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### **BLOG: SFWMD 2011 Budget: When not raising taxes cuts revenues**

09/22/2010

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Palm Beach Post - Online

Stapleton, Christine

The South Florida Water Management District did not raise its tax rate when it approved its \$1.07 billion budget for 2011 on Tuesday.

It didn't cut taxes, either. But the ongoing slide in property values left the district with \$60 million less in property tax revenue than this year. About 37 percent of the district's budget comes from property tax revenue.

The tax rate remains at about .62 cents per \$1,000 of taxable value. That means a house with a taxable value of \$200,000 will pay \$124.80 in district taxes.

There will be no raises for employees but and no lay-offs. However, the budgets for staff training, travel and conferences were slashed.

Ongoing green initiatives, native plant landscaping, high-efficiency and motion sensor lighting, low-flow, waterless and dual-flow plumbing fixtures and a reflective membrane on the roof, saved the district \$10 million.

The initiatives have resulted in a 30 percent drop in water usage since 2006 and a nearly 12 percent decrease in electric use.

The 2011 budget includes \$197 million for the purchase of 26,800 acres of land from U.S. Sugar to be used for treating water destined for the Everglades. Another \$120 million will be spent on the on-going construction of storm water treatment areas around Lake Okeechobee.

### **Judge reaffirms order for EPA chief to appear in court over Glades cleanup**

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Miami Herald, The

Morgan, Curtis

Five months ago, U.S. District Judge Alan Gold ordered the top bosses of two state and federal environmental agencies to show up in his Miami courtroom to explain in person how they are going to end the "glacial delay" miring efforts to clean up the Everglades.

On Tuesday, he reaffirmed his order, rejecting a request from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to provide a substitute for Administrator Lisa Jackson, who argued that a high-ranking assistant oversaw Glades issues and that Jackson was too busy to make the Oct. 7 hearing.

"Furthermore, the demands of the administrator's schedule, including travel to Asia as part of an official government delegation beginning October 8, would create a hardship for her to prepare for and attend the hearing," an EPA motion filed last month read. Gold's response: See you in court, Ms. Jackson.

In a nine-page order, the judge questioned the federal agency's priorities, saying the EPA had not "demonstrated any showing of a matter of national importance, issue, or great significance to preclude" her attendance.

In April, in a federal lawsuit first filed in 2005 by the Miccosukee Tribe and the Friends of the Everglades, Gold delivered a blistering 48-page order finding state lawmakers and water managers had crafted "incomprehensible" rules and loopholes pushing back a 2006 cleanup deadline by a decade and that the EPA erred in approving watered-down standards.

Earlier this month, the EPA filed a report with Gold calling for a 42,000-acre expansion of the state's existing network of reservoirs and pollution treatment marshes -- projects that could cost taxpayers billions of dollars -- and endorsing Gov. Charlie Crist's controversial land deal with the U.S. Sugar Corp. But the proposal would again push back deadlines to meet the standard for phosphorus, a fertilizer ingredient that flows from farms, ranches and yards and can poison native marsh plants.

In a response to e-mail questions about whether Jackson would show up, Adora Andy, an EPA spokeswoman, said, "We are working with the Department of Justice to respond to the Judge's order."

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