



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

## NEWS RELEASE

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**SFWMD Expands Land-Buying Efforts Along Shingle Creek**  
*District partners with Osceola County, City of Kissimmee to preserve and restore headwaters of the Everglades*

**West Palm Beach, FL** — Expanding an existing land-buying partnership, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) Governing Board recently committed up to an additional \$2 million to help Osceola County and the City of Kissimmee with future conservation land acquisitions at the headwaters of America's Everglades.

"This commitment builds upon a productive history between the District, Osceola County and the City of Kissimmee of preserving land along Shingle Creek," said SFWMD Governing Board Vice-Chair Jerry Montgomery. "Conservation of this land helps protect wildlife habitat and water quality at the headwaters of America's Everglades, while providing countless recreational opportunities in the Kissimmee region."

Since 2004, the three parties have worked together to conserve about 208 acres along the creek, which passes through Kissimmee and Osceola County on the way to Lake Tohopekaliga. For those acquisitions, the District invested \$2.7 million specifically for mitigation of wetland impacts associated with construction of the Western Beltway (State Road 429). The mitigation funds will also be used for the \$2 million in future land purchases approved by the Governing Board.

"The commitment of the South Florida Water Management District will allow the preservation of a valuable natural asset for Osceola County and the City of Kissimmee and continued protection for the headwaters of the Everglades," said Osceola County Commissioner Michael Harford. "Shingle Creek provides excellent opportunities for our citizens to see the natural beauty of our state while preserving the balance needed to provide natural resources and recreation for generations to come."

"The City of Kissimmee has been committed to the success of the Shingle Creek land acquisition efforts for more than 20 years," added Kissimmee Mayor Jim Swan. "The

conservation of these sensitive lands would not be possible without the District's collaboration with local government and its continued investment in this most valuable project."

Future land purchases made with the new funding will be managed according to a 10-year stewardship agreement approved in August 2008. Under the agreement, the District provides up to \$100,000 a year – matching city and county contributions dollar-for-dollar – for maintaining and restoring public lands along Shingle Creek. Land management activities include improved public access, prescribed burns where possible, control of exotic and invasive plants and animals and the reintroduction of native plants that once existed on these lands.

The preservation of land along Shingle Creek was identified as a SFWMD priority through the Save Our Rivers program, which enables the agency to acquire land necessary for water management, water supply and the conservation and protection of water resources. The entire drainage basin of the creek, the northernmost tributary in the Greater Everglades system, spans more than 110 square miles and encompasses a floodplain swamp dominated by cypress, black gum and red maple trees. The floodplain and surrounding wetlands cleanse water bound for Lake Tohopekaliga and provide natural flood protection for nearby communities.

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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.*