



NEWS RELEASE

May 16, 2013

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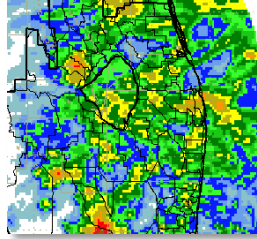
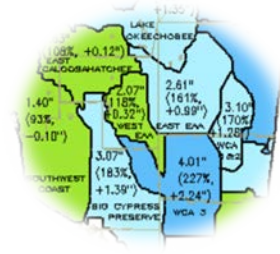
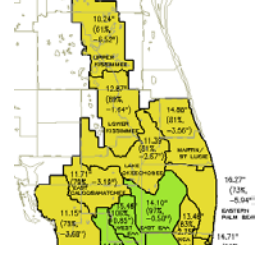
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SFWMD Water Levels Positioned Well for NWS Forecast of ‘Average’ Wet Season

Water resources are managed to balance the needs of residents and the environment

Track the Wet Season with SFWMD Online Weather Resources		
Near Real-Time Raindar 	Monthly Rainfall 	Seasonal Rainfall 
Displays rain gauge-adjusted radar estimates	Tracks monthly basin rainfall, updating daily	Provides seasonal rainfall amounts by basin
<p><i>Click on the graphics above, or see more SFWMD weather data here.</i></p>		

Miami, FL — With the latest official forecast calling for an average 2013 wet season, water levels across 16 counties from Orlando to the Florida Keys are positioned to provide adequate water supply for residents and the environment, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) and the National Weather Service reported today at a joint briefing.

“An average wet season would benefit water managers in the challenging effort to balance the needs of 7.7 million people and South Florida’s unique ecosystems,” said Susan Sylvester, SFWMD Chief of the Water Control Operations Bureau. “Still, we remain vigilant because Florida has unexpected weather extremes that can dramatically impact water conditions across large areas.”

Released today, the National Weather Service’s 2013 wet season forecast calls for:

- Near-normal precipitation through October
- Near- to above-normal temperatures
- Lack of either El Niño or La Niña conditions through the summer, which can lead to higher variability in rainfall across the area

Current Conditions

South Florida has seen 12.93 inches of rain to date this dry season, which is 81 percent of average, or a deficit of 3.04 inches. Key placed and well-timed rainfall events during this time period, however, stabilized regional water supplies during the driest portions of the dry season. This included the second wettest April on record since 1997.

Because of this rainfall, water levels in managed areas are on target with or near their regulation schedules. These federally authorized operating plans are designed to set water levels, based on a host of factors, to help balance competing demands on a resource such as a lake or reservoir and to achieve the lowest desirable water levels going into the hurricane/wet season. The hurricane season officially begins on June 1 and ends on November 30.

Lake Okeechobee stood at 13.48 feet NGVD today, which is 0.18 feet above its historic average for this time of year. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which is responsible for managing the lake’s levels, has been making regulatory releases to help meet the lake’s established regulation schedule.

South Florida Wet Season Facts

- On average, South Florida’s wet season begins around May 20 and ends around October 13, lasting for about 21 weeks.
- Typically, about two-thirds of annual rains fall during the wet season, or approximately 35 inches out of 52 inches.
- Since 1932, virtually all wet seasons have produced 2 to 4 feet of rainfall.
- June is usually South Florida’s wettest month.
- The wet season has three general phases:
 - Memorial Day weekend through July 4 weekend, which are typically the wettest six weeks of the year.
 - Early July through mid-August, which are hotter and often drier.
 - Late August through October, which are characterized by highly variable rainfall mainly due to tropical activity and cold fronts.

Wet Season Preparation
<p>Maintenance and infrastructure upgrades are critical to the optimal operation of the regional flood control system of nearly 2,000 miles of canals and 2,800 miles of levees and berms. During the past five years, the District has invested \$240 million in essential maintenance work, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hardening pump stations • Overhauling gated spillways • Replacing project culverts • Dredging canals • Stabilizing canal banks • Enhancing treatment wetlands <p>The District will also conduct its annual “Hurricane Freddy” exercise as part of the agency’s emergency operations readiness for hurricane season.</p>

More information is available at:

- [Landscape Irrigation Days and Times by County](#)
- [SFWMD Weather/Rainfall Data](#)
- [Climate Prediction Center Precipitation Forecast](#)

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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.