JUNE 2024

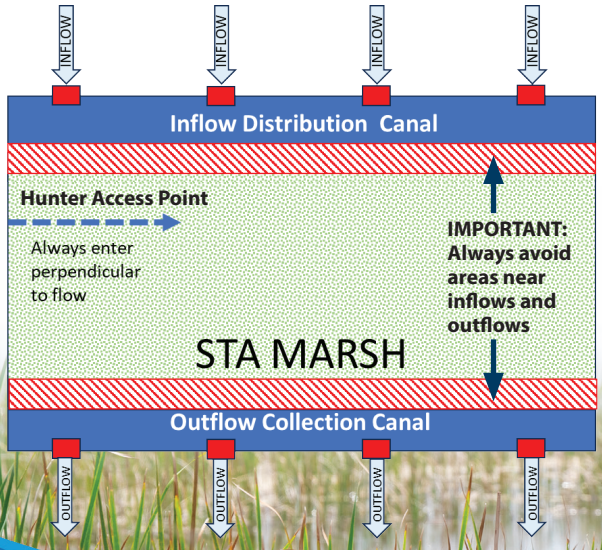
Hunting in South Florida's Stormwater Treatment Areas (STAs)

The South Florida Water Management District's (District) Stormwater Treatment Areas provide some of the best hunting opportunities in South Florida.

Know Before You Go!

Follow these important reminders every time you enter an STA to go hunting.

- **Only enter and exit from designated areas.** These areas have been selected to have the least impact on the treatment process and sensitive environmental areas. Avoid impacting any vegetation restoration efforts.
- Entering at designated areas into the water is **only for hunters who have an FWC permit** to hunt. The District prohibits other recreators from entering the waters within the STAs.



- **Hunting for alligators and waterfowl is managed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC).** Visit myfwc.com for hunt dates, regulations, and directions to check stations to ensure the most accurate and latest information.

- **When you leave the STA, make sure you take everything you carried in with you.** This includes drink containers, food, fishing lines, nets, shell casings, bait containers and trash.

- **Failure to follow posted guidelines can result in a fine from the FWC.**

Keeping Stormwater Treatment Areas Healthy

Purpose

STAs are built specifically for improving water quality in the Everglades. Their vast shallow waters and rich plant life also make them an outstanding habitat for wildlife such as alligators, birds and various mammals including deer, bobcats and foxes. The purpose of STAs is to remove phosphorus flowing into the Everglades.

Too much phosphorus alters the habitat that Florida's native plants and animals need to thrive.

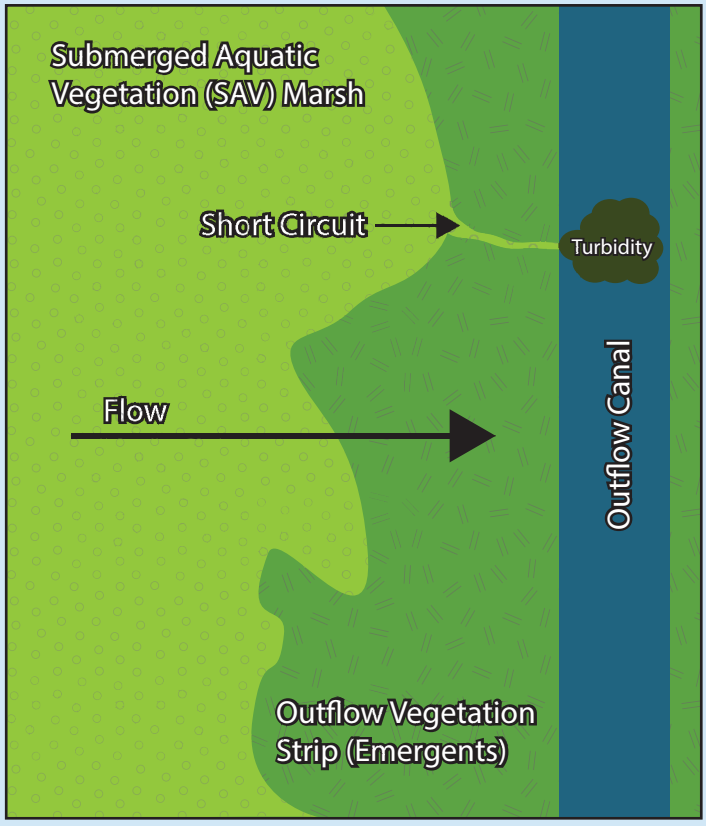
When visiting an STA, almost all of what you see is by design. **Different types of vegetation serve different roles to achieve optimal performance.**

EMERGENT VEGETATION

Emergent vegetation such as cattail will be found at the inflows and outflows to help reduce particulates and encourage sheet flow.

SUBMERGED AQUATIC VEGETATION (SAV)

Submerged Aquatic Vegetation plays a critical role in phosphorus reduction. They are one of the most productive habitats on Earth.



Keep STAs Healthy

- Water quality improvement is largely determined by soil stability and the health and resiliency of aquatic vegetation.
- Manual disturbances to vegetation and soil, such as non-motorized boating, repeated walking or removing vegetation can interrupt the nutrient uptake process and can permanently damage the vegetation, leading to short circuits in water flow.
- A short circuit is a damaged area in an STA where water can bypass the vegetation and therefore the treatment process. Water moving through this area will travel at a higher speed and cause scouring of the peat soil, which adds phosphorus to the water entering the Everglades.

Do your part to keep our STAs healthy. Follow all posted guidelines.