



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

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Recreation Abounds in South Florida on National Public Lands Day *SFWMD public lands offer extensive 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 635,000 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 2014 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.

2014 Recreation Highlights (Fiscal Year 2013-2014)

- 330 miles of trails, 270 geocaches, 50 designated camping areas and 66 trailhead/parking areas were available for public use.
- An estimated 10,000 campers utilized District-managed lands.

- More than 11,000 waterfowl hunters and 1,300 alligator hunters used Stormwater Treatment Areas (STAs) in Palm Beach and Hendry counties.
- More than 1,000 equestrian enthusiasts rode through the Kissimmee area.
- More than 65 organized bird-watching tours with more than 1,600 participants were held in Stormwater Treatment Areas in Palm Beach, Hendry and Martin counties.
- More than 270 students and teachers participated in environmental education activities at the DuPuis Management Area visitor center in Martin County.
- More than 760 people participated in guided nature hikes on the Corkscrew Regional Ecosystem Watershed (CREW) property in Lee and Collier counties.
- More than 11,000 hours were logged by volunteers serving as campground hosts, leading bird-watching and wildlife tours and assisting with trail maintenance, trash cleanups and environmental education programs.

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

- The STA-5/6 Public Use Area was opened. Activities include hiking, biking and wildlife viewing. Hours are from sunrise to sunset Fridays, Saturdays, Sundays and Mondays. Amenities include a parking area, informational signage, restrooms and a shelter.
- In partnership with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and volunteer groups, specialty youth hunts were conducted under the State's Youth Hunting Program on the Istokpoga Floodplain in the Kissimmee River area in Highlands County and the Grassy Island property in Okeechobee County.
- The District hosted a Wounded Warrior Outdoors alligator hunt in STA-2.

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.