



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

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SFWMD Begins Review of Fifth Land Assessment Region *Public may submit comments on District lands in the Everglades region through July 8*



(Click on the image to visit www.sfwmd.gov/landassessment.)

West Palm Beach, FL – As part of its ongoing comprehensive land assessment, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) is beginning an evaluation of agency lands in the Everglades Assessment Region, which includes parts of Palm Beach, Broward, Miami-Dade and Hendry counties.

The Everglades region is the last of five geographic areas being reviewed in the assessment of approximately 750,000 acres of fee-owned lands – properties in which the District has full or shared ownership rights. As part of a broader effort to maximize its resources to meet mission-critical responsibilities, the District is conducting the assessment to ensure that each parcel owned by the agency is being put to its most effective use.

To gather all relevant information for a thorough analysis, the District is seeking public feedback on the use of its lands within the Everglades region. Stakeholders and the general public can examine detailed land portfolios and submit comments on specific

properties through July 8 at www.sfwmd.gov/landassessment. In addition, a regional public workshop will be held at SFWMD headquarters in West Palm Beach on June 26.

Status of Other Regions

At the same time that the public comment period is opening for the Everglades region, the assessment of other regions is progressing. For these regions, District staff is currently:

- **Kissimmee/Okeechobee:** Accepting public comments on draft staff recommendations for SFWMD lands in the Upper and Lower Kissimmee basins and the Lake Okeechobee watershed. Comments may be submitted through the land assessment website until June 10. In addition, District staff hosted two public workshops on May 30 and 31 to receive further public input and will be presenting the draft recommendations during the Water Resources Advisory Commission (WRAC) meeting on June 7.
- **East Coast:** Developing staff recommendations for SFWMD lands in parts of Palm Beach, Martin and St. Lucie counties. Recommendations will be based on nearly 200 public comments, feedback received during an April public workshop, input from SFWMD subject matter experts and a variety of land-related data. All submitted comments are available for review on the land assessment website.
- **West Coast:** Analyzing public and internal feedback submitted for this region, which includes parts of Lee, Collier, Hendry and Glades counties. The District accepted more than 250 public comments for this region from April 26 through May 28 and held a public workshop in Fort Myers to gather additional input.

The District completed its assessment of the Upper Lakes region with a presentation to the Governing Board on May 9. Final staff recommendations for the region are posted on the land assessment website.

In the staff recommendations for each region, current uses of District lands will remain in place for parcels that are determined to contribute fully to the agency's core mission of balancing and improving flood control, water quality, natural systems and water supply. To provide the most benefit to taxpayers and South Florida's water resources, lands that do not directly support the District's core mission may be considered for alternative uses or possible surplus.

Timeline and Next Steps

Incorporating public and WRAC input, final staff recommendations for the Kissimmee/Okeechobee region will be presented to the full Governing Board at its June 13 meeting. The remaining regions will each go through a similar process that will conclude at Governing Board meetings over the following three months.

The District-wide land assessment for all fee-owned lands is scheduled for completion by September 2013. A review of the agency's approximately 700,000 acres of non-fee-owned lands is planned to begin in late 2013. Reassessments of all District lands will be conducted as needed, potentially every three to five years.

To submit public comments either on lands in the Everglades Assessment Region or draft staff recommendations in the Kissimmee/Okeechobee Assessment Region, visit www.sfwmd.gov/landassessment. Other information featured on the website includes:

- [Regional Land Portfolios, Staff Recommendations and Other Materials](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Land Assessment Objectives and Evaluation Criteria](#)
- [Land Assessment Schedule \[PDF\]](#) - updated May 30, 2013

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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.