



**SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT**

# **NEWS RELEASE**

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## **Water Resource Improvements May Change Water Restrictions**

### ***District Staff to Recommend Twice-Weekly Lawn Irrigation***

**West Palm Beach, FL** – With South Florida’s water resources showing signs of recovery following a multi-year rainfall deficit, staff at the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) is recommending an adjustment to water restrictions that would allow twice-weekly landscape irrigation throughout much of South Florida. The District’s Governing Board will consider and vote on these recommendations tomorrow. If approved, the changes would become effective April 18.

“These recommendations are based solely on improved resource conditions,” said SFWMD Executive Director Carol Ann Wehle. “Recent rainfall combined with our proactive water management decisions and widespread participation in conservation efforts have collectively brought us to this much anticipated point.”

Above-average rainfall in February, March and early April has raised surface and groundwater levels in most areas of the District’s 16 counties. At 10.50 feet above sea level this morning,

Lake Okeechobee 's water level continues to make modest gains and is expected to continue an upward trend. Levels today are four inches higher than on this date last year.

Water levels in the three Everglades Water Conservation Areas in western Palm Beach , Broward and Miami-Dade counties are near or above their optimum levels for this time of year and nearly a foot higher than this time last year.

Groundwater levels are also in good shape and are higher now than this time last year, with the exception of a few wells in Lee and Collier counties that remain low. Water levels in the Kissimmee River are at their regulation, or optimum, levels and higher than this time last year.

### **Water Restriction Recommendations**

In response to these improved conditions, District staff is recommending that water restrictions be modified in Broward, Collier, Glades, Hendry, Lee, Martin, Miami-Dade, Monroe, Okeechobee, Palm Beach and St. Lucie. Staff recommends that landscape irrigation be permitted on Wednesdays **and** Saturdays for addresses ending in an odd number (1,3,5,7,9), and Thursdays **and** Sundays for addresses ending in an even number (0,2,4,6,8) or with no address. Recommendations for specific watering times are still being developed.

The recommendations also include allowing golf courses throughout the District to use 70 percent of their permitted water allocation, an increase of 15 percent. Plant nurseries would be permitted to irrigate for an additional two hours daily. It is being recommended that agricultural water users in the Lake Okeechobee Service Area continue to maintain at a 45 percent reduction in permitted water use allocation.

Osceola and Orange county residents would continue to follow restrictions established by the St. Johns River Water Management District. Polk, Charlotte and Highlands counties residents would continue to follow restrictions established by the Southwest Florida Water Management District.

Due to continued local concerns about water resource availability, staff is recommending that once-weekly landscape watering restrictions remain in place for the City of West Palm Beach and its water utility service area as well as in the cities of Dania Beach , Hallandale , Lake Worth and Lantana and portions of unincorporated Lee County , including the Lehigh Acres area.

District staff will present these recommendations to the SFWMD Governing Board tomorrow. The recommended changes are proposed to go into effect on Friday, April 18, with local governments encouraged to begin enforcement on Thursday, May 1. This would give residents sufficient time to become aware of the new restrictions and adjust their sprinkler systems.

### **Current Restrictions Remain in Place until April 17**

In Broward, Glades, Hendry, Martin, Miami-Dade, Monroe, Okeechobee, Palm Beach and St. Lucie counties, landscape irrigation is currently permitted on Mondays for addresses ending in an odd number and Thursdays for addresses ending in an even number. Residents and businesses in Lee and Collier counties are limited to one-day-a-week watering during specific "watering windows" directly associated with their unique street address.

Osceola and Orange county residents are required to follow restrictions established by the St. Johns River Water Management District. Polk, Charlotte and Highlands counties residents are required to follow restrictions established by the Southwest Florida Water Management District.

For additional information on water shortage conditions, irrigation restrictions or water conservation, call the SFWMD's toll-free Water Shortage Hotline at (800) 662-8876, contact a regional SFWMD service center or visit [www.sfwmd.gov/conserv](http://www.sfwmd.gov/conserv). Helpful water conservation tips also are available at [www.savewaterfl.com](http://www.savewaterfl.com).

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