



SOUTH FLORIDA WATER MANAGEMENT DISTRICT

NEWS RELEASE



November 19, 2009

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SFWMD, FWC Plan Hydrilla Treatments for Kissimmee Chain of Lakes *Agencies to control invasive plant in three lakes by applying herbicide to 6,240 acres*

Kissimmee, FL – Beginning a few days before Thanksgiving, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) will launch a significant effort to control hydrilla growing over approximately 6,240 acres in the Kissimmee Chain of Lakes. 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 liquid and pellet form, over impacted areas of lakes Hatchineha, Tohopekaliga and Kissimmee. Aquathol is approved for lake use by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Treatment of 640 acres of hydrilla on Lake Hatchineha is scheduled to get under way on November 23. District staff will begin treating 3,300 acres of Lake Tohopekaliga on December 1 before moving on to 2,300 acres of Lake Kissimmee a week later.

Additional work on lakes Jackson and Cypress is slated for January 2010 and March 2010, respectively.

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. If left unchecked, the plant could 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 – [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.