

DETERMINING MINIMUM LEVELS (MFLS) FOR LAKES WITHIN THE SOUTHWEST WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

Section 373.042, Florida Statutes (F.S.), directs the Department of Environmental Protection or the water management districts to establish minimum flows and levels (MFLs) for lakes, wetlands, rivers and aquifers. The minimum water level of an aquifer or surface water body is defined as "...the level of groundwater in an aquifer and the level of surface water at which further withdrawals would be significantly harmful to the water resources of the area." As each water management district determines MFLs somewhat differently, I will describe the current methods Southwest Florida Water Management District uses and briefly discuss some revisions we are considering.