



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

## NEWS RELEASE

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### June is 'Flood Awareness Month' in South Florida

*SFWMD highlights shared responsibility of flood control as wet season begins*



*SFWMD has an extensive program of structural maintenance and upgrades that is critical to ensuring the regional flood control system operates at optimal capacity.*

**West Palm Beach, FL** — For the third consecutive year, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) is recognizing June as Flood Awareness Month to highlight the risk of flooding in South Florida and to encourage residents to help reduce that risk.

“While this year’s wet season is off to a slow start, the District has worked diligently to maintain the region’s flood control system so we’re ready to quickly move water away from communities after the summer storms begin,” said Jeff Kivett, SFWMD Division Director of Operations, Engineering and Construction. “We encourage residents to remember that flood control is a shared responsibility in South Florida, and now is the time to prepare.”

In an average year, South Florida’s wet season begins around May 20 and typically brings 35 inches of rainfall, two-thirds of the annual total in the region. The 2014 season has started late, and the National Weather Service’s forecast calls for near to slightly below-average precipitation over the coming months. However, flooding may occur any time during the wet season, either when large amounts of rain fall during a brief timeframe or from a single heavy storm, tropical system or hurricane.

Due to South Florida's weather extremes, the District's flood control system must be prepared to handle intensive rainfall at any time of year, from Tropical Storm Isaac in August 2012 to conditions this past January – the wettest January in more than two decades – during the height of the dry season. The agency coordinates closely with local drainage authorities, whose canal systems move water into the regional system.

### **Know the Flow**

As a result of South Florida's interconnected drainage system, flood control is a responsibility shared by the SFWMD, county and city governments, local drainage districts, homeowners associations and residents.

Residents can do their part to prepare by:

- Keeping ditches, swales, drainage grates and retention lakes clear of debris, trash and other discarded material
- Knowing whether a nearby canal is a primary canal maintained by the District or a secondary canal maintained by a municipality or drainage district
- Reporting the location and condition of any clogged or damaged facilities to the proper authority
- Making sure trees or other vegetation do not encroach on canal maintenance right-of-way

### **Maintenance: Keeping the Flow Going**

The District has an extensive program of structural maintenance and upgrades – carried out primarily during the dry season – that is critical to ensuring the regional flood control system operates at optimal capacity. This extensive system includes nearly 2,100 miles of canals and 2,000 miles of levees and berms. District crews also regularly inspect more than 600 water control structures and 70 pump stations.

During the past five years, the District has invested \$276 million in essential maintenance work, including:

- Hardening pump stations
- Overhauling gated spillways
- Replacing project culverts
- Dredging canals
- Stabilizing canal banks
- Enhancing Stormwater Treatment Areas

### **For more information:**

- [Rainy Season Readiness](#)
- [Below the Surface: Managing Flood Water Before and After the Storm \[PDF\]](#)
- [Know the Flow \[PDF\]](#)
- Follow the District's Emergency Management Twitter feed: [@SFWMD\\_EM](#)

### **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.*