



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

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Wellington Opens Recreation in Preserve at Marjory Stoneman Douglas Everglades Habitat

*Partnership with SFWMD melds water quality improvement, flood protection and
recreation*



(Click on the picture for a larger version.)

West Palm Beach, FL — Completing a partnership with the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD), the Village of Wellington recently opened pedestrian and equestrian trails along with a host of recreational opportunities at an Everglades restoration project to improve water quality and enhance flood protection. The project was officially named the Environmental Preserve at the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Everglades Habitat.

“The preserve is already improving the quality of water flowing into the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge and enhancing flood protection for residents,” said Kenneth Ammon, P.E., SFWMD Deputy Executive Director - Everglades Restoration and Capital Projects. “Recreational opportunities, when

compatible with restoration, add significant value to efforts to protect South Florida's ecosystems."

As the first Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) project completed in Palm Beach County, the preserve, formerly known as the Acme Basin B Discharge Project, is improving Everglades water quality by diverting the direct discharge of urban runoff away from the Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge. As a result of this project, this runoff is now directed north to a 5,132-acre constructed treatment wetland, known as Stormwater Treatment Area 1 East, before it enters the Refuge. The project included construction of two pump stations and a 365-acre water storage area to impound flood water and provide a buffer between natural and developed areas.

The District and the Village of Wellington invested approximately \$35 million in the project, which began in 2007 and was completed in November. Along with its environmental and flood protection benefits, the project is also providing recreational opportunities to residents with a combination of boardwalks, educational displays and deep lagoons that will enhance the ecosystem and wildlife habitat. The American Society of Civil Engineers recently gave the effort the 2009-2010 Outstanding Project of the Year Award.

"For Wellington, this project represents the culmination of over a decade of stormwater and environmental planning. Today, we can celebrate our ability to resolve complex environmental issues through collaboration and partnerships," said John W. Bonde, Deputy Village Manager. "We have also created an opportunity for our residents to understand the delicate balance between water quality, flood protection and environmental restoration."

The Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan is a framework for restoring, protecting and preserving the water resources of central and southern Florida. The State of Florida and the South Florida Water Management District have invested approximately \$2.4 billion toward this effort, including approximately \$300 million in construction. Through June 30, 2010, 60 percent — or approximately 234,853 acres — of the estimated lands needed to implement CERP have been acquired.

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About the South Florida Water Management District

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.