



News Release

SFWMD Board Celebrates Restoration of 6,700 Acres of Wetlands in Martin County

Restored wetlands at Allapattah Flats Wetland Reserve Project reduce harmful discharges to St. Lucie Estuary and improve water quality.

PALM CITY, Fla. - The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) Governing Board celebrated the completion of the **Allapattah Flats Wetland Reserve Project** in western Martin County this morning. The SFWMD Governing Board was joined by the Martin County Board of County Commissioners, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Busch Wildlife Sanctuary, and the public to celebrate 13,000 acres of land conservation, including 6,700 acres of restored wetlands.

"This is the latest win for South Florida's environment under the leadership and direction of Gov. Ron DeSantis," said **SFWMD Governing Board Member Jacqui Thurlow-Lippisch**, a Martin County native. "Look around at this beautiful restored 13,000-acre wetland and all the native wildlife that will call it home and all of the recreation opportunities for the public, all while helping to improve the water quality of the St. Lucie Estuary. This is the beauty of restoration in action."

A Natural Lands component of the *Indian River Lagoon - South Project*, property for Allapattah Flats Wetland Reserve Project was jointly purchased by SFWMD and Martin County and restored in cooperation with the USDA National Resources Conservation Service. SFWMD made numerous improvements to the property including:

- Building 14 miles of berms
- Building 12 water control structures, and
- Installing 19 ditch plugs

The improvements raised the water level on the property and helped restore it to its natural state as wetland habitat. The property also now stores its own stormwater runoff.

The project will work in conjunction with other Everglades projects being completed in the coming years that reduce damaging discharges to the St. Lucie Estuary from the local basin and Lake Okeechobee. SFWMD continues to advance important Everglades restoration projects that will send more water south, reduce harmful discharges, and improve water quality in South Florida.

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The South Florida Water Management District is a regional governmental agency that manages the water resources in the southern part of the state. It is the oldest and largest of the state's five water management districts. Our mission is to safeguard and restore South Florida's water resources and ecosystems, protect our communities from flooding, and meet the region's water needs while connecting with the public and stakeholders.

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