



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE



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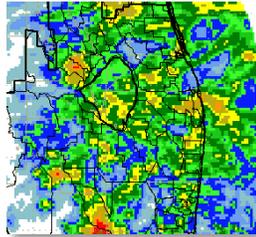
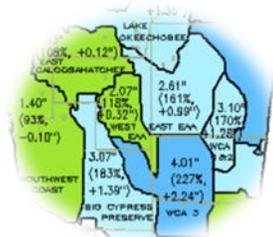
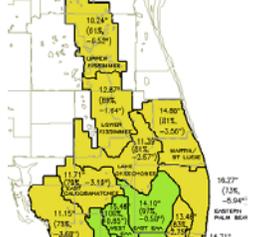
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SFWMD Water Levels Near Average for Wet Season Start

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> 
Displays rain gauge-adjusted radar estimates	Tracks monthly basin rainfall, updating daily	Provides seasonal rainfall amounts by basin
Click on the graphics above, or see more SFWMD weather data here .		

Miami, FL – Water levels are at near normal levels as South Florida enters a 2015 wet season forecast by the National Weather Service (NWS) to produce near to slightly below-average precipitation overall, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) and the NWS reported this week at a joint briefing.

“Drier conditions have lowered water levels in recent weeks, providing room for summer rainfall,” said John Mitnik, SFWMD Chief of the Engineering and Construction Bureau. “Water levels remain sufficient for normal water supply should wet season rainfall dip below average.”

Released this week, the National Weather Service’s 2015 South Florida wet season forecast calls for:

- Near to slightly below-average rainfall, with an overall range of 75 to 95 percent of average

- May/June to potentially be the wettest months relative to normal, with a drier trend beginning in July
- Above-average temperatures by 1 to 2 degrees Fahrenheit
- El Niño conditions tending to provide less conducive conditions for storm/hurricane development and less influence on local rainfall

Wet season forecasts have less accuracy than the dry season forecasts because of tropical activity and other variables.

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 approximately \$300 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 conduct its annual “Hurricane Freddy” exercise on Thursday as part of the agency’s emergency operations readiness for hurricane season.

Current Conditions

South Florida as a whole received 16.15 inches of rain between the start of the 2015 dry season in early October and May 19, representing 82 percent of average, or 3.49 inches below average.

The upper and lower Kissimmee basins experienced the wettest conditions in the 16-county District, with 22.80 inches of rain, representing 114 percent of average, or 2.87 inches above average in the upper basin alone. This contributed to high water levels in Lake Okeechobee.

The lake stood at 13.23 feet NGVD today. According to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, which manages the lake, federal water managers prefer to maintain water

levels between 12.5 feet and 15.5 feet to help balance competing demands such as public safety, water supply and environmental health.

More information is available at:

- [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.