



NEWS RELEASE

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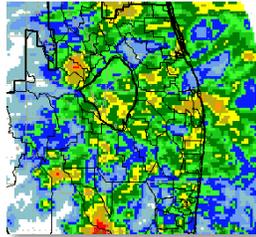
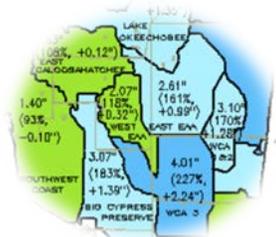
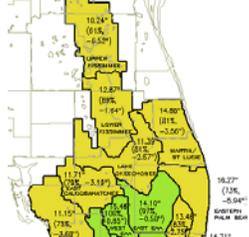
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SFWMD Water Levels Positioned Well for Wet Season Start
Water resources are managed to balance varied needs

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

Miami, FL – South Florida’s water levels are at seasonally normal levels heading into the 2014 wet season that is forecasted to produce near to slightly below-average precipitation, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) and the National Weather Service reported today at a joint briefing.

“A combination of timely rainfall and proactive water management during the dry season allowed current water levels to be at a beneficial level for 7.9 million residents and the environment,” said Susan Sylvester, SFWMD Chief of the Water Control Operations Bureau. “Nevertheless, we continually evaluate conditions because Florida has unexpected weather extremes that can quickly change water conditions across large areas.”

Released today, the National Weather Service’s 2014 wet season forecast calls for:

- A late start to the rainy season (Median start is May 20 on the southeast coast and May 27 in the interior and west coast.)
- Near to slightly below-average precipitation, with June potentially being the wettest month relative to normal
- Above-normal temperatures, 1-2 degrees F, more noticeable in the overnight/early morning
- El Niño to develop during the summer, which typically places South Florida in a transition zone between Caribbean dryness and slightly more precipitation across the southeast U.S. – this was a factor in developing the near to slightly below-average wet season forecast



Current Conditions

South Florida has seen 15.30 inches of rain to date this dry season, which is 94 percent of average, or a deficit of 1.05 inches. Well-timed rainfall events in key locations during this time period stabilized regional water supplies during the driest portions of the dry season.

In recent weeks, dry days have helped to position water levels at their regulation schedules for adequate water supply while making room in storage areas such as the water conservation areas and lakes for summer rains as South Florida enters the hurricane season on June 1.

The regulation schedules are federally authorized operating plans 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. One of the goals is to achieve the lowest desirable water levels going into the hurricane/wet season. The hurricane season officially ends on November 30.

Lake Okeechobee stood at 12.79 feet NGVD today, which is 0.45 feet below 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 the Caloosahatchee River to help meet the lake's established regulation schedule. It is too early to predict how the wet season will impact lake management during the coming months.

During the past 16 years, the dry period of November through April produced above-average rainfall twice and near normal rainfall five times, with the rest being below average.

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
SFWMD maintenance and infrastructure upgrades are critical to the optimal operation of the regional flood control system of nearly 2,100 miles of canals and 2,000 miles of levees and berms. During the past six years, the District has invested \$276 million in essential maintenance work, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hardening pump stations• Overhauling gated spillways• Replacing project culverts• Dredging canals• Stabilizing canal banks• Enhancing treatment wetlands The District will also conduct its annual “Hurricane Freddy” exercise as part of the agency’s emergency operations readiness for hurricane season.

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.