

below  
the  
surface  
an in-depth  
look at...



# Water Reuse:

*A safe and effective way to save water*

## ON THE INSIDE

- Reclaimed water and reuse explained
- Reuse success stories
- Reuse on a regional level
- How water is reclaimed
- Purple pipes signify reclaimed water

*The demand for water is projected to increase over the long term in South Florida. Urban populations, agricultural operations and the environment depend on adequate water supplies. Fresh ground water and surface water will not be sufficient to satisfy all future demands. Meeting this growing thirst hinges on efforts to develop alternative water sources. This brochure looks at one of the ways to conserve Florida's water resources — reclaiming water for reuse.*

Consider what happens to the water used inside the home. Once down the drain, this water is piped to the local wastewater treatment plant where it undergoes treatment to meet state standards for disposal. Historically, most of the water was disposed by injecting it deep underground or by discharging to surrounding waters or to the ocean. This is a wasteful way to treat such a valuable resource.

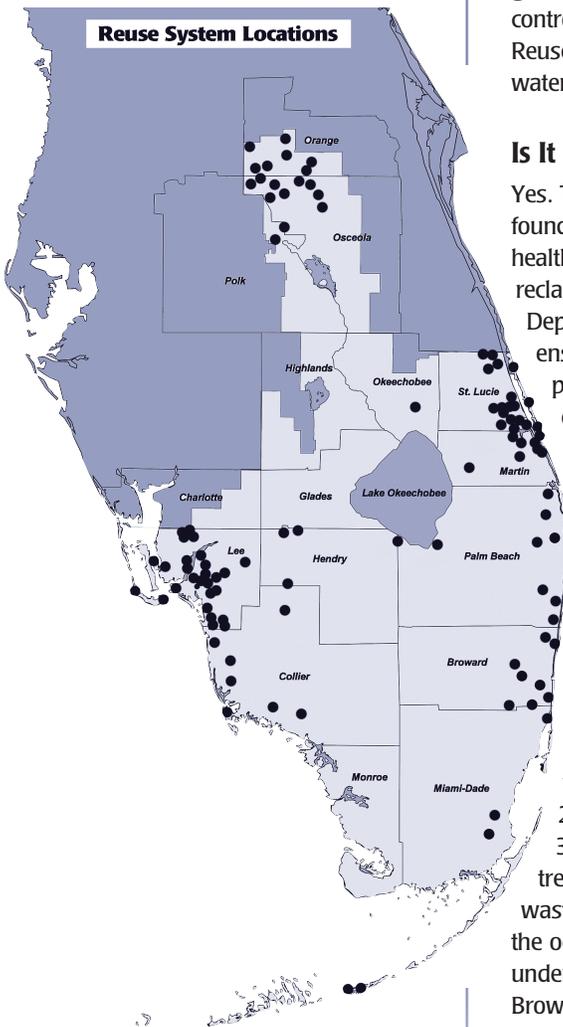
More and more communities are finding that wastewater need not be wasted. They are reclaiming this water for irrigation of residential lots, golf courses, sports fields and orange groves; industrial cooling; car washing; fire protection; and groundwater recharge.



*Reclaimed water sign in Collier County*



The color purple is used to identify pumps, tanks and pipes carrying reclaimed water for reuse. The photo above and on the cover shows a reuse facility in Pompano Beach.



Reuse is also beneficial to the environment. During times of drought, reclaimed water is a dependable source of water because its availability is not dependent on rainfall. The use of reclaimed water is currently exempt from year-round landscape irrigation conservation measures and emergency water shortage restrictions.

### What Is Reuse?

Water reuse is the use of highly treated domestic wastewater (reclaimed water) for beneficial purposes, such as: irrigation of yards, agriculture, golf courses, parks and other green space; industrial purposes such as cooling water and process water; groundwater recharge; toilet flushing; dust control; and environmental restoration. Reuse reduces the reliance on ground water, surface water and potable water.

### Is It Safe to Use Reclaimed Water?

Yes. The Florida Department of Health has found that reuse poses no threat to public health. Continuous monitoring of reclaimed water, required by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection, ensures excellent water quality for protection of the public and the environment. It is not treated for domestic use, such as drinking, cooking or bathing.

### Reuse System Locations

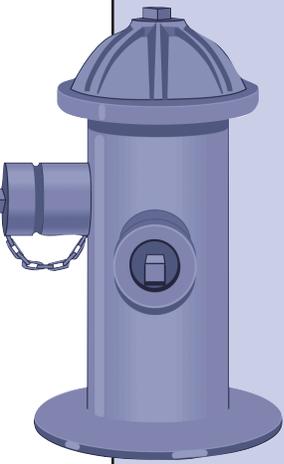
The map to the left shows locations where reclaimed water is being utilized within the 16-county area of the South Florida Water Management District. The dots represent more than 100 wastewater facilities that are reusing 266 million gallons per day (mgd), or 31 percent of the total wastewater treated. For now, the rest of the wastewater (590 mgd) is being sent to the ocean or injected 3,000 feet underground, primarily in Palm Beach, Broward and Miami-Dade counties. This is water that could be reclaimed for reuse.

### Success Stories

- **Pompano Beach** – The city takes wastewater being piped to the ocean, treats it to a higher standard and reuses it locally for irrigating residential lawns, parks and golf courses.
- **Cape Coral** – A reclaimed water irrigation system serves more than 38,000 residences as part of the city's Water Independence for Cape Coral (WICC) campaign. Canal water is used to supplement reclaimed water to meet the 28 mgd system demand.
- **Collier County** – More than 18 mgd of reclaimed water is provided by 2 facilities. The water is reused at almost 20,000 residences, 23 golf courses and several parks and schools.
- **Orlando and Orange County** – The Conserv I and Conserv II reuse systems provide reclaimed water to about 8,000 residences, 85 parks, 12 schools and 13 golf courses – in addition to recharging the aquifer through rapid infiltration basins.
- **Loxahatchee River District** – This system in Jupiter reuses more than 6 mgd of reclaimed water to irrigate 14 golf courses, 14 parks and 4,500 residential lawns.
- **Palm Beach County** – The county's Water Utilities Department provides approximately 14 mgd of reclaimed water to more than 6,000 residences, 10 golf courses, 2 parks, and the Wakodahatchee and Green Cay wetlands. In addition, approximately 20 mgd of reclaimed water is sent to FPL's West County Energy Center for cooling.
- **Reedy Creek Improvement District** – This utility provides reclaimed water for irrigation of the landscaped areas in the Walt Disney World Resort Complex. Four golf courses, hotels, highway medians and parks are irrigated with reclaimed water. A network of rapid infiltration

## OTHER REUSE UTILITIES IN SOUTH FLORIDA

Ave Maria	Miramar
Boca Raton	Naples
Bonita Springs	North Fort Myers
Broward County	Okeechobee
Clewiston	Port St. Lucie
East Central Regional (West Palm Beach)	St. Cloud
Florida Keys Aqueduct Authority	St. Lucie County
Fort Myers	St. Lucie West
Hollywood	Sanibel
Indiantown	Seacoast
LaBelle	South Central Regional (Boynton Beach/Delray Beach)
Lee County	South Martin Regional (Hobe Sound/Jupiter Island)
Marco Island	Toho Water Authority
Martin County	Wellington
Miami-Dade County	



basins is used for groundwater recharge. More than 6 mgd of reclaimed water is used for groundwater recharge and another 5 mgd is used for irrigation.

### Does the SFWMD Help Fund Reuse Projects?

The District has provided financial assistance through the Alternative Water Supply (AWS) grant program to local entities in developing local reuse initiatives. The District has contributed more than \$99 million to 257 reclaimed water projects through its annual grant program.

### Reuse on a Regional Level

- **Kissimmee/Orlando Area** – This area has historically had a high percentage of water reuse. The District is working with utilities in Orange, Osceola and Polk counties to optimize the use of reclaimed water to offset withdrawals from the Floridan aquifer and avoid potential harm to the groundwater resources.
- **Collier, Lee, Martin Counties/ Northern Palm Beach County** – These areas have a high percentage of

reuse. The demand, especially for irrigation, has grown beyond what can reasonably be supplied by traditional groundwater sources and reclaimed water sources. There is a waiting list of users for reclaimed water. Utilities and the District are working together to maximize the use of reclaimed water. This includes interconnecting reclaimed water systems, developing supplemental sources of water and increasing storage.

- **Miami-Dade, Broward, Palm Beach Counties** – Miami-Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties make up the Lower East Coast urban corridor. Since 2007, any increase in future water supply needs cannot draw from the natural system. These counties have large requirements for water reuse due to the Ocean Outfall Act that could offset the regional demands. This would reduce the demand on the regional system and improve Everglades/Lake Okeechobee restoration efforts.

Palm Beach County has taken great strides with water reuse, doubling its reuse over the last 10 years to 58 mgd in 2012, or 48 percent of its wastewater flow.



*Groundwater recharge basins in Orlando*



*Fort Myers city nursery using reclaimed water*



*Wetland created with reclaimed water in south Palm Beach County*

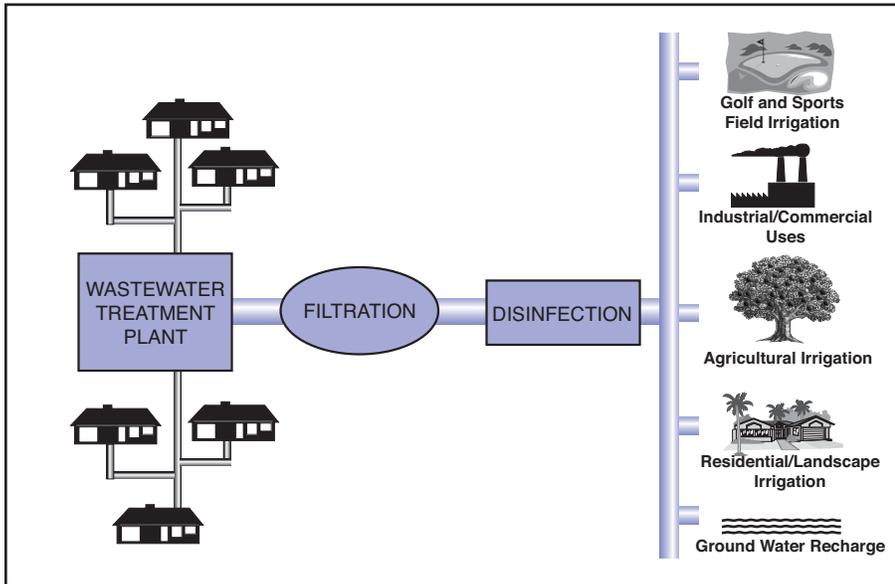


*Freeze-proofing plants with reclaimed water in Orlando*



*Reclaimed water for golf course irrigation in Palm Beach Gardens*

## How Water Is Reclaimed



*This diagram follows the process of turning domestic wastewater into reclaimed water for reuse. Separate pipes carry wastewater to the treatment plant where it undergoes treatment, including filtration and disinfection, before it can be distributed. Reuse eliminates the dependence on potable water, surface water or ground water for these uses.*

– FOR MORE INFORMATION ON WATER REUSE –  
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– FOR MORE INFORMATION ON WATER CONSERVATION –  
[www.savewaterfl.com](http://www.savewaterfl.com)



For more information on this subject, scan this QR code using a barcode reader app on your smartphone.

**The South Florida Water Management District** is a regional, governmental agency that oversees the water resources in the southern half of the state. It is the oldest and largest of the state's five water management districts.

Our Mission is to manage and protect water resources of the region by balancing and improving water quality, flood control, natural systems and water supply.

This "Below the Surface" publication on Water Reuse directly supports our mission of water supply.



**[sfwmd.gov](http://sfwmd.gov)**

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## DID YOU KNOW?

- More than 127,000 residences, 199 golf courses, 269 parks and 74 schools are using reclaimed water for irrigation within the boundaries of the South Florida Water Management District.
- Reclaimed water doesn't smell or stain sidewalks and driveways like well water or canal water.
- Nature is the ultimate reuser of water. Through what is called the "hydrologic cycle," today's rainfall is the same water recycled over millions and millions of years.
- An average of 725 million gallons per day (mgd) of reclaimed water is reused every day in Florida. About 266 mgd of this reuse occurs within the 16-county area of the South Florida Water Management District.
- Most of the reclaimed water (55%) is used for irrigation of public areas like residences, parks, schools, medians, golf courses, etc.
- Users of reclaimed water are currently exempt from year-round irrigation measures and restrictions imposed during water shortages.
- As the population grows, wastewater flows will increase and so will the ability to produce more reclaimed water.
- Sixty-four percent of wastewater treated in the District is in Broward and Miami-Dade counties. Of that, only about five percent is reused.
- Putting reclaimed water to beneficial use is "Recycling at its Best."