



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

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SFWMD Begins Next Steps of Land Assessment Process

Public meeting scheduled for March 28 to discuss first property under consideration for possible surplus or exchange

West Palm Beach, FL — As part of an ongoing effort to maximize resources toward its mission-critical responsibilities and continue its commitment to transparency, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) is moving forward with the next phase of its comprehensive land assessment.

The District will be considering public lands for exchange or surplus that were identified in 2013 during the first phase of the land assessment. As each property becomes available for proposed action, a public meeting will be held and detailed information will be posted in a database that will be available soon on [the District's website](#). Following the public process, the SFWMD Governing Board will vote on a final recommendation.

The first public meeting is scheduled for 10 a.m. on Friday, March 28, at SFWMD Headquarters in West Palm Beach. One parcel will be discussed: a vacant 20.41-acre site in St. Cloud that was originally acquired by the District for construction of a field station.

Taking into account extensive public input as well as feedback from SFWMD subject matter experts, the District determined during the first phase of the assessment that the properties now under review for possible exchange or surplus do not directly support the agency's core mission. Since September, agency staff has been following guidelines from the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to further evaluate swapping these properties for more needed lands or potentially selling them.

Land Assessment Process

Launched in January 2013, the District's comprehensive land assessment was designed to ensure that each SFWMD-owned property is being put to its most effective use.

The first phase of the land assessment 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 of balancing and improving flood control, water quality, natural systems and water supply. The large majority of fee-owned lands were recommended to remain in SFWMD ownership in their current uses.

Throughout the process, the District 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

For more information on surplus lands, visit www.sfwmd.gov/landresources and click the Surplus Land link. More details on the SFWMD land assessment process – including a complete list of fee-owned properties that were identified for possible surplus or exchange – are 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.