



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

## NEWS RELEASE

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**SFWMD, Partners Sponsor Art That Saves Water**  
*Youth-decorated rain barrels will conserve water in Lee County*



*(Click on the picture to see rain barrels from the contest.)*

**Fort Myers, FL** — Art met water conservation once again in Lee County with the latest youth contest to decorate colorful rain barrels. The 35-gallon containers will be installed in Bonita Springs Regional Park and the Bonita Springs YMCA as a tool to help conserve water at these facilities.

“This art contest proves to be a creative way of educating young people about the importance of water conservation,” said Dan DeLisi, a South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) Governing Board member. “The painted rain barrels will not only save water, they’ll serve as colorful reminders that Bonita Springs youth are becoming good stewards of South Florida’s natural resources.”

For the event, 150 students, ages 6 to 13, painted South Florida nature scenes on nearly a dozen barrels donated by the University of Florida IFAS Florida Yards & Neighborhoods Program. Partners also included the City of Bonita Springs Parks and Recreation Youth Camp and the Bonita Springs YMCA.

Rain barrels are the modern version of cisterns that Florida pioneers used to collect rainwater. Cisterns were once relied on for drinking water, washing, bathing and crop irrigation.

Today, on a smaller scale, rain barrels help conserve water supplies by collecting rainwater that falls on roofs for later use, primarily in landscape irrigation. The water-saving containers reduce the amount of potable (drinking) water used for landscape irrigation, which accounts for 50 percent of the water used per person per day in South Florida. In addition, rain barrels help reduce stormwater runoff from residential lawns and driveways, which can affect water quality in rivers, creeks, estuaries and other waterways.

Encouraging the use of rain barrels is just one strategy in the District's Comprehensive Water Conservation Program. The SFWMD Governing Board approved the program in September 2008 to encourage more responsible use of water resources throughout South Florida. Numerous stakeholders worked with the District to define specific regulatory, voluntary and incentive-based programs and in-depth education and marketing plans that will help foster a year-round conservation ethic.

For more information on rain barrels, see [Quick Facts on Rain Harvesting](#). For comprehensive information on water conservation, visit the District's conservation website, [www.savewaterfl.com](http://www.savewaterfl.com).

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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.*