

# Florida Water Facts

- ◆ Florida's total water area covers 4,308 square miles and ranks third in the nation.
- ◆ Florida's coastline stretches 1,197 miles with 663 miles of beaches.
- ◆ The state has more than 11,000 miles of rivers, streams, and waterways.
- ◆ Florida has about 7,700 lakes that are larger than 10 acres.
- ◆ Florida has more than 700 springs with water that comes primarily from the aquifer.
- ◆ The state has 33 first magnitude springs (flow greater than 100 cubic feet per second), more than any other state.
- ◆ The Everglades is really a river that flows at the slow rate of a quarter mile per day.
- ◆ Florida receives 50-54 inches of rain annually.
- ◆ The average Floridian uses about 124 gallons of water daily.
- ◆ Depending on the region, between 65 and 85 percent of the water used is groundwater pumped from Florida's underground aquifer system.

## Water Management in Florida

Water is one of Florida's most important natural resources, essential for maintaining public health and continuing economic community development. Florida faces complicated issues surrounding water's allocation, use, and conservation, and many governmental agencies work together to balance competing needs so that people all have necessary water supplies, now and in the future. For example, questions about water utility rates, drinking water quality, storm runoff, well drilling, beach erosion, agricultural irrigation, and restoration projects are best answered by the agency responsible for that aspect of water management.

## Florida Public Service Commission

The Florida Public Service Commission (FPSC or Commission) regulates water and wastewater utility companies in 37 of Florida's 67 counties. The Jurisdictional Counties map shows the counties that have officially transferred jurisdiction to the Commission. In non-jurisdictional counties, the Board of County Commissioners usually has the responsibility for regulating the water utilities.

Regulated water and wastewater companies must apply to the Commission for a certificate of authorization before they can supply services to consumers. The FPSC establishes the service territories, regulates the rates the companies can charge, and requires the utilities to provide reliable service to all who request it. The Commission must also approve each utility's tariff sheet, which contains the company's rate schedules, charges, and rules.

Florida Statutes (Chapter 367) further explain the Commission's authority in the economic regulation of water and wastewater companies.

The Commission's main water conservation focus is economic regulation that affects the demand for water. Through consumer education, the FPSC promotes cooperation and policy coordination with other state water and environmental regulators.

## Other agencies and organizations that handle water issues:

Florida Department of Health, [www.doh.state.fl.us](http://www.doh.state.fl.us)

American Water Works Association, [www.awwa.org](http://www.awwa.org)

Florida Rural Water Association, [www.frwa.net](http://www.frwa.net)

U. S. Environmental Protection Agency, [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov)

Florida Water and Pollution Control Operators Association, [www.fwpcoa.org](http://www.fwpcoa.org)

Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, [www.myfwc.com](http://www.myfwc.com)

Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, [www.doacs.state.fl.us](http://www.doacs.state.fl.us)

For further information, contact the

**Florida Public Service Commission**  
**Office of Consumer Assistance & Outreach**  
2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard  
Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0850

phone: 1-800-342-3552

fax: 1-800-511-0809

e-mail: [contact@psc.state.fl.us](mailto:contact@psc.state.fl.us)

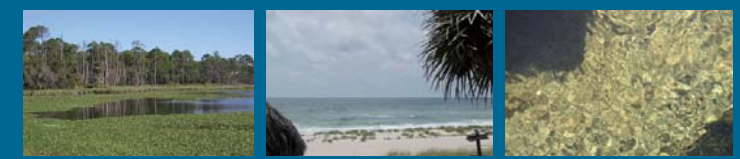
Visit our Internet home page at

[www.FloridaPSC.com](http://www.FloridaPSC.com)

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**Y**ou can't conserve what you haven't got."  
*Marjorie Stoneman Douglas*



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## Florida Department of Environmental Protection

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) is the primary state agency charged with managing Florida's air, land, and water resources. The state's freshwater systems—lakes, rivers, streams, springs, wetlands, and groundwater—provide water for household consumption, agricultural use, and recreation. The FDEP monitors, protects, and improves the water quality of the state's waters while increasing available water supplies to meet the needs of current and future residents.

Regulatory and permitting programs for using surface and groundwater, constructing wells, managing stormwater, and treating wastewater help the agency achieve its mission. The FDEP Web site ([www.dep.state.fl.us](http://www.dep.state.fl.us)) gives consumer and recreational information in addition to details on laws, rules, and permits. To plan and manage water supplies for the future, the FDEP works in conjunction with water management districts.

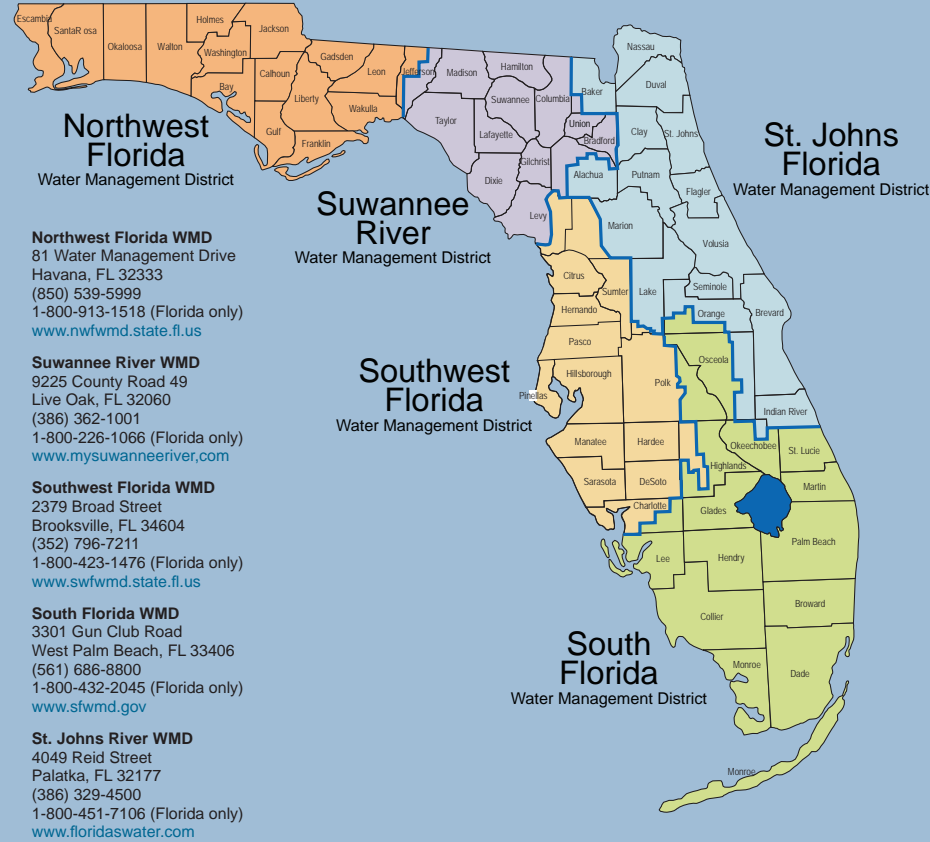


## Water Management Districts

In 1972, the state legislature passed the Florida Water Resources Act (Chapter 373, Florida Statutes), establishing five water management districts (WMD) which are regional agencies under the FDEP's supervision. The district areas, as seen on the Water Management Districts map, roughly correspond to the state's major watersheds. Each water management district, consisting of a Governing Board appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate, works to improve, maintain, and protect the individual region's water supplies. WMD programs include flood protection, aquifer recharge, water shortage planning, well construction, and surface water management in addition to conservation and restoration projects unique to each district.

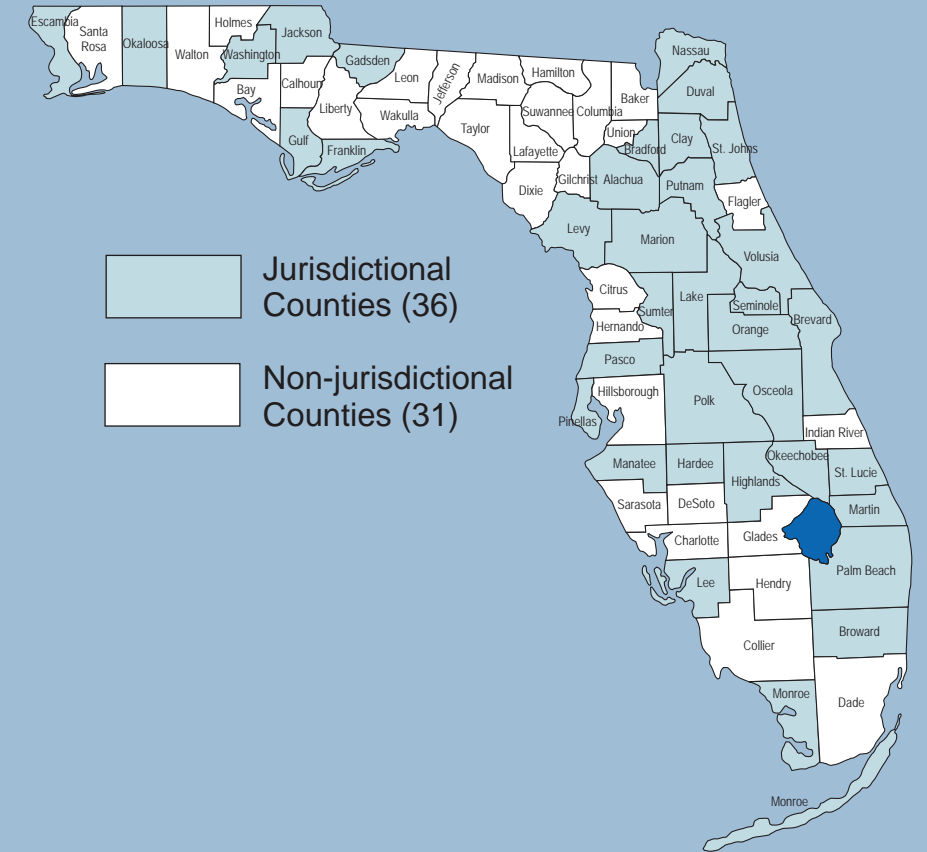
Water management districts work in conjunction with local governments to develop responsible water use plans. Consumers may request specific information and access brochures and other materials through the individual district's website.

## Water Management Districts



Source: Florida Department of Environmental Protection, [www.dep.state.fl.us/secretary/watman/](http://www.dep.state.fl.us/secretary/watman/)

## Jurisdictional Counties



## Smart Water Use Tips

- The human brain is 75 percent water! Good health requires about 2½ quarts of water per day.
- Retrofit faucets with aerators and showerheads with low flow models.
- Consider water-efficient models when shopping for new clothes washers.
- Use drought-tolerant plants for landscaping.
- Fix leaks in your home: a dripping faucet may waste 30 gallons per day, and a leaky toilet may use an extra 100 gallons per day.
- Install timers on irrigation systems to prevent overwatering.
- Use a shut-off valve on garden hoses; a hose left running may waste more than 500 gallons of water in an hour.
- Store drinking water in the refrigerator instead of letting the tap run to get cold water.
- Dispose of hazardous waste properly; a quart of oil can spoil 250,000 gallons of water.
- Manage your own water supply wisely because every drop counts.