



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

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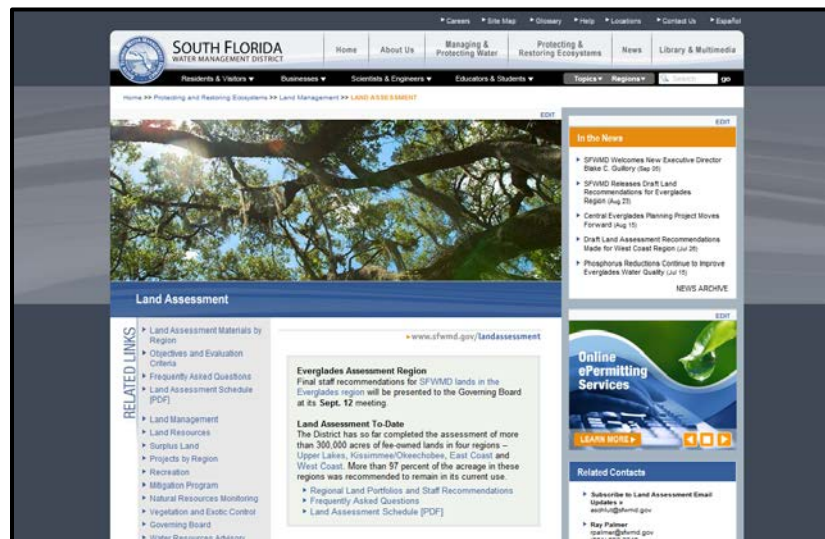
South Florida Water Management District

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SFWMD Completes First Phase of Comprehensive Land Assessment *97 percent of acreage reviewed will remain in current use to support core mission*



(Click on the image to visit www.sfwmd.gov/landassessment.)

West Palm Beach, FL – As part of an ongoing effort to maximize resources toward its mission-critical responsibilities, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) has completed the first phase of a comprehensive assessment of its public lands.

This phase was a review of the District’s nearly 750,000 acres of fee-owned lands – properties in which the agency has full or shared ownership rights. More than 97 percent of the acreage evaluated across five geographic regions was determined to directly support the District’s core mission: balancing and improving water quality, flood control, natural systems and water supply. The majority of fee-owned lands were recommended to remain in SFWMD ownership in their current uses.

“Completion of this comprehensive effort provides a thorough assessment of the District’s land resources,” said SFWMD Governing Board Chairman Daniel O’Keefe. “With significant input from the general public and local stakeholders, the Board is now

able to make well-informed decisions that best direct our resources toward District priorities.”

Approximately 3 percent, or 21,000 acres, of lands that do not directly support the core mission were identified for possible exchange or surplus. Following guidelines from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), the District will evaluate swapping these properties for more needed lands as well as considering them for potential sale. As evaluations are completed, final recommendations on exchange or surplus will be presented to the Governing Board for approval before action is taken.

Further analysis is also being carried out on three properties: the Munger Tract in Orange County, Pal-Mar in Martin and Palm Beach counties and Bird Drive Basin in Miami-Dade County. Due to a variety of assessment challenges, SFWMD staff identified the need for further, in-depth research on these sites.

Public Process and Next Steps

Launched in January, the land assessment was designed to thoroughly analyze each property to determine how its current use contributes to the agency’s core mission. Throughout an extensive public process, the District has remained committed to transparency and has actively encouraged public and stakeholder participation. Outreach efforts included:

- Utilizing a dedicated web page (www.sfwmd.gov/landassessment) to post more than 600 pages of land profiles, staff recommendations for each of the five regions, presentations from public meetings and a variety of other documents
- Receiving nearly 1,500 public and stakeholder comments and more than 400 responses from SFWMD subject matter experts
- Holding 12 regional public workshops throughout the assessment process at various locations around South Florida
- Providing the Water Resources Advisory Commission (WRAC) and Governing Board with regular updates at their monthly public meetings

With the fee-owned phase of the land assessment complete, a comprehensive review of 700,000 acres of non-fee-owned lands is scheduled to start during the next fiscal year. Most non-fee-owned lands are properties in which the District has conservation or flowage easements. Reassessments of all District lands will be conducted as needed.

More information on the SFWMD land assessment process, including final staff recommendations by region, is available at www.sfwmd.gov/landassessment.

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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.