



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE

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SFWMD Issues Orders to Protect West Palm Beach Preserve

West Palm Beach, FL - This week, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) issued two administrative complaints and orders for corrective action to protect the Grassy Waters Preserve located in Palm Beach County. Water quality issues were brought to light there by the City of West Palm Beach during a Division of Administrative Hearings trial challenging the extension of State Road 7, City of West Palm Beach vs. Palm Beach County, Florida Department of Transportation, and South Florida Water Management District (Fla DOAH Case No: 16-001861).

The administrative complaint addresses the surface water management system located adjacent to Grassy Waters, which consists of two parts. The first section contains a series of lakes operated by Northern Palm Beach County Improvement District (Northern) in the Ibis community. The second portion of the system is a 364-acre area known as the Ibis Preserve that is permitted to retain water onsite. This second area is owned by the City. Water flows from the Ibis lakes into the Ibis Preserve before entering the Grassy Waters Preserve.

According to the City, an accumulation of sediment in stormwater lakes in the Ibis community is causing excess nutrients such as phosphorus to flow into the Ibis retention area. These nutrients are not being effectively removed in the second part of the system owned by the City. The excess nutrients in turn are contributing to the growth of nuisance vegetation in the area where water is discharged from the City's property into Grassy Waters Preserve.

During the hearing, the City presented evidence that the sediment and nutrient problem was caused by lack of routine maintenance in the Ibis community lakes, an issue that was previously unknown. Northern's permit requires it to perform routine maintenance of the lakes. The administrative law judge suggested SFWMD take appropriate action to correct these issues.

The administrative complaints and orders for corrective action mean Northern and the City must develop and implement plans to correct these deficiencies.

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The South Florida Water Management District is a regional governmental agency that manages the water resources in the southern part of the state. It is the oldest and largest

of the state's five water management districts. Our mission is to protect South Florida's water resources by balancing and improving flood control, water supply, water quality and natural systems.

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