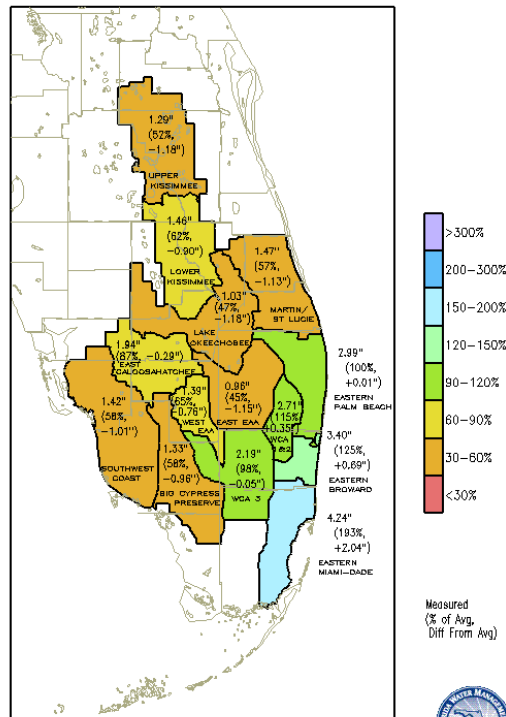
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February Rainfall Provides a Mix of Dry and Supply *Water conservation will help sustain the public water supply*

SFWMD Rainfall
02-FEB-2012 to 01-MAR-2012



DISTRICT-WIDE: 1.75" (74%, -0.60")

/ICES

2012-03-01-14-02

(Click on the image for a larger version.)

West Palm Beach, FL — Following a record dry January, much of the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) from Orlando southwest to Naples continued to experience below-average rainfall in February. Water supplies in the lower east coast, however, received a boost during the month from significant rainfall in Palm Beach, Broward and Miami-Dade counties.

“While many areas of the District remain below average, water levels are higher than a year ago, when the majority of the region was in drought conditions. Along with recent

rainfall, this has helped slow down the normal dry season recession of the regional aquifers,” said Susan Sylvester, SFWMD Chief of the Water Control Operations Bureau. “We are still concerned about the overall deficit of rainfall and continue to cautiously manage the water in the system because the driest months of the dry season are on the way.”

For February, a total of 1.75 inches of rain fell across the District, representing 74 percent of the average for this time of year, or a deficit of 0.60 inches. Areas along the southwest coast received only 58 percent of the average rainfall for the month. Eastern Miami-Dade County received 2.04 inches above its normal, or 193 percent of its average.

In an interesting quirk of the calendar according to District meteorologists, a gauge at Palm Beach International Airport recorded 0.87 inches of rain on February 29, setting a record as the wettest Leap Day at that location since at least 1896. The previous record Leap Day at the airport was 0.68 inches of rain in 1976.

Lake Okeechobee stood at 12.98 feet NGVD today, which is 1.54 feet below its historical average for this time of year but nearly a foot higher than a year ago. 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.

Looking forward, March contains a short period from about the 15th to the 25th that has historically proved to be the wettest time of the South Florida dry season, according to a District analysis of 30 years of rainfall records. This does not always happen, and below-average rainfall is forecast for the remainder of this year’s dry season. Longer days, more sunlight and higher evapotranspiration also mean that water levels can fall rapidly in April and May.

As a result, a water shortage warning remains in place across the entire 16-county District. 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.

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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.