



# NEWS RELEASE

August 28, 2012

**CONTACT:**

**Randy Smith**

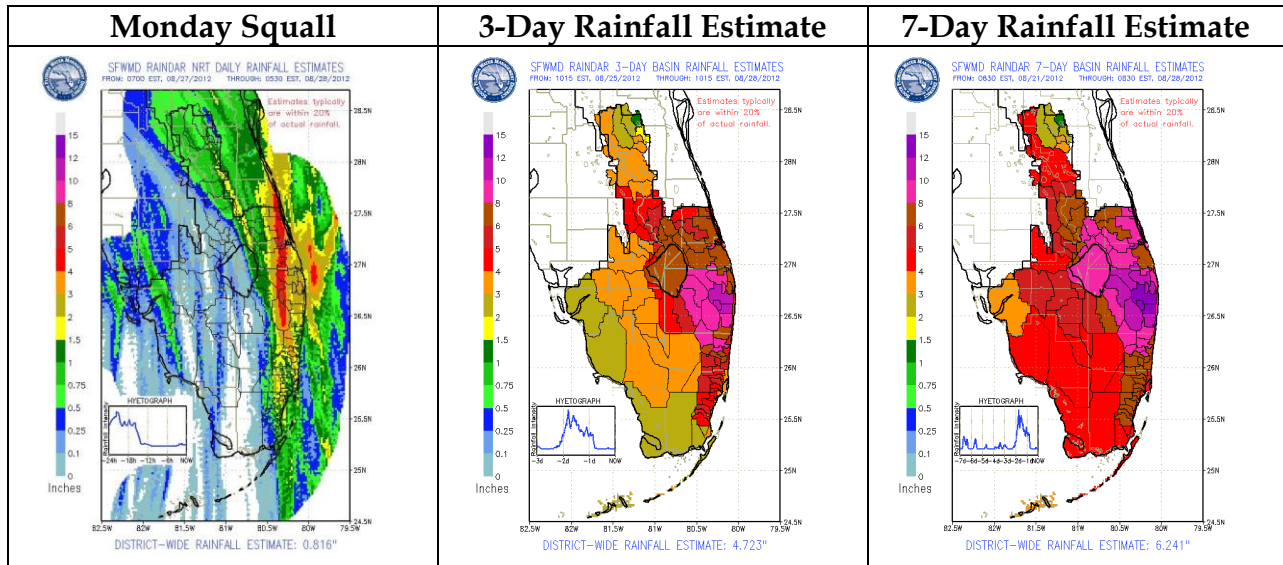
South Florida Water Management District

Office: (561) 682-2800 or Cellular: (561) 389-3386

[www.sfwmd.gov/news](http://www.sfwmd.gov/news)

follow us on

## SFWMD Continuing Recovery from Tropical Storm Isaac's Impacts *Regional flood control system operating at full capacity*



(Click on the maps for larger versions)

**West Palm Beach, FL** – The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) is continuing to operate the regional flood control system at full capacity to reduce flooding from Tropical Storm Isaac while preparing for the possibility of additional rainfall on Tuesday.

Some areas of South Florida along the east coast and around Lake Okeechobee have received more than a foot of rain between the height of the storm on Sunday night and a trailing storm feeder band on Monday afternoon. As a result, some communities are experiencing localized flooding and high water in lakes, swales and on roadways.

Tuesday’s forecast calls for 1 to 2 inches of rain in parts of South Florida from another trailing storm feeder band mixing with sea breezes typical of this time of year.

“District staff continue to work around the clock to provide flooding relief for South Florida residents,” said Tommy Strowd, Director of the SFWMD Operations,

Maintenance and Construction Division. “The regional flood control system is responding as designed to move water as quickly and safely as possible away from affected areas. It will take time for standing water to recede from the intense, historical rainfall associated with Tropical Storm Isaac.”

### **Impacted Areas and SFWMD Response**

Preliminary estimates indicate that the C-51 Basin, which encompasses central Palm Beach County, experienced a 1-in-100-year rainfall event from Tropical Storm Isaac. Based on radar rainfall estimates, up to 14.85 inches of rain fell in the C-51 Basin for the period from August 25 at 7:30 a.m. to August 28 at 7:30 a.m. This is on top of rainfall before the onset of the storm that brought the estimated seven-day total for the basin to 17 inches.

Water levels are beginning to gradually decline in the C-51 Canal, which moves water to tide from inland areas of Palm Beach County. Since Monday, water managers have been maximizing discharge from both the east and west ends of the C-51. Emergency orders remain in place to maximize system operations and divert water to help alleviate local flooding. The District was able to accept some additional flows into the C-51 Canal from the Indian Trail Improvement District, which manages the secondary canal system in the Acreage.

Water levels in communities north of Lake Okeechobee are also starting to recede as the District operates pump stations around the lake at full capacity. Current inflows for the lake are close to 25,000 cubic feet of water per second – more than 10 times greater than inflows a week ago. The lake level increased from 12.48 feet NGVD on Monday to 13.12 feet NGVD today and is continuing to rise.

In Miami-Dade County, the C-4 Canal recovered during the night on Monday to levels that allowed water managers to secure the pumps that were moving water into the C-4 Emergency Detention Basin. The C-4 Emergency Detention Basin is a 900-acre impoundment area that was built by the District in response to local flooding from Hurricane Irene in 1999 and an unnamed storm in 2000. The detention basin is providing improved flood protection to 500,000 residents and to 5,000 homes and businesses.

In addition to its pre-storm activities and post-storm emergency orders, the District has taken the following actions:

- Dispatched rapid response assessment teams to provide real-time ground information, supplementing automated data gauges and field crews
- Focused resources on areas receiving the heaviest rainfall – Palm Beach, Broward and Miami-Dade counties
- Moved water away from populated regions through the canal system to areas that have storage and to tide

- Ongoing coordination with county officials and drainage districts to enhance the ability of local drainage facilities to route excess runoff into the District canal system
- Temporarily closed a section of the Kissimmee River for the public health, safety and welfare of recreational boaters

The District continues to closely monitor conditions around the clock and is coordinating information with the state Emergency Operations Center as well as federal and local partners.

### **Rainfall Totals from Tropical Storm Isaac**

Based on radar rainfall estimates, the District-wide rainfall average was 4.73 inches for the last three days as of mid-morning Tuesday. The timeframe includes the most intense periods of rain from Tropical Storm Isaac late Sunday night and Monday afternoon. The heaviest rainfall was concentrated in Palm Beach and Broward counties.

Significant rainfall was recorded in the following areas with totals up to:

- Wellington and The Acreage, Palm Beach County - 15 inches
- Canal Point near Lake Okeechobee - 13 inches
- Port St. Lucie, St. Lucie County - 9.3 inches
- Sunrise, Broward County - 8.3 inches
- Okeechobee, Okeechobee County - 7.5 inches
- Homestead, Miami-Dade County - 6.2 inches
- Eastern Caloosahatchee, Lee County - 4 inches
- Eastern Collier County and Southern Golden Gate Estates - 6.7 inches

With the additional rainfall received in the days before the storm, the District-wide seven-day rainfall estimate is 6.24 inches.

### **Maintenance: Keeping the Flow Going**

To sustain the regional flood control system's capability for handling storms and wet season rainfall, the District has a robust program of structural maintenance and refurbishment. Accomplished primarily during the dry season, these activities are critical to ensuring that the regional flood control system – comprised of more than 1,600 miles of canals, 1,000 miles of levees/berms, 1,300 water control structures and 64 pump stations – operates at optimal capacity.

The District continues to invest in improving the flood control system. The agency has a proposed operations and maintenance budget of approximately \$182 million for Fiscal Year 2013, which includes more than 700 employees and operation of eight field stations. 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
- Upgrading microwave towers with control buildings
- Dredging canals
- Stabilizing canal banks
- Enhancing Stormwater Treatment Areas

Each year as the summer rainy season and hurricane season approaches, many canals and lakes from Orlando to the Florida Keys reach the lowest level in their seasonally varying operations. During that timeframe, District crews inspect many of the water control structures and pump stations.

**Useful Storm Links:**

- [Radar & Satellite Images](#)
- [Hurricane Tracking/Tropical Storm Forecast](#)
- [Hurricane and Storm Models](#)
- [FloridaDisaster.org](#)

To report flooding or damaged or blocked water control structures, call the SFWMD Citizen Information Line toll-free at (877) 429-1294.

For updates in case of an emergency, residents and visitors can follow the District's Twitter feed ([@SFWMD](#)) and its list of weather and emergency management tweeters related to South Florida ([@SFWMD/emermanagement](#)).

# # #

**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.*