

WET SEASON, DRY SEASON MANAGING EVERY DROP

Our central and south Florida weather can be one of extremes from droughts to hurricanes – sometimes in the same year! Our region has two seasons: the wet season, from June through October, when 70 percent of the year's rain falls, and most hurricanes occur; and the dry season, from November through May. We typically get an abundance of rain, about 52 inches a year, falling mostly in the wet season. But, Mother Nature isn't always typical and she does not always follow the wet/dry calendar. Knowing that we can expect two seasons, we can all be prepared to handle too little or too much rain.



Our Connected System

The South Florida Water Management District operates the regional water management system of canals, levees and water control structures and has, for more than 60 years, helped to lessen the impact of flood and drought. With more than 2,600 miles of canals and levees, about 1,300 water control structures and 66 pump stations, it is one of the largest water control systems in the world. The system connects to community drainage districts and hundreds of smaller neighborhood systems to effectively manage floodwaters during heavy rain and to move water to manage water supplies for cities, farms and the environment during drought.

South Florida Water Management District Boundary

SFWMD WATER MANAGERS

Engineers, meteorologists and water managers monitor weather conditions and water levels 24 hours a day from the District's "Control Room" at its headquarters in West Palm Beach. They use this data to determine optimal operation of the hundreds of water control structures throughout the system in times of heavy rain or drought – and all year long.



Lake Okeechobee Extreme Highs & Lows . . .



. . . in the same year!

Extreme Drought

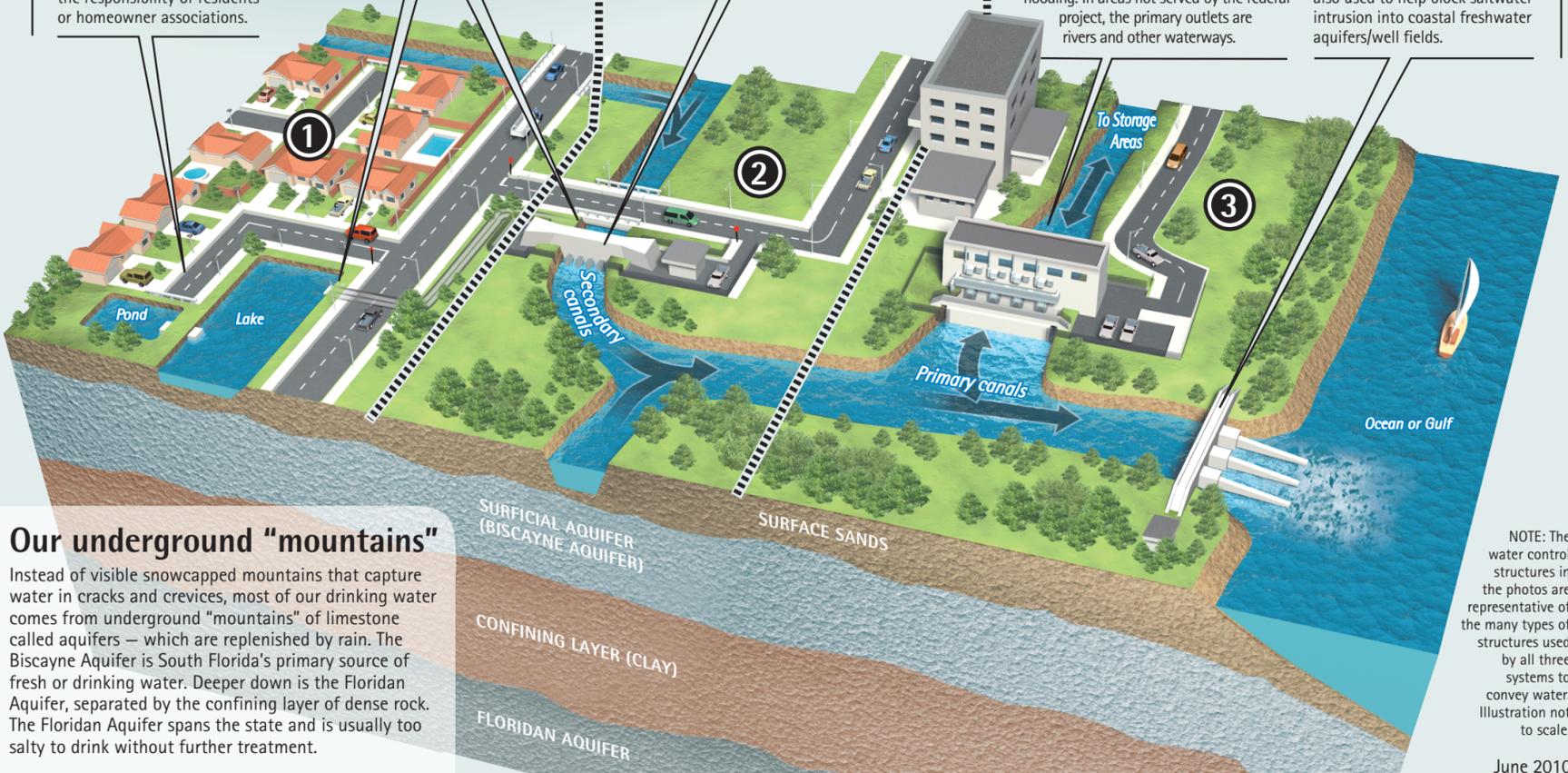
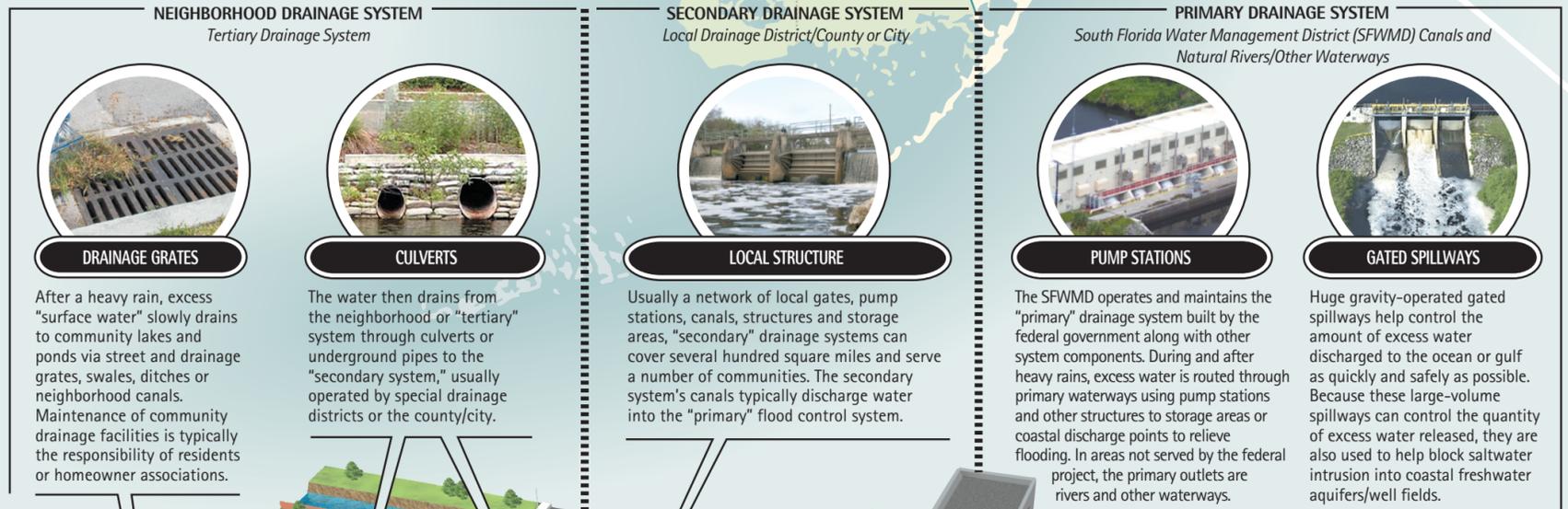
During drought, the South Florida Water Management District constantly monitors our water supply sources and storage areas such as ground (aquifers and ponds, etc.) water levels, including Lake Okeechobee and the Everglades Water Conservation Areas. These levels can fall fast because they are recharged by rainfall. When levels fall too low, the District declares a water shortage emergency imposing mandatory water use restrictions to stretch our limited water supplies and protect our natural systems. Depending on levels, the District also can move water from storage areas through the system to recharge public water supply well fields and prevent saltwater intrusion from tainting our drinking water.



When a Storm Approaches

Weather conditions and water levels are monitored around the clock, 365 days a year using state-of-the-art technology and long-term climatic forecasting. The District opens flood gates and lowers primary canal levels if heavy rains are expected. In extreme conditions, the Emergency Operations Center is activated and coordinates with other governmental agencies.

KNOW THE FLOW: A THREE-TIERED SYSTEM



Our underground "mountains"

Instead of visible snowcapped mountains that capture water in cracks and crevices, most of our drinking water comes from underground "mountains" of limestone called aquifers – which are replenished by rain. The Biscayne Aquifer is South Florida's primary source of fresh or drinking water. Deeper down is the Floridan Aquifer, separated by the confining layer of dense rock. The Floridan Aquifer spans the state and is usually too salty to drink without further treatment.

NOTE: The water control structures in the photos are representative of the many types of structures used by all three systems to convey water. Illustration not to scale.