

State of the Water Management System

Water Shortage Edition



Weekly Update

February 4 - 8, 2008

**Mission Statement:**

To underscore our commitment to keep you informed, we will send this update weekly. We encourage you to share this water resources information with your constituents.



sfwmd.gov

District News and Happenings

District meteorologists report that rainfall for November, December and January averaged 2.95 inches District-wide - only 43 percent of the historical average, or a relative deficit of 3.95 inches for the November-January period. It marks the eighth driest start to the South Florida dry season since rainfall recordkeeping began in 1932.

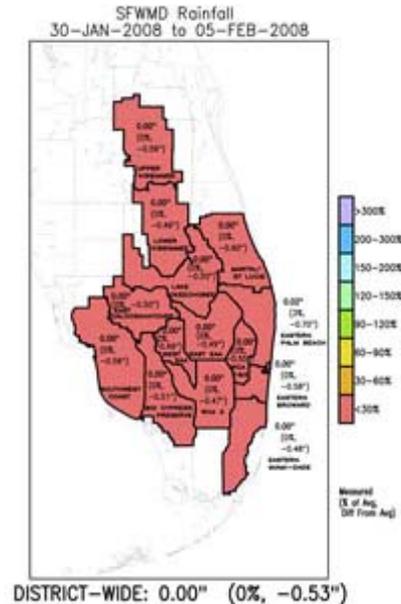
All of the District's major basins experienced substantially below average rainfall during this period. Rainfall patterns continued to favor southeastern residential areas, where storage options for water supply are limited and tidal discharges are often required to prevent flooding.

Groundwater levels in Lee, Collier and other west coast counties remain 2-to-4 feet lower today than this time last year, with many monitoring wells already inside the lowest 10 percent of their historic water elevations. Record low elevations for this time of year have been recorded at one monitoring well at Estero in Lee County. Groundwater levels in the Upper and Lower Kissimmee Basins also remain below normal for this time of year, despite favorable recent rains in the Upper Kissimmee Basin.

Due to safety hazards caused by low water levels, the S-65E navigation lock, which regulates boat traffic between the Kissimmee River and Lake Okeechobee, will be closed to navigation until water levels in the lake return to safe operating levels.

System-Wide Overview

South Florida Water
Management District
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Rainfall overview:

- The District received no rain last week.
- The rainfall outlook for the next seven days is below average.
- Rains are expected to move from north of Lake Okeechobee on Thursday to south of the lake on Saturday.

U.S. Drought Monitor:

The [Drought Monitor](#) focuses on broad-scale conditions and identifies general drought areas, labeling droughts by intensity. Last week, areas of the District fell into four levels of intensity, ranging from abnormally dry conditions to extreme drought.

Lake Okeechobee:

Lake Okeechobee measured 10.05 feet NGVD 29 (8.75 feet NAVD 88) on Tuesday, which is 0.01 feet lower than it was on that day last week and 0.07 feet lower than it was a month ago. The current water level is 1.53 feet lower than it was a year ago and 4.66 feet below its historical average for this time of year. Initial reports from monthly submerged aquatic vegetation monitoring indicate that water clarity at the south end of the lake is excellent, but submerged aquatic vegetation is sparse and limited to one species.

Upper Chain of Lakes/Kissimmee Basin:

During the last week, the Kissimmee Basin received no rain. Water levels in the upper basin lakes appear to have stabilized from rainfall in recent weeks. Water levels are at or below regulation schedules.

St. Lucie and Caloosahatchee Estuaries:

Salinity increased slightly in most areas of the St. Lucie Estuary over the past week. Based on the salinity tolerance of oysters, salinity conditions in the estuary are good. Salinity increased slightly in most areas of the Caloosahatchee Estuary. Based on submerged plant requirements, conditions in the upper estuary, east of Ft. Myers, are poor due to high salinity. Based on the salinity tolerance of oysters, salinity conditions in the estuary downstream of the Cape Coral Bridge are fair.

Water Conservation Areas (WCAs):

The WCAs received no rain last week. Water stages in WCA-1 are slightly below regulation, WCA-3 stages continue to be significantly below regulation, and WCA-2A remains above regulation.

Everglades National Park:

Park water levels fell between 0.1 and 1.2 inches in response to the lack of rain.

Note: This rainfall information is based on rain gauges within the Park. The map above captures District rain gauge data only.

Florida Bay:

Salinity increased slightly or remained stable.

Water Restrictions, starting January 15, 2008:



Click map for larger image

[Residents and businesses of Broward, Glades, Hendry, Martin, Miami-Dade, Monroe, Okeechobee, Palm Beach and St. Lucie counties](#) are limited to a one-day-per-week landscape irrigation schedule with two watering windows. Odd street addresses may irrigate lawns and landscapes on Mondays between 4:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. or 4:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. Even street addresses may irrigate lawns and landscapes on Thursdays between 4:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. or 4:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. Residents and businesses with more than five acres have expanded irrigation hours, between 12:00 a.m. and 8:00 a.m. or 4:00 p.m. and 11:59 p.m. on their designated irrigation day.

[For all locations of Lee County, other than the City of Cape Coral](#), the typical homeowner may choose one four-hour watering window on your designated irrigation day - either 4 a.m. to 8 a.m. or 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

Because jurisdiction in certain counties is shared with other water management districts, the SFWMD has coordinated with these agencies to simplify implementation and enforcement. Residents of **Orange and Osceola counties** should adhere to any water restrictions set forth by the St. Johns River Water Management District. Residents of **Polk, Highlands, and Charlotte counties** should adhere to the water restrictions set forth by the Southwest Florida Water Management District. However, golf courses, nurseries, and agricultural users District-wide should follow SFWMD water use restrictions.

Did you know?

The South Florida Water Management District manages and protects the water resources of the region by balancing and improving water quality, flood control, natural systems and water supply. Want to hear more? It would be our pleasure to meet with your organization to give a presentation and answer your questions. If interested, please contact Niki Spencer at 800-432-2045 or 561-686-8800, ext. 6004.

** SFWMD water managers and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers work together to manage Lake Okeechobee. Water releases from the lake are made in accordance with a federally authorized regulation schedule based on many factors such as time of year, current water conditions, predicted rainfall and lake level.*