



LAUDERTRAC



WATERWAY QUALITY UPDATE

Tracking Progress on Fort Lauderdale Commission Priorities for 2021

April 2021

IMPROVING OUR WATERWAYS

Miami Waterkeeper – Water Quality Monitoring Update



The City of Fort Lauderdale allocated \$100,000 in the fiscal year 2021 budget for waterway quality monitoring. The City has entered into an agreement with a South Florida-based non-profit organization, Miami Waterkeeper, to perform that task. Each Tuesday, Miami Waterkeeper performs water quality testing of fecal indicator bacteria (FIB – *Enterococci*) within the City of Fort Lauderdale’s key recreational areas:

1. Sand Bar (Sampled from SE 10 Street)
2. Lake Sylvia (Sampled from the parking area at the end of Harbor Beach Parkway)
3. Middle River (Sampled from George English Park kayak launch)
4. Sunrise Bay (Sampled from Birch State Park)
5. Sweeting Park (North Fork of the New River)
6. Coontie Hatchee Park (South Fork of the New River)
7. Tarpon River (Sampled from SE 9 Avenue Bridge or from an alternative sampling location at South Rio Vista Boulevard)
8. Himmarshee Canal (Sampled from Las Olas Boulevard)
9. Royal Palm Drive (Sampled from Las Olas Boulevard)
10. Annie Beck Park (Sampled from the waterway stairs)

Any sites that do not initially meet the Florida Department of Health’s (FDOH) Florida Healthy Beaches program criteria will be re-tested on the following Thursday. The easy-to-understand results of that testing will be posted online for a 12-month

period and will also be made available to the public via the Swim Guide web and phone app (www.swimguide.org). The criteria and color scheme used to communicate the results are consistent with what is used in the Florida Healthy Beaches program to assess recreational water quality. The results are measured in Most Probable Number (MPN), a method used to estimate the concentration of viable microorganisms in a sample.

- ▶ Good (“green”) = 0-35 Enterococci per 100 milliliters of marine water (0-35 MPN)
- ▶ Moderate (“yellow”) = 36-70 Enterococci per 100 milliliters of marine water (36-70 MPN)
- ▶ Poor (“red”) = 71 or greater Enterococci per 100 milliliters of marine water (>71 MPN)

Miami Waterkeeper uses the FDOH’s Florida Healthy Beaches program criteria to determine waterway quality thresholds. These standards address public health concerns about ingestion and duration of exposure to water during activities such as swimming and recreating. The Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) also maintains a classification system for waterways that is designed to protect human health and aquatic life. According to FDEP, Class III waterways have a limit for Enterococci of 130 MPN and are designated for uses including fish consumption and recreation. Since the start of sample collection on January 12, 2021, the monitoring data has been valuable in helping the City to develop an understanding of long-term trends in waterway quality. As of April 8, 2021, over 179 samples have been collected and approximately 53% of those samples have met or exceeded FDOH Florida Healthy Beaches Program standards. In addition, approximately 62% of those samples have met or exceeded the FDEP Class III standards.

To learn more about the FDOH’s Florida Healthy Beaches program, visit www.floridahealth.gov/environmental-health/beach-water-quality.

To learn more about FDEP surface water quality standards, visit www.floridadep.gov/comm/press-office/content/dep-101-surface-water-quality-standards.