



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE



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Hydrilla Treatment for Cypress Lake Postponed

SFWMD and FWC will reschedule herbicide application in at least six weeks

Kissimmee, FL – The South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) have postponed a hydrilla treatment planned for 1,745 acres of Cypress Lake that was scheduled to begin March 2. The agencies will reschedule the effort to control the invasive plant for some time after April 15.

The District and the FWC determined that recent wetter-than-normal weather in the Kissimmee Basin had the potential to increase water flows, limiting the effectiveness of herbicides used on hydrilla. The noxious aquatic plant can clog waterways, impede navigation and affect wildlife.

When the treatment does occur, the SFWMD Vegetation Management Division and FWC Invasive Plant Management Section will first apply the herbicide Aquathol over impacted areas of Cypress Lake using a team of helicopters. A few days later, aquatic plant experts will use airboats to apply Galleon, another herbicide that robs hydrilla of its ability to feed itself.

As hydrilla becomes a larger challenge in the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes, the agencies are constantly looking for new ways to keep the plant under control. By applying Galleon in combination with the regularly used Aquathol, aquatic plant experts are hoping to maximize the herbicides' effects.

Both Aquathol and Galleon are approved for lake use by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

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 Web site 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.