



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

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SFWMD and Palm Beach County Improve Lake Worth Lagoon
Restoration project will create mangrove and oyster habitat near Ibis Island

West Palm Beach, FL — A muck removal project that is improving water quality in the Lake Worth Lagoon will be enhanced by sediment management and environmental restoration work to be completed by Palm Beach County in partnership with the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) and the Florida Legislature.

The new project component includes placement of a sand cap over 6.3 acres of muck in the lagoon downstream of the C-51 Canal outflow on the east side of Ibis Island. Lagoon ecosystems will be improved when the sand cap is planted to create 2.4 acres of mangrove habitat, 1.2 acres of oyster habitat and 2.7 acres of emergent vegetation.

In addition to reducing the undesirable effects of bottom muck and excess sediments, this approach uses restoration features to trap fine, water-clouding sediments, which prevent light from reaching submerged plants and animal life.

The \$1.1 million in muck capping and habitat improvements are funded by \$850,000 from Palm Beach County and \$250,000 from the Florida Legislature in a contract managed by the District. The SFWMD Governing Board recently approved a contract amendment permitting the new project to move forward.

The project at Ibis Island builds on the success of \$3 million in environmental restoration work to remove 101,000 cubic yards of muck along a 3,500-foot section of the C-51 Canal. A prototype sediment trap was also installed to reduce muck accumulation and ease future dredging efforts.

Sediments in the canal had built up over time, settling as a layer of muck that impaired plant growth and animal life. The muck also reduced water flow capacity needed for effective flood control.

The South Florida Water Management District contributed \$1 million toward the initial dredging project. Combined, the C-51 Canal and Ibis Island projects bring the total to \$4.1 million in Lake Worth Lagoon water quality improvements.

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About the South Florida Water Management District – [Celebrating 60 Years \(1949-2009\)](#)

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.