



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

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SFWMD Recognizes June as 'Flood Awareness Month'

Flood control is a critical mission in South Florida, where weather extremes include torrential rainfall



Maintaining South Florida's flood control system requires extensive upkeep to maintain canals, pump stations, vegetation and water control structures. Examples include: (Clockwise from top left) S-235 gate replacement in Glades County; S-140 pump repair in Broward County; S-135 pump and engine refurbishment in Martin County; vegetation removal on Lake Kissimmee in Osceola County.

West Palm Beach, FL – The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) Governing Board is recognizing June as Flood Awareness Month to raise awareness about the risk of flooding in South Florida and encourage residents to help reduce that risk.

“Living and working in South Florida comes with the inherent risk of heavy rainfall and potential flooding,” said SFWMD Governing Board Chairman Joe Collins. “While the District works diligently to maintain the flood control system and to quickly move water away from communities after storms, we encourage residents to be prepared as well.”

Flood control has been a critical component of life in Florida and a high priority of the state legislature since 1949, when it created the Central and Southern Florida Flood Control District – the predecessor to the South Florida Water Management District.

Since those early days of pumping stormwater, the District has evolved into a multi-faceted agency, with flood control just one of several core missions that address South Florida's water needs.

Due to the region's weather extremes, the District's extensive flood control system of canals, levels, berms and water control structures is sometimes challenged – from Hurricane Andrew in 1992 to Hurricane Wilma in 2005, and then again recently with record rainfall in the Kissimmee Valley in October 2011 and heavy rainfall in Miami-Dade County in May 2012. At the District, preparing for these extreme events is a year-round effort.

Maintenance: Keeping the Flow Going

The District has an extensive program of structural maintenance and upgrades, carried out primarily during the dry season, that is critical to ensuring the regional flood control system operates at optimal capacity. During the past five years, the District has invested approximately \$240 million in essential maintenance work, including:

- Hardening and overhauling pump stations
- Overhauling gated spillways
- Replacing project culverts
- Dredging canals
- Stabilizing canal banks
- Enhancing Stormwater Treatment Areas

In the midst of the summer rain and hurricane season, many canals and lakes from Orlando to the Florida Keys are lowered, creating additional capacity to store stormwater and provide flood protection. District crews also regularly inspect the approximately 1,300 water control structures and 64 pump stations.

Know the Flow

Flood control in South Florida is a shared responsibility. Residents are encouraged to do their part by:

- Keeping ditches, swales, drainage grates and retention lakes clear of debris, trash and other discarded material.



Crews remove shoal in Highlands County (top) and debris in Palm Beach County as part of efforts to keep canals clear and waterways running smoothly.

- Knowing whether a nearby canal is a primary canal maintained by the District or a secondary canal maintained by a municipality or drainage district.
- Reporting the location and condition of any clogged or damaged facilities to the proper authority.
- Making sure trees or other vegetation do not encroach on canal maintenance right-of-way.

More tips on how residents can prepare for the rainy season are available on the District's Rainy Season Readiness [website](#). For updates from the District in case of an emergency, follow the District's Twitter feed: [@SFWMD](#).

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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.