



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE



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SFWMD, FWC Schedule Hydrilla Treatment on Lake Kissimmee *Treatment to target 2,000 acres to improve habitat, navigation and flood control*

West Palm Beach, FL – The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) are scheduled to begin hydrilla treatments Wednesday on about 2,000 acres of Lake Kissimmee. The invasive plant can clog waterways, impede navigation and affect wildlife.

Working in cooperation with the FWC Invasive Plant Management Section, the SFWMD Vegetation Management Division will apply the herbicide Aquathol, which is approved for lake use by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Allowing for inclement weather, the aerial treatments are scheduled to be completed during the first week of March.

Areas to be treated were carefully selected to improve fish and wildlife habitat, as well as improve navigation and flood control on the lake. The location and timing of the treatments are designed to avoid impacts to the Everglades snail kite nesting season. In the last few years, the endangered birds have enjoyed more nesting success on the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes – particularly Lake Tohopekaliga – than on any other site in South Florida as hydrilla mats have expanded the habitat of apple snails, the birds' main prey.

Since hydrilla was first introduced from Asia as an ornamental aquarium plant in the 1950s, the rapidly growing aquatic plant has invaded almost 80 percent of Florida's freshwater ponds, rivers and waterways. The plant can grow in underwater stands or surface mats and is easily transferred to other water bodies by boats.

Hydrilla slows water flow and can clog structures in District canals that must be kept clear for effective flood control. It can also be detrimental to fish and wildlife habitat and limit access to waterways by clogging boat motors.

The SFWMD Vegetation Management Division is responsible for managing nuisance and invasive exotic vegetation throughout the 16-county District. The implementation of a vegetation management program is necessary to ensure the continued use and function of the region's water resources and preservation of South Florida's conservation lands.

For more information on the District's vegetation management efforts, please visit the District's website at www.sfwmd.gov.

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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.