



NEWS RELEASE

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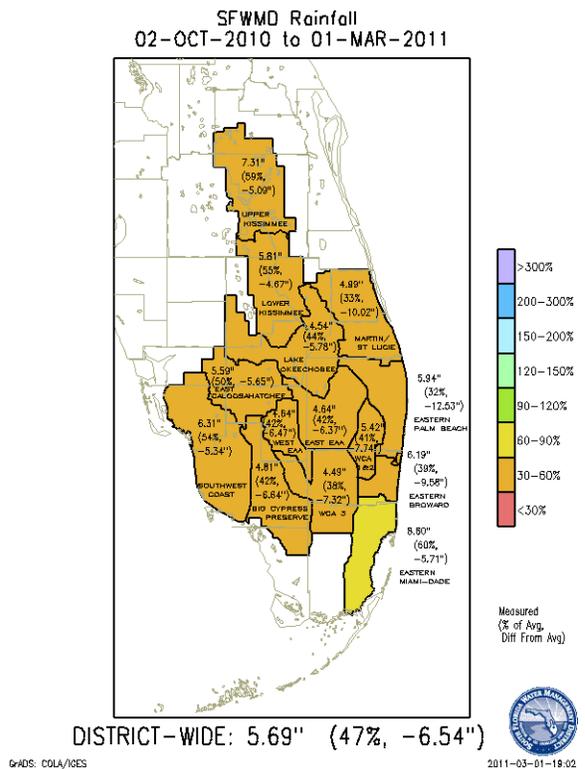
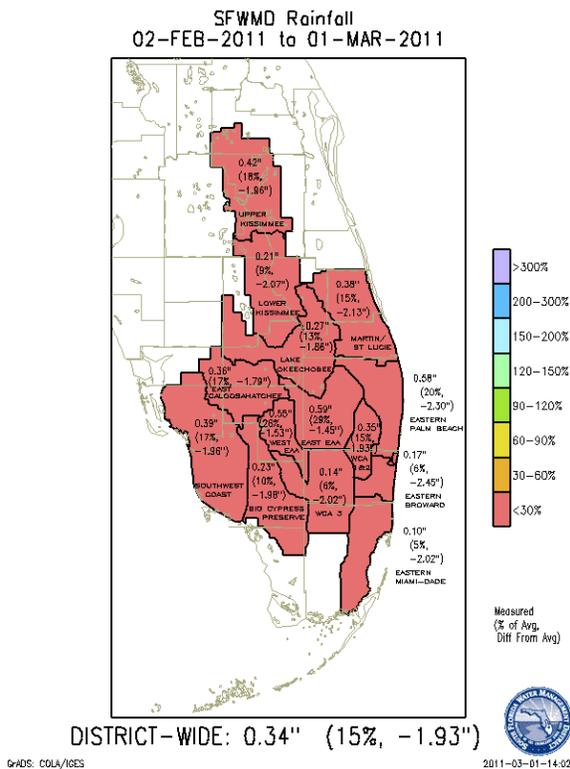
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Dry Conditions Resume in February October-to-February period was the driest in South Florida in 80 years

February 2011 Rainfall

October 2010 to February 2011 Rainfall



(Click on the maps for larger versions.)

West Palm Beach, FL — After some helpful rainfall in January, extreme dry conditions returned across Central and South Florida in February. South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) meteorologists are reporting that the below-average rainfall last month capped the driest October-to-February period in 80 years.

“Surface and ground water supplies are declining at a significant rate,” said Tommy Strowd, SFWMD Deputy Executive Director of Operations and Maintenance. “The

existing situation and the long-term forecast for continued extreme dry conditions make water conservation efforts essential.”

District-wide rainfall for February registered 0.34 inches for a deficit of 1.93 inches, or only 16 percent of the historical average for the month. The rainfall total tied for the third-driest February in the District’s 16-county region since recordkeeping began in 1932.

None of the basins in the District received more than 29 percent of their historical average rainfall in February. The most severe deficits were in Broward and Miami-Dade counties and Water Conservation Area 3, where less than 6 percent of average rainfall was recorded.

February continued a dry trend that began with a record rainfall deficit in October, which signaled an early start to the 2010-2011 dry season. Over the last five months, the District’s 16-county region has received a total of 5.69 inches, less than half the average rainfall for that period, or 6.46 inches below average. Eastern Palm Beach County has faced the biggest deficit during this period with a shortfall of 12.43 inches, or only 32 percent of its average rainfall.

Lake Okeechobee is currently at 12.12 feet above sea level, more than two feet below its historical average for this time of year. Without significant rainfall in the coming weeks, lake levels are expected to dramatically decline as temperatures rise and evapotranspiration rates increase.

Dry Season Forecasts

In October, the National Weather Service declared an earlier-than-usual start to the dry season along with moderate strength La Niña conditions. La Niña is a weather phenomenon that often generates below-average rainfall during the dry season.

While about 12 inches of rain falls on average across the District from November through March, La Niña-influenced dry seasons often produce only about two-thirds of the average during this five-month period.

These dry conditions are following the driest wet season since 1984 in South Florida. An average of 27.31 inches of rain fell between June 1 and October 31, representing 82 percent of the normal amount and a deficit of 6 inches.

Water Conservation Remains Key

The South Florida Water Management District’s Comprehensive Water Conservation Program was approved by the Governing Board in September 2008 to encourage more consistent use of water resources throughout South Florida. Numerous stakeholders worked with the District to define specific regulatory, voluntary and incentive-based programs and in-depth education and marketing plans that will help foster a year-

round conservation ethic. The program includes Year-Round Landscape Irrigation Conservation Measures that took effect in March 2010.

The SFWMD continues to closely monitor water levels and is urging residents and businesses to conserve water and follow landscape irrigation conservation measures in effect. Water-savings tips, information about irrigation limits by area and current conditions are available at www.sfwmd.gov/waterwatch.

For more information:

- [SFWMD Weather/Rainfall Data](#)
- [National Weather Service Dry Season Forecast](#)
- [Climate Prediction Center FAQ on La Niña](#)
- [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.