

## Press Release

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For Immediate Release

### **Water Conservation is Key Element in Achieving Effective Green Building**

**TALLAHASSEE, Fla** - Almost every facet of life in Florida is closely associated with water. Florida has 1,197 miles of coastline, 7,700 lakes greater than 10 acres, more than 1,700 streams and 27 high-flow springs.

Florida is also one of the wettest states in the country. Its average annual rainfall is 53 inches, but the amount of rainfall that recharges (or refills) the groundwater supply can vary from zero in some areas to more than 20 inches in other parts of the state.

Water is used for many purposes — for recreation, agriculture and industry. But as our population grows and the demand for drinking water increases, Florida must build on its water conservation initiatives and expand the use of reclaimed water to extend groundwater supplies.

In many areas, utilities will need to develop alternative sources of water to bolster traditional drinking water sources.

According to the U.S. Geological Survey, the average Floridian uses 133 gallons of water each day. Slightly less than half is used inside the home. The rest is used outdoors, primarily for landscape irrigation.

As increasing demands are placed on the state's water resources, sustainable housing is a cornerstone for Florida's future.

The Florida Green Building Coalition (FGBC) certifies "green" homes and businesses and teaches builders how to construct high-efficiency homes while making a profit. This helps builders learn successful ways to market "green" building practices.

For 16 years, FGBC and its members have made a significant impact on Florida's growth in sustainable building projects.

This year, it reached a new milestone of over 14,000 certified "Florida Green" homes. Adding to that the 25 million square feet of commercial and high-rise residential, 62 land developments, and 86 local governments participating in FGBC certification programs, sets FGBC as the leading certifier of green projects in Florida.

Water conserving components both inside the home and out in the landscape must play a primary role in green building in Florida. With many regions of Florida facing public water supply constraints, building homes to use less water by way of high efficiency components only makes sense.

FGBC has partnered with the Florida Water Star<sup>SM</sup> (FWS) program so a builder can satisfy all the FGBC water credits by building to the FWS standard, thereby achieving two "green" certifications.

Green building certification ensures a builder has designed and installed a landscape that needs much less water than the conventional home. Over the life of that home, the homeowner will save thousands of gallons of water and have a lower monthly utility bill.

How?

With site appropriate plants, increased shade and reduced areas of irrigated turf grass, an irrigation system can be set to run for much shorter periods — and in some cases, an irrigation system is not necessary at all.

Green builders have increased their client base by marketing to consumers who take environmental factors into account.

Some lending institutions consider energy efficiency when qualifying prospective homebuyers because lower utility bills can make monthly mortgage payments more affordable.

In Florida, the low-income building sector leads the way in green building approaches, thereby ensuring their clients will have affordable monthly utility bills.

Looking to the future, and Florida's continued water resource constraints, it will become even more critical builders look to green building programs such as FGBC and FWS.

**For information about green building practices, contact the Florida Green Building Coalition at [info@floridagreenbuilding.org](mailto:info@floridagreenbuilding.org) or visit [www.floridagreenbuilding.org](http://www.floridagreenbuilding.org).**