



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Estuary Monitoring Agreement Benefits Biscayne Bay**

*SFWMD and Miami-Dade County partner for health of Biscayne Bay, Barnes Sound*

**Miami, FL** - The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) has entered into a five-year cooperative agreement with Miami-Dade County to continue support for long-term environmental monitoring in Biscayne Bay, Barnes Sound and their associated tributaries. The monitoring effort documents how changes in both estuarine water quality and seagrass growth impact the South Florida coastal ecosystem and the effects of various Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) projects adjacent to Biscayne Bay.

"Monitoring programs like this one provide the South Florida Water Management District and its partners with the quantifiable data we need to show the benefits or required enhancements of our water quality improvement projects," said SFWMD Governing Board Chairman Eric Buermann, who resides in Miami-Dade County.

The monitoring program, known as the Biscayne Bay Surface Water Quality and Biological Monitoring Program, is conducted by the county's Department of Environmental Resources Management (DERM). DERM scientists collect water and seagrass samples from basins in the study area and analyze them for a variety of chemical, physical and biological features.

The water samples provide information about water quality at 85 fixed monitoring stations, and the seagrass samples provide information about fish and invertebrate habitat at 100 random monitoring stations. These monitoring stations stretch from Barnes Sound in southern Miami-Dade County to the northern part of Biscayne Bay near the Broward County line.

This long-term monitoring effort, which began in 1979, provides a substantial period of record that serves as a baseline to evaluate estuarine restoration. The agreement supports monitoring for the next five years with a \$1.15 million investment.

Coastal ecosystems, comprised of 10 major estuarine areas, are found throughout the SFWMD's 16-county region, including Biscayne Bay. The SFWMD is working with many organizations, including Miami-Dade County, to produce a broad range of scientific and water resource information for better managing freshwater inputs to these vital ecosystems and for supporting their restoration.

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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.*