



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

3301 Gun Club Road, West Palm Beach, FL 33406

MEDIA ADVISORY

June 29, 2010

CONTACT:

Randy Smith

South Florida Water Management District
Office: (561) 682-2800 or Cellular: (561) 389-3386

Jeremy Ashton

South Florida Water Management District
Office: (561) 682-2800 or Cellular: (561) 714-6126

www.sfwmd.gov/news

follow us on 

SFWMD Airdropping Plants to Improve Everglades Water Quality *Aquatic plants will help remove phosphorus from water in treatment wetlands*



(Click on the photo for a larger version.)

WHAT: The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) will airlift 22.5 tons of plants to a constructed treatment wetland to help improve the quality of water flowing into America's Everglades.

District staff will be harvesting three native species of submerged aquatic plants – Southern naiad, chara and Illinois pondweed – from Cell 3 of Stormwater Treatment Area 2 (STA-2). The plants will then be loaded into a large cargo net and flown by helicopter to Cell 2 of STA-2, where they

will be released into shallow waters. Approximately 30 flights – each carrying between 1,400 and 1,500 pounds of plants – are scheduled.

Known as submerged aquatic vegetation because it grows beneath the surface of the water, the airlifted plants will replace cattails that have been growing in Cell 2. District scientists expect the new plants to increase phosphorus removal from water moving through this cell.

Stormwater Treatment Areas are the water-cleaning workhorses of Everglades restoration, using plants to naturally remove phosphorus from water flowing into the fabled River of Grass. The District operates a network of six STAs south of Lake Okeechobee with a combined area of more than 52,000 acres. Since 1994, the treatment areas have retained more than 1,200 metric tons of total phosphorus that would have otherwise entered the Everglades.

WHEN: Wednesday, June 30, 2010

TIME: Throughout the day (11 a.m. – 4 p.m.)

WHERE: Stormwater Treatment Area 2 in Palm Beach County

DIRECTIONS:

From West Palm Beach:

Travel west on State Road 80 (Southern Boulevard) until it joins with U.S. 441 near Belle Glade. Turn left, staying on S.R. 80/U.S. 441 through Belle Glade and into South Bay. In South Bay, turn left, and take U.S. 27 south. Travel approximately 18 miles. Look for a cement plant on the east side of U.S. 27, turn left and cross over a bridge into STA-2. Go south on the levee across the bridge until you reach a yellow gate.

From Naples or Fort Lauderdale:

Travel on I-75 (Alligator Alley) to U.S. 27 in Broward County. At Exit 354, turn north onto U.S. 27. Travel approximately 19.5 miles. Look for a cement plant on the east side of U.S. 27, turn right and cross over bridge into STA-2. Go south on the levee across the bridge until you reach a yellow gate.

RSVP: Reporters interested in attending should contact Randy Smith at 561-389-3386 or rrsmith@sfwmd.gov or Jeremy Ashton at 561-714-6126 or jashton@sfwmd.gov.

#

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.