



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

## NEWS RELEASE

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[www.sfwmd.gov/news](http://www.sfwmd.gov/news)

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### **Recreation Abounds in South Florida on National Public Lands Day** *SFWMD public lands offer numerous opportunities to enjoy the outdoors*



*A campsite at the DuPuis Management Area in Martin County. (Click on the SFWMD Recreational Guide for information on recreational opportunities, including an interactive listing of activities and locations.)*

**West Palm Beach, FL** – With approximately 600,000 acres of land open to the public, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) joins the Florida Department of Environmental Protection in promoting opportunities to celebrate 2013 National Public Lands Day this Saturday.

Camping, bird-watching, hiking, hunting and horseback riding are among the most popular activities on District-managed lands. These and other recreational opportunities throughout the District's 16-county region can be found online at [www.sfwmd.gov/recreation](http://www.sfwmd.gov/recreation).

#### **2013 Recreation Highlights (Fiscal Year 2012-2013)**

- An estimated 10,000 campers utilized District-managed lands
- More than 10,000 duck and 300 alligator hunters used Stormwater Treatment Areas in Palm Beach and Hendry counties
- More than 1,000 equestrian enthusiasts rode through the Kissimmee area

- More than 50 organized-bird watching tours with approximately 1,500 participants in Stormwater Treatment Areas in Palm Beach, Hendry and Martin counties
- More than 300 students and teachers participated in educational activities at the DuPuis Management Area visitor center in Martin County
- More than 600 people participated in guided nature hikes on the Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed (CREW) property in Lee and Collier counties
- 10,000 hours logged by volunteers serving as campground hosts, leading bird-watching tours and assisting with trail maintenance, trash cleanups and environmental education
- 66 trailhead/parking areas, 50 designated camping areas, 334 miles of trails, 238 geocaches

Each year, the District evaluates opportunities to improve access to public land for recreation. Recent additions include:

- In a partnership with Audubon of Martin County, organized bird-watching tours have recently started at the Lakeside Ranch Stormwater Treatment Area.
- In cooperation with the Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge, staff opened a new 7-mile trail for hiking and bicycling connecting STA-1E and STA-1W.
- A new multi-use (hiking, biking, horseback riding) public trail was opened on the east side of the Loxahatchee River Management Area property.



**Recently opened for use, the S-65D Lock Boat Ramp in Okeechobee County was built as part of the Kissimmee River Restoration Project. The 5-acre public use facility includes a dual-lane boat ramp with floating dock; restroom; vehicle and trailer parking, including ADA parking; and solar lighting.**

**For more information:**

- [National Public Lands Day](#)
- [Florida Department of Environmental Protection Events](#)

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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.*