

SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

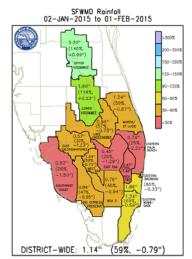
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January Rainfall Feeds Lake Okeechobee, Leaves South Florida Dry Above-average Kissimmee rainfall contributed to lake inflows



(Click on map for larger version.)

West Palm Beach, FL — January rainfall was below average across the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD), with a notable exception of wetter conditions in the Kissimmee basins.

"Above-average rainfall in the Kissimmee region sustained flows into Lake Okeechobee at a time when we would like to see the lake level falling," said Jeff Kivett, SFWMD Division Director of Operations, Engineering and Construction. "In response, the District continues to move water south of the lake and utilize all available storage options."

District-wide, 1.14 inches of rain fell during the month, representing 59 percent of average, or 0.79 inches below average.

But the Upper Kissimmee Basin, which helps feed Lake Okeechobee, received 3.20 inches of rainfall, representing 145 percent of average, or 0.99 inches above average. The Lower Kissimmee Basin also received above-average rainfall, with 1.90 inches representing 114 percent of average.

Lake Okeechobee received only 0.96 inches of direct rainfall, representing 57 percent of average, or 0.73 inches below average. The lake stood at 14.67 feet NGVD today, which is 0.02 feet above its historic average for this time of year but more than a half a foot higher than this time last year.

The remainder of the District was dry in January, with Palm Beach and the Southwest Coast being the driest areas. Eastern Palm Beach received only 0.74 inches of rain, representing 25 percent of average, or 2.22 inches below average.

South Florida's Dry Season

- November May
- About 18 inches of rain is the average
- May and October are important transition months
- March, April and May have the highest evaporation rates and lowest rainfall

The Southwest Coast received only 0.52 inches of rain, representing 26 percent of average, or 1.50 inches below average.

More information is available at:

- SFWMD Weather/Rainfall Data
- Climate Prediction Center Precipitation Forecast
- Interactive "Moving Water South" map: www.sfwmd.gov/movingwatersouth

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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.