



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **SFWMD Emergency Actions Alleviating Flooding Impacts from Tropical Storm Isaac**

*Water managers installed additional pumps, working with local drainage districts*



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

**West Palm Beach, FL** – The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) continues to take actions to alleviate flooding in areas still impacted by Tropical Storm Isaac. Field crews have installed temporary pumps in key locations, and water managers continue operating South Florida’s massive primary flood control system to maximize flood relief efforts. The agency’s Emergency Operations Center remains in full activation.

The District is coordinating closely with local drainage districts and municipalities to address flooded areas. Engineers are working together to direct additional flows from municipal drainage systems into the regional canals.

With the system operating at full capacity, water levels are receding in central Palm Beach County and other areas affected by the storm. Light rainfall recorded on Wednesday (District-wide average of 0.05 inches) has not impeded progress in reducing flood waters.

### **Palm Beach County Impacts and SFWMD Response**

Western communities in the C-51 Basin, located in central Palm Beach County, remain affected by flood waters. Preliminary data indicate the basin experienced a 1-in-100-year rainfall event from Tropical Storm Isaac, with up to 15 inches of rain falling between Saturday morning and Tuesday morning. On top of rainfall before the onset of the storm, the estimated seven-day rainfall total for the basin was 17 inches.

Since Monday, water managers have been working around the clock to maximize system operations to reduce flooding, including:

- Discharging at maximum rates from both the east and west ends of the C-51 canal, moving flood water out of the basin.
- Installing temporary pumps adjacent to the J.W. Corbett Wildlife Management Area to divert water to the C-18 and L-8 canals. This is improving drainage from the Acreage community by moving water into Lake Okeechobee and to tide.

### **Conditions Improving in Other Areas**

In other areas affected by Tropical Storm Isaac:

- Water levels in communities north of Lake Okeechobee continue to recede as the District operates pump stations around the lake at full capacity.
- Current inflows into Lake Okeechobee are exceeding 30,000 cubic feet of water per second – the equivalent of filling up an Olympic-sized swimming pool every two seconds. The lake level has increased from 12.48 feet NGVD on Monday to 13.64 feet NGVD today and is continuing to rise.
- Conditions in portions of the Kissimmee River have improved, and today the section of the river north of S-65E was reopened to navigation for recreational boat traffic.
- In Miami-Dade and Broward counties, regional canals have moved back to acceptable pre-storm levels, and water control structures are available for flood control.

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

According to SFWMD meteorologists, Isaac produced the second-largest single-day rainfall total and the third-largest two-day total across the District's region in the last 20 years.

District-wide rainfall from Tropical Storm Isaac on Sunday measured 3.89 inches – the second-largest single-day rainfall total in the last 20 years, according to SFWMD meteorologists. The only higher single-day total during that time was 5.35 inches from

Tropical Storm Mitch in November 1998. Isaac's two-day rainfall total of 4.76 inches on Sunday and Monday trailed only Tropical Storm Fay in August 2008 and Tropical Storm Mitch.

The heaviest rainfall from Isaac was concentrated in Palm Beach and Broward counties, with local maximum totals of more than a foot. With additional rainfall received in the days before the storm, the District-wide seven-day rainfall estimate was 6.24 inches through Tuesday morning.

### **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.

### **Useful Storm Links:**

- [FAQs: Tropical Storm Isaac](#)
- [Radar & Satellite Images](#)
- [Rainfall Maps](#)
- [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](#)).

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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.*