



LAUDERTRAC

WATERWAY QUALITY UPDATE FORT LAUDERDALE

Tracking Progress on Commission Priorities for 2020



December 2020

IMPROVING OUR WATERWAYS



Protecting Waterways from Pollutants

The City of Fort Lauderdale has taken great strides to improve our waterways and protect and preserve our natural environment. One of our primary goals is to prevent pollution and algal blooms through education and enforcement. The City participates in the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit program and operates an aggressive erosion and sediment control program. Some of the actions taken include regular inspections of construction sites for compliance with erosion and sediment control best management practices and prohibiting the use of fertilizer from June 1st to September 30th each year. Neighbors are also educated to never dispose of or blow trash, litter, yard, or lawn clippings in streets, storm drains, or waterways to prevent nutrients that feed the algal blooms from entering waterways. In addition, the City is reviewing a pilot study plan for algae prevention that will help find innovative ways to keep our waterways clean.

Stormwater Improvements

The City of Fort Lauderdale is implementing a stormwater management program through the stormwater master planning effort to address chronic flooding and other stormwater management issues including water quality. Over the past year, the City's Stormwater Operations team took proactive steps to keep our waterways clean by reducing nonpoint-source (NPS) pollution from stormwater runoff. Catch basin cleaning and street sweeping prevented more than 1,000 tons of debris from entering our waterways. Over 30 tons of waste were collected from our waterways and disposed of properly through the City's canal cleaning program. Furthermore, a new initiative was implemented to install 57 SNOOT® pollution prevention devices. The SNOOT® devices act as a filter for trash, sediment, leaves, and other debris in the existing catch basins. The devices keep oil and trash on the surface of the water while heavy sediment sinks to the bottom, letting cleaner water flow through the outlet. They remove up to 75 percent of stormwater pollutants and prevent them from entering the waterways.

New Water Monitoring Program

The City established a bacteria monitoring program to ensure waterways are safe for neighbors and visitors enjoying recreational activities. A monitoring service agreement with Miami Waterkeeper will provide the City with weekly water quality testing results across key waterway recreational areas over a 12-month period. Monitoring is scheduled to begin in January 2021. The up-to-date water quality status will be available to the public on www.theswimguide.org or the program's mobile device app "Swim Guide" that is available to download from the App Store or Google Play.

Additionally, environmental assessments of George English Lake and Tarpon River have been completed in response to the sewer main breaks that occurred starting in December 2019. Sediment removal plans and permits are in process and work is expected to begin in 2021. An environmental assessment is also occurring on the Himmarshee Canal which should be completed in early 2021. The quality of our 165 miles of waterways is critical to our way of life with its beautiful views, marine commerce, habitat for wildlife, and recreational opportunities. The City is dedicated to protecting its waterways as it is the "Venice of America".