



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

## NEWS RELEASE

January 22, 2013

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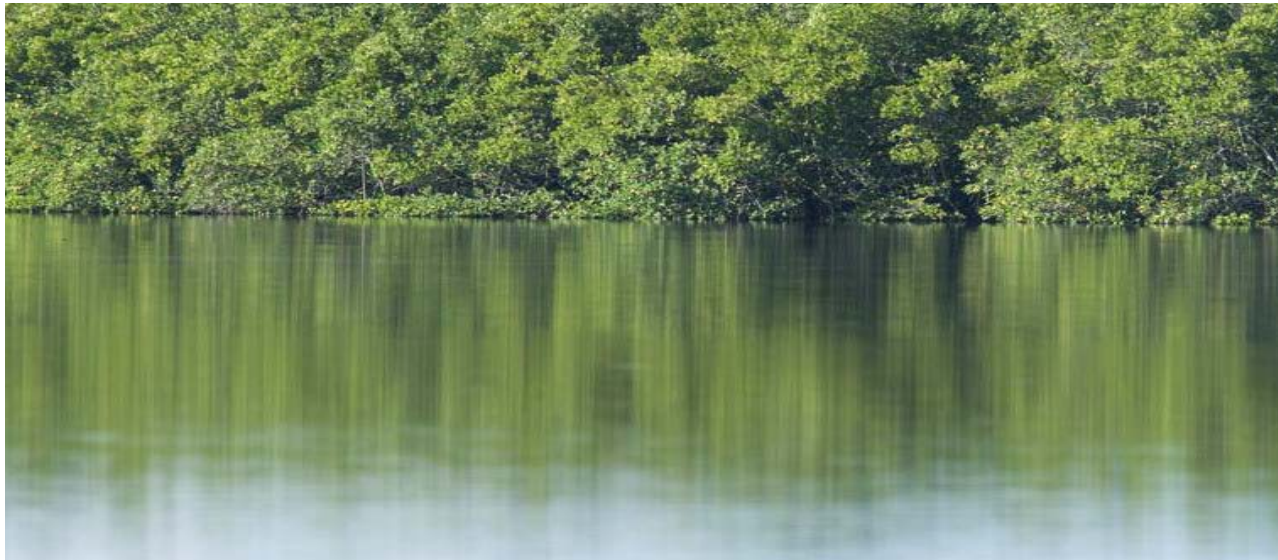
South Florida Water Management District

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### **Oyster Restoration, Drainage Projects to Benefit St. Lucie River** *Projects will improve wildlife habitat and water quality*



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

**West Palm Beach, FL** — Five priority projects to benefit the St. Lucie River ecosystem were approved for implementation as part of a multi-agency effort administered by the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD).

The projects are set to begin this month and will deliver benefits that include oyster habitat restoration, improved stormwater management and drainage improvements.

“The St. Lucie River and its watershed are important resources for Martin and St. Lucie counties and all of South Florida,” said Governing Board Vice-Chairman Kevin Powers, a long-time Martin County resident. “The District is committed to working with our partners to bolster the health of this unique coastal ecosystem.”

The five projects were recommended for funding by the St. Lucie River Issues Team from a suite of proposals reviewed and evaluated last year. The team is a multi-agency

group that works to accelerate and implement “ready-to-go” projects that readily offer quantifiable benefits to the river and estuary.

The projects are administered by the District using state funding dedicated for environmental improvement. The projects selected for current funding are:

<b>Recipient</b>	<b>Project</b>
<b>Martin County</b>	St. Lucie Estuary Oyster Reef Habitat Restoration Project
<b>City of Port St. Lucie</b>	Baffle Box Stormwater Quality Retrofit
<b>Florida Oceanographic Society</b>	Oyster Restoration and Estuary Observatory System for the St. Lucie Estuary
<b>Town of Sewall’s Point</b>	High Point Water Quality Retrofit
<b>St. Lucie County</b>	White City Drainage Project – Phase II at Citrus and Saeger Avenues

Three of the five projects were approved by the District’s Governing Board at its January meeting.

The St. Lucie River Issues Team, initiated in 1998 by the state’s South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Working Group, also works to implement projects to benefit the Indian River Lagoon, which is slated for additional projects to be determined in upcoming weeks.

Since the inception of the Issues Team, the legislature has funded more than \$63 million in its recommended projects for the St. Lucie River. Additional funding has included more than \$65 million from local partners and \$2 million from the federal government. Accomplishments include the restoration of more than 4,671 acres of habitat, 4,358 acres of wetlands and 25,940 feet of shoreline throughout this watershed.

The St. Lucie Estuary, located within Martin and St. Lucie counties, is a major tributary to the Southern Indian River Lagoon. Combined, these two watersheds encompass 2,160 square miles along the Treasure Coast.

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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.*