

## Take a hike during the month of February

The Suwannee River Water Management District invites the public to go hiking on public lands throughout the month of February to celebrate Florida Hiking Trails Month.

“Some interesting features you might see while hiking on District lands include unique wildlife, whitewater rapids and champion trees – the largest of trees within a species,” said Edwin McCook, the District’s land management specialist.

Following are some of the best hiking opportunities within the District:

- Big Shoals**, Hamilton County
  - Steinhatchee Trail**, Taylor County
  - Falling Creek Falls**, Columbia County
- More information about these and other hiking opportunities are available at [www.mysuwanneeriver.com/recreation](http://www.mysuwanneeriver.com/recreation).

For more information contact Edwin McCook at 386.362.1001.

The District acquires and manages lands for flood control, water quality protection and natural resource conservation.

Lands are open to the public for various recreational activities.



Hikers explore a trail on a District tract in Hamilton County.

## Water Shortage Advisory still in effect within District

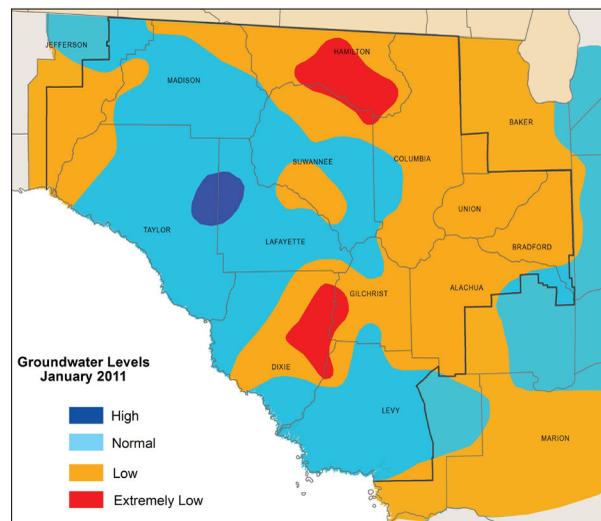
**Did you know that a Phase I Water Shortage Advisory is in effect within the District?** The District Governing Board declared the advisory in December 2010 in response to long-term drought conditions.

“We had the third driest autumn since the 1890s,” said Megan Wetherington, District senior professional engineer.

November and December received an average of less than 2 inches of rain each month and October received less than 1 inch. In October, two gages reported no rainfall, making it the driest October on record at those gages.

Rainfall deficits resulted in a significant drop in groundwater and surfacewater levels and came close to record low levels.

**How has recent rainfall affected conditions?** In January the District received one- and a-half times its normal rainfall, with an average of 6 inches



January 2011 Groundwater Conditions

District-wide and up to 9 inches in some areas.

Wetherington said while the rainfall ended a 3-month deficit, hydrologic conditions have not fully recovered and the District remains in a drought.

“Though we’ve seen some improvement in our rivers, groundwater levels have only

received minor improvements and remain below normal throughout most of the District,” she said.

Wetherington said forecasters are holding to their predictions for dry conditions through spring.

**What does the advisory mean for me?** The advisory asks all users to conserve water.

“Water conservation should become a routine way of life for all of us,” said Jon Dinges, the District’s director of water supply and resource management. He noted that a permanent, year-round landscape irrigation rule places limits on all lawn and landscape watering within the District.

“The Phase I Advisory simply calls upon all of us to take additional voluntary steps to reduce both indoor and outdoor water use during times of drought and until conditions recover,” said Dinges. “Once river flows and groundwater levels recover to normal levels, the Governing Board may consider lifting the advisory.”

# Board approves Florida Forever Work Plan

The District Governing Board approved the 2011 Florida Forever Work Plan update at a Governing Board meeting Feb. 8.

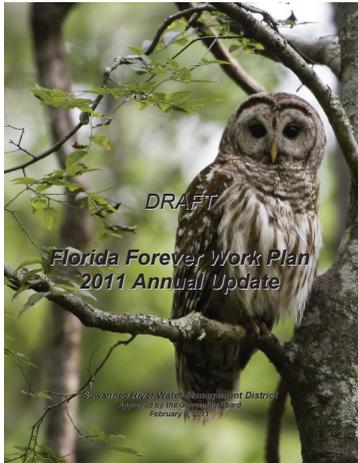
The updated work plan presents projects eligible for funding under the Florida Forever Act and reports on progress and changes made since the original plan was approved in 2001.

The plan highlights the District's goals for land acquisition and for restoration and water resource

development projects.

Such projects include acquiring lands for flood control, water quality protection, and natural resource conservation; creating or restoring wetlands; and implementing reuse water and stormwater management projects.

This update marks 10 years of land preservation using Florida Forever funding which has culminated in the fee purchase of 43,117 preservation acres and 24,771 acres of protected conservation easements.



## Water Conservation

Daylight Saving Time begins Sunday, March 13.

Remember to set your clocks ahead one hour and to limit lawn and landscape watering to two days per week.



## News briefs

### District Lands

• On Jan. 31, the District acquired conservation easement rights on the Santa Fe River Hammock, LLC, property. The 167-acre property in Bradford County includes 2.09 miles of Santa Fe River frontage and its floodplain, 76 acres of surface water, and 84 acres of wetlands.

Protection of the floodplain, riverine buffer and natural forest regeneration will be the primary management objective under the conservation easement.

The cost of the conservation easement was \$263,899 and was paid for by P2000 resale funds.

• The District purchased the Robert Shaw property in Alachua and Bradford counties on Jan. 31. The 60.11-acre parcel provides public access to the west side of the District's 5,500-acre Santa Fe Swamp Tract.

The parcel contains .55 miles of Santa

Fe River frontage, 30 acres of the 100-year floodplain and 32 acres of surface water protection.

The purchase price was \$120,220 or \$2,000/acre from P2000 resale funds.

The parcel will preserve floodplain forests and wetland resources in their natural state and may eventually open to the public for hiking, biking and nature study activities.

### Flood Mapping

• The Governing Board approved a contract for \$86,500 with Taylor Engineering, Inc., to implement Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Risk MAP projects. The Risk MAP Program is part of the process to obtain accurate flood data and determine flood risks.

The District is an ongoing cooperative technical partner with FEMA and

provides assistance with FEMA's Risk MAP and Digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps programs.

Through these efforts the District evaluates flood risks, updates digital flood maps and establishes flood elevations.

The public can view new flood zone designations from the District's flood information tool at <http://www.srwmdfloodreport.com>.

### Strategic Plan

• The Governing Board accepted the District's 2011-2020 Strategic Plan. The plan outlines the District's priorities for water supply, water quality, flood control, natural systems and mission support. It also lists the District's accomplishments from the previous year.

The plan is available at [www.mysuwanneeriver.com](http://www.mysuwanneeriver.com).