



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE



March 15, 2013

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SFWMD, Palm Beach County Partner on Lake Worth Lagoon Science *Water quality data provides essential foundation for restoration projects*



Palm Beach County's Department of Environmental Resources Management planted these mangroves for the Ibis Isle Restoration project to improve habitat and water quality in the Lake Worth Lagoon. Photo: Palm Beach County. (Click on the picture for a larger version.)

West Palm Beach, FL — Extending a commitment to gather the science needed to improve water quality and wildlife habitat in the Lake Worth Lagoon, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) and Palm Beach County this week signed an agreement to continue partnering on water quality monitoring and analysis to benefit the lagoon.

Building on five years of data logged to-date in coordination with the county's Department of Environmental Resources Management, the agreement will provide scientists with an additional five years of data that are essential for a scientific baseline to plan and implement successful restoration projects.

"Sound science is the basis for restoring ecosystems and improving water quality throughout South Florida," said SFWMD Executive Director Melissa L. Meeker. "Pairing the District's laboratory analysis expertise with Palm Beach County's monitoring team and their experience with the lagoon will keep us on a forward path for improving this vital waterway."

Palm Beach County, through its Department of Environmental Resources Management, began partnering with the District in 2007 to collect data for the lagoon, which is the county's largest estuary. Along with providing habitat for a diverse array of wildlife such as manatees, sea turtles, oysters and fish, the lagoon is a haven for recreation such as fishing, boating, kayaking and bird watching.

"Palm Beach County is known for its coastal lifestyle, and the Lake Worth Lagoon is one of our most treasured waterways," said Palm Beach County Commissioner Paulette Burdick. "Sharing science and expertise with the SFWMD allows us to develop restoration projects and management strategies that will protect the lagoon and its amazing array of life well into the future."

Lake Worth Lagoon Quick Facts
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 20 miles long, stretching from North Palm Beach to Ocean Ridge• Largest estuary in Palm Beach County• Separated from the ocean by Singer Island and Palm Beach Island• Features two permanent, dredged inlets• Abundant life, including tarpon, snook, shrimp, American oystercatcher, osprey and a variety of seagrasses and mangroves

Each month, county scientists retrieve samples from 14 strategic locations throughout the lagoon. These samples are delivered to the District's science lab in West Palm Beach, where 16 physical and chemical parameters, such as temperature, salinity, dissolved oxygen and total phosphorus, are analyzed.

The high-quality data collected from laboratory analysis are added to the District's comprehensive environmental database, known as DBHYDRO, which contains hydrologic, meteorologic, hydrogeologic and water quality data. The database is widely used by water managers and scientists from a variety of agencies and municipalities for a host of critical work on South Florida's water resources.

To date, the Lake Worth Lagoon water quality monitoring project has produced:

- 1,204 collected samples
- 7,224 measurements of physical parameters
- 12,040 analytical tests

The SFWMD/Palm Beach County monitoring partnership was created under the Lake Worth Lagoon Initiative, a forum established in 2007 to exchange information and discuss opportunities to restore and protect the lagoon. SFWMD Governing Board member Timothy Sargent and Commissioner Burdick serve on the initiative's steering committee, along with members of the City of Riviera Beach, the Florida Department of Environmental Protection and the Florida Inland Navigation District.

As part of the Lake Worth Lagoon Initiative, several successful restoration projects have already been completed by Palm Beach County, helping to restore areas impacted by stormwater inflows into the lagoon. These include:

- Ibis Isle Restoration: Restored 8.3 acres of intertidal habitat, planted 80,000 plugs of cord grass and created an oyster reef to improve wildlife habitat and long-term water quality
- Snook Islands Natural Area: Restored 100 acres of wetland habitat, planted 11 acres of mangroves, along with related work to improve wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities

Upcoming on May 15, the Lake Worth Lagoon Initiative Symposium, to be held at Palm Beach Atlantic University, will host presentations on research, project status and updates on restoration efforts in the lagoon.

For more information:

- [Lake Worth Lagoon Initiative](#)
- [Registration for Symposium](#)
- [Palm Beach County Department of Environmental Resources](#)
- [Lake Worth Lagoon Photos](#)

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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.