



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **District Helps Princeton Students Study Everglades**

*Stormwater Treatment Area serves as educational site for water quality study*

**West Palm Beach, FL** — Not only are Stormwater Treatment Areas (STAs) improving Everglades water quality, these wetlands are also serving as teaching tools for professionals and students alike. Today, twelve environmental resource students and four professors from Princeton University collected water samples in one of the STAs, constructed wetlands that use aquatic plants to trap excess nutrients.

The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) has hosted guest scientists and officials from as far away as Israel and China to study Everglades restoration and water quality monitoring techniques, along with industry-leading best practices in hydrologic modeling and water supply. The Princeton group joins that list of scientists and researchers, learning lessons that can provide significant environmental benefits far beyond South Florida.

The Princeton students collected water samples from STA-1 East in Palm Beach County for a land use and water quality project. The samples, taken as water flows in and out of the STA, were frozen and shipped back to Princeton for a study designed to test the students' hypothesis that the wetlands are helping to clean the water. District data fully support the effectiveness of the STAs, which to date have prevented more than 1,000 metric tons of phosphorus from reaching the Everglades.

The students plan to conduct a follow-up mapping exercise at Princeton, where they will look at the different land uses in the past and today. They will also study the different water chemistries in the past and today so they can learn about human impacts and the critical role of wetlands in protecting marine resources.

District staff assisted with the sampling and explained operation of a pump station. Florida Atlantic University's Pine Jog Environmental Center briefed the students on the STAs. During the last 15 years, the District has constructed more than 45,000 acres of treatment wetlands to improve the quality of water entering the famed River of Grass.

For more information on the District's efforts to improve Everglades water quality, visit [www.sfwmd.gov](http://www.sfwmd.gov).

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**About the South Florida Water Management District – [Celebrating 60 Years \(1949-2009\)](#)**

*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.*