



June 2021

ELIMINATE MARINE POLLUTION



National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)

The National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Stormwater Program regulates point source discharges from three potential sources: Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems (MS4s), construction activities, and industrial activities with the goal of keeping pollutants out of our waterways. While there are treatment plants for wastewater and drinking water, there are no treatment plants for stormwater runoff. Instead, anything that falls to the ground eventually makes its way into storm drains and then flows directly into our waterways. Therefore, it is critical that only rain go down storm drains.

Two pollutants of concern which can cause algal blooms are nutrients that are found in most fertilizers: nitrogen and phosphorus. Algal blooms can deplete oxygen from the water and block sunlight, harming the waterway ecology. Although less than one percent of algal blooms produce toxins, it is still important to address the cause and prevent them from forming.

Because fertilizers are major contributors to algal blooms, the City regularly educates residents and businesses on best management practices for fertilizer use. To prevent stormwater runoff containing nutrients from entering our waterways:

- ▶ Maintain at least a 10-foot buffer when dispensing fertilizer near a waterway.
- ▶ Avoid spreading fertilizer in the street that will wash into storm drains.
- ▶ Never blow or dispose of trash and lawn clippings into our streets, storm drains, or waterways. They are loaded with nutrients and bacteria that will feed algae blooms. It is also important to make sure your landscaping company is taking these steps to avoid polluting our streets and waterways.

The City has adopted a Florida Friendly Fertilizer Use on Urban Landscapes ordinance. One of the key components is that no fertilizer can be applied during the rainy season from June to September, as this time presents a prime opportunity for algal blooms. The City also conducts regular algae inspections at established locations during these rainy months. Once a bloom is discovered, the City reports the bloom to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) as part of their efforts in monitoring and responding to algal blooms. Testing is conducted by FDEP and the State maintains a dashboard at floridadep.gov/AlgalBloom. Anyone can report a bloom to the state at 855-305-3903 or by visiting floridadep.gov/AlgalBloom and floridadep.gov/Blue-GreenAlgaeTaskForce.



Himmarshee Canal Protein Skimming Pilot Program

As part of the City's effort to ensure clean and safe waterways for residents, visitors, and wildlife in Fort Lauderdale, an innovative pilot project is underway in the Himmarshee Canal. Protein skimming is a filtration process that removes organic compounds from water. Utilizing protein skimmers, pumps inject microbubbles into the water that bind to any present organic compounds such as bacteria and other pollutants. The substances are then collected in a foam-like concentration and disposed of at an approved Broward County facility.

The City of Fort Lauderdale contracted with Clean Waterways LLC to receive protein skimming services as a two-week pilot program at no cost to the City. Over the coming weeks, Beverly Heights neighbors will notice a 30-foot barge with three large protein skimmer apparatuses on it operating throughout the canal north of Las Olas Boulevard. The process is quiet and will only take place during daylight hours. No fish or aquatic life will be harmed by this process that will result in clean, oxygenated water being returned to the environment. To learn more about this program that was approved by the City Commission at the June 1 regular City Commission meeting, visit ftlcity.info/3fH5YUv.

Get information and updates



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