



# NEWS RELEASE

March 19, 2011

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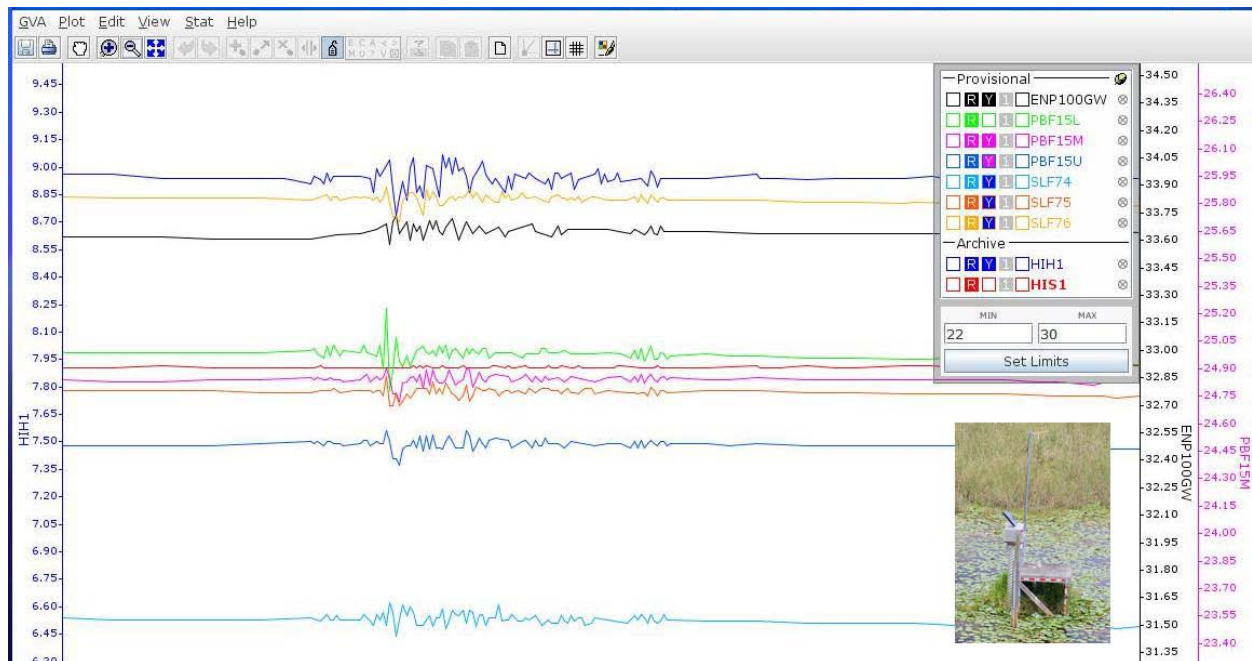
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## SFWMD's Extensive Monitoring Network Detects Japan Earthquake *South Florida water gauges show anomalies 34 minutes after earthquake struck*



*This is a random sampling of groundwater gauges in South Florida, all showing tremors after the disaster in Japan.*

*(Click on the image for a larger version.)*

**West Palm Beach, FL** — An extensive network of groundwater gauges monitored by the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) to protect regional water resources registered an unusual oscillation shortly after the devastating earthquake and tsunami struck Japan.

“We were not expecting to see any indication of the geological events in Japan given the island’s great distance from Florida. The fact that many of our groundwater gauges picked up this anomaly is an indication of just how sensitive the SFWMD monitoring network can be,” said Susan Sylvester, SFWMD Director of the Operations Control and Hydro Data Management Department. “This high-level resolution allows our engineers

to gather information vital to protecting South Florida's water resources and environment."

SFWMD technicians noticed the anomaly occurred shortly after the quake and tsunami hit Japan. The unusual reverberations continued throughout the District's 16-county region for nearly two hours. The same technicians documented both the Haiti earthquake on January 12, 2010, and the Chile earthquake on February 27, 2010.

"It's the science and engineering of this caliber that allow us to manage water resources for 7.7 million residents and the South Florida ecosystem," said SFWMD Executive Director Carol Ann Wehle. "This data allows the agency to make informed, science-based decisions when managing the water resources of South Florida for flood control, water supply and water quality."

Data from across South Florida is collected through a series of wells fitted with recording devices that transmit the water levels to the SFWMD headquarters in West Palm Beach. Information from the network helps District scientists and engineers make daily operational decisions and develop tools to improve water quality for South Florida. This creates a broad, well-defined picture of the regional groundwater status, which is especially critical in times such as the current record-setting dry season.

The network consists of 907 groundwater wells managed by both the District and the U.S. Geological Survey that are monitored every 15 minutes, monthly or on a custom schedule. The wells, which can measure levels down to one one-hundredth of a foot, monitor groundwater in locations such as the Floridan Aquifer, 1,800 to 3,600 feet deep, and the shallower Biscayne Aquifer, where much of South Florida's drinking water originates. Additional gauges measure surface water stages, rainfall and water quality in places such as the Water Conservation Areas.

District staff is especially touched by this disaster, which struck just days after a delegation from Japan visited agency facilities. The group members, who traveled to the District to enhance their water management expertise and learn new techniques, reported back they were in Tokyo at the time of the earthquake and were not hurt – even as they live with the overwhelming effects.

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### **About the South Florida Water Management District**

*The South Florida Water Management District is a regional, governmental agency that oversees the water resources in the southern half of the state – 16 counties from Orlando to the Keys. It is the oldest and largest of the state's five water management districts. The agency mission is to manage and protect water resources of the region by balancing and improving water quality, flood control, natural systems and water supply. A key initiative is cleanup and restoration of the Everglades.*