



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

## NEWS RELEASE



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**CONTACT:**

**Bill Graf**

[Orlando Service Center](#)

South Florida Water Management District

Office: (407) 858-6100, ext. 3837 or Cellular: (407) 908-4764

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### **Hydrilla Treatments Scheduled on Lake Tohopekaliga**

*Treatments timed and located to avoid impact to duck hunters and snail kites*

**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 this week on about 1,500 acres of Lake Tohopekaliga. 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 in pellet form for precise placement of treatment. Aquathol is approved for lake use by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Areas to be treated were carefully selected to improve navigation and flood control on the lake while limiting impacts to the federally protected Everglades snail kite. In the last few years, the endangered birds have enjoyed more nesting success on Lake Tohopekaliga than any other site in South Florida as hydrilla mats have expanded the habitat of apple snails, the birds' main prey.

As a result, the FWC, along with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, is taking a more targeted approach to managing hydrilla on Lake Tohopekaliga during the winter of 2010-2011. The agencies held the first in a series of public meetings on November 5 to discuss upcoming hydrilla treatments and their impacts on the lake. More information, including the presentation made at the first meeting, is available at [www.myfwc.com](http://www.myfwc.com).

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](http://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.*