



FOR YOUR INFORMATION...

This fact sheet is offered as a courtesy to assist in supporting greater understanding of water-related issues in the Southwest Florida Water Management District.

Minimum Flows and Levels (MFLs) Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What are MFLs?

A: A minimum flow or level, commonly referred to as an MFL, is the limit at which further withdrawals will cause significant harm to the water resources or ecology of the area. Minimum flows are typically expressed as a rate of flow; minimum levels are expressed as water levels in a surface water body or aquifer.

Q: Why does the District develop MFLs?

A: State law requires the establishment of MFLs on priority water bodies.

Q: What water bodies receive MFLs?

A: Minimum flows are set for priority rivers, streams, estuaries and springs. Minimum levels are developed for priority lakes, wetlands and aquifers.

Q: How are MFLs determined?

A: The District collects and analyzes a variety of data for each water body to help define significant harm and determine the recommended MFLs. During a voluntary peer review process, independent scientists review and comment on proposed MFLs and/or the methods used to evaluate them. The proposed MFLs are then presented to the public and incorporated into recommended rules that go to the District's Governing Board for approval.

Q: Who approves MFLs?

A: MFLs are approved as rules by the Governing Board and then filed with the Secretary of State before becoming final. In addition, the Governor's office is now reviewing all government rules.

Q: How are MFLs used by the District?

A: To ensure that withdrawals and other permitted activities do not cause significant harm to water resources or the environment, MFLs are used in the District's water use and environmental resource permitting programs and for water resource planning.

Q: What happens if the MFL is not being met?

A: If actual flows or levels are currently, or are expected to be during the next 20 years, below established MFLs, the District is required by state law to develop and implement a recovery or prevention strategy.

Q: Where can I view a list of local MFLs?

A: Water bodies within our District that have adopted MFLs or are scheduled for MFL development are identified in the District's Minimum Flows and Levels Priority List and Schedule. This document and the technical reports that were used to determine the MFLs can be viewed online at WaterMatters.org/MFLreports/.

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**Southwest Florida
Water Management District**