



LAUDERTRAC



WATERWAY QUALITY UPDATE

Tracking Progress on Fort Lauderdale Commission Priorities for 2021

November/December 2021

IMPROVING OUR WATERWAYS

The City of Fort Lauderdale continues to take great strides to improve our waterways and protect and preserve our natural environment. In early 2021, the City set seven tasks for improving Waterway Quality.

Education and awareness through NPDES implementation

The National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Stormwater Program regulates discharges with the goal of keeping pollutants out of our waterways. One of the items highlighted in 2021 is the City's Florida Friendly Fertilizer Use on Urban Landscapes ordinance, which aims to keep algal blooms out Fort Lauderdale waterways during the rainy season when they would be most likely to thrive. Since fertilizer stimulates the growth of algal blooms, a key mitigation strategy is to restrict fertilizer application from June to September.

Implementation of stormwater quality improvements

By the end of 2021, the Stormwater Operations team will have completed an initial inventory of pollution control baffles throughout the City that prevent debris such as litter from entering our waterways. The finalized inventory will allow staff to have a clear understanding of areas that are not yet equipped with baffles but could benefit from this asset so they can redistribute them as they are replaced.

Continuation of Waterway Quality Monitoring Program

The City engaged Miami Waterkeeper, a South Florida-based non-profit organization, to continuously monitor the quality of the City's waterways. Water quality testing results and status updates for neighbors and visitors are posted online for a 12-month period via the Swim Guide web and phone app (www.swimguide.org).

Remediation of water bodies impacted by 2019-2020 wastewater discharges

The City continues to improve the waterways impacted by the 2019 and 2020 wastewater discharges at George English Lake, the Tarpon River, and the Himmarshee Canal. George English has been successfully dredged. The contract to dredge the Tarpon River is expected to be awarded in December 2021. The dredging project at the Himmarshee Canal is currently under permit review by regulatory agencies.



The City prohibits fertilizing in the summer (June 1 - September 30)



Cleaning a catch basin containing a pollution control baffle



Miami Waterkeeper performing water quality testing

Research the feasibility and cost effectiveness of a program to increase the availability of mobile pumpouts

The City is considering options to increase the availability of mobile pumpouts. The use of pumpout facilities is important to reduce or eliminate the discharge of sewage into our waters. The options being explored include a City-operated mobile vessel pumpout service, vendor-operated pumpout service, a public-private partnership, or maintaining our current operations at City marinas designated as 'Clean Marinas.'

Continuation of canal cleaning program to remove floating debris

The City has a contract to provide regular cleaning services for navigable waterways. From January 1, 2021, to November 27, 2021, 113 tons of debris were removed including landscape debris and litter such as beverage containers. Decaying vegetation from trimmed landscaping can be a source of bacterial pollution and can add nutrients that create conditions that may support the development of algal blooms, so it is critical that these items be removed from our waterways promptly.

Implementation of aeration and pilot projects from the algal study

In Fiscal Year 2022, the City is funding several aeration projects that will benefit water quality by maintaining dissolved oxygen that will enhance the ecological function of our waterways. The aerators will be installed in Cliff Lake, Lake Melva, the Himmarshee Canal, and the Tarpon River. In addition, a bubble curtain will be installed at Citrus Isle which should prevent debris from entering the waterways.

As the "Venice of America," the quality of our waterways is critical to our way of life that provides beautiful views, marine commerce, habitat for wildlife, and recreational opportunities. The City is committed to protecting our 165 miles of waterways for years to come.



Marine Boat Builders Co. 23' 460-gallon capacity pumpout vessel used in Charleston, South Carolina



Debris recovered from waterway through canal cleaning program



Floating Treatment Wetland in Lake Melva

Get information and updates



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