

## **South Indian River Water Control District Manager's Report for 2022-2023**

South Indian River Water Control District (the District) is a Special Taxing District that serves Jupiter Farms, Palm Beach Country Estates, Egret Landing, and a portion of Jupiter Park of Commerce. The District interacts with several agencies which include South Florida Water Management District, Palm Beach County, the Department of Environmental Resource, the Sheriff's Department, Fire and Rescue, Solid Waste Authority, and the Town of Jupiter. The District also participates as committee members on several agencies that include the Loxahatchee River Management Coordinating Council, the Loxahatchee Preservation Initiative, and the Palm Beach County Safety Council.

The District's primary function is to provide stormwater discharges during heavy rainfall events. The District's discharge system essentially functions as a dual basin system. Palm Beach Country Estates, Jupiter Park of Commerce, and Egret Landing are east of the South Florida Water Management District's Canal 18. Jupiter Farms is west of Canal 18. East of Canal 18 are approximately 15 miles of canals that drain west to east through four control structures prior to entering the Turnpike Borrow Canals. Water is conveyed from the West Borrow to the East Borrow Canal. Waters then flow north to the district's 706 Outfall Canal, then out to the Southwest Fork of the Loxahatchee River. West of Canal 18 are 45 miles of canals that drain west to east through five control structures. Waters then move north to the Northwest fork of the Loxahatchee River. During heavy rainfall events, we receive additional discharge from the South Florida Water Management District G-92 structure for the westside and the South Florida Water Management District PC8-A and PC-10 riser culverts for the eastside.

In addition to stormwater drainage, our operations include road grading, mowing, contractual aquatic spraying, culvert replacements, ditch, and canal restoration.

The District has approximately 90 miles of unpaved roads that require grading and recontouring. Roads are graded weekly and at times, material is brought in to stabilize road surfaces. Throughout the year, roads are checked for shoulder recontouring. This involves pulling the shoulder of the road toward the center to create a crown in the road. Creating the crown minimizes standing water along the edges the road during rain events. In addition to District roads, there are private and Palm Beach County roads that the District does not maintain.

The District also has a maintenance program for District paved roads. Each year, asphalt, and open grade emulsified mix roads are inspected for re-surfacing. Roads are re-surfaced with either asphalt or micro-overlay. This year, numerous intersections were repaired with micro-overlay while Haynie Lane between 171st and 167th was overlaid with asphalt. It is important

to know that all paving projects are landowner initiated. Contact the District office for road paving petition information.

With 60 miles of canals and 378 miles of roadway easements, the District's mowing schedule could take 6 to 8 weeks to complete. However, weather, mechanical, or personnel issues can alter this schedule. If a homeowner chooses to mow the ditch themselves, they can call our office to be put on the "Do Not Mow" list. District operators review this list each day before mowing operations begin. For those who choose to mow their own ditch, please make sure your address is visible for operators to see so they can bypass your property. Be advised that if a "Do Not Mow" property has excessive growth, the operators are instructed to mow the ditch.

The District continues to apply regulated and permitted herbicides in the canal systems for the control of aquatic weeds. The canals are inspected regularly and sprayed on an as needed basis. With the consistent afternoon rains, canal spraying has been particularly challenging this summer and the buildup of vegetation is not uncommon. Heavily vegetated areas are reported to the spray contractor to be scheduled for maintenance.

Throughout the year, crews continuously inspect drainage culverts for maintenance and replacement. Culverts that have sediment buildup, damage, or severe deterioration can impede the flow of water during storm events. Once a culvert is replaced, rip-rap headwalls are installed to minimize damage and erosion. Sod is placed for additional stabilization. Fully functional culverts allow for maximum discharge during storm events.

When a driveway culvert needs replacing, the District can assist landowners with the installation through our driveway culvert program. Since 2016, the District has installed over 1,400 driveway culverts. Once replaced, these culverts will function at full capacity during heavy rainfall events. Once installed, it's the Landowner's responsibility to maintain their culvert, keeping it free of debris and sediment build up. With older culverts, landowners should look for sink holes around the culvert, if you have a permanent surface such as concrete, or asphalt, look for cracks, or depressions, these could be signs of culvert failure. If you would like more information, please contact our office.

Roadside ditches are part of the secondary drainage system. They collect stormwater from properties and roadways. Ditches are designed to move stormwater as well as retain water for percolation. Since most landowners are on well systems, storage and percolation is needed for aquifer absorption. When ditches become impacted or blocked, stormwater flow can be affected, and in some cases, can back up water onto neighboring properties. To restore flow, elevations are checked and ditches recontoured. If needed, sod is added for erosion control. Open ditches along with operable culverts can maximize stormwater runoff.

District canals are inspected regularly for erosion, aquatic weed growth, illegal dumping, and illicit discharge. Canal washouts create negative impacts to the district's drainage system. Small erosion areas can lead to major blockages if not restored. If left unattended, the erosion can undermine trees making them vulnerable during storm events. Once the erosion is reported, crews are dispatched to restore the area. Keep in mind, anyone who uses the canals for recreation is doing so at their own risk, so please be aware of your surroundings.

Each year, operators are trained to identify and report illicit discharges or illegal dumping within the system. When illicit discharges are reported, the district works with the Department of Environmental Protection to identify the discharge and safely remove it from the waters. All inspections and violations are logged as part of our annual report for the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System. Illegal dumping violations are reported to the Solid Waste Authority Investigative Unit, and Palm Beach County Code Enforcement. Illegal dumping can have negative impacts on District operations, wildlife and even alter water quality if entering the drainage system. If you witness anyone committing these violations, contact our office immediately.

Continuous training is an essential part of our safety program. For the 24th year in a row, the District has received awards for employee and vehicle safety from the Palm Beach County Safety Council.

The District continues to be concerned with the illegal use of ATV's and dirt bikes on canals and other restricted areas. Property damage, accidents, even fatalities can occur when these machines operate on District's right-of-way. This illegal activity is subject to a Palm Beach County Sheriff's citation and confiscation. If you witness these activities, please call our office.

The District office is located at 15600 Jupiter Farms Rd and is open Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. If you have any questions or concerns, please stop by. You can also contact us at 561-747-0550, [sirwcd@sirwcd.org](mailto:sirwcd@sirwcd.org), or you can visit our website at <https://www.sirwcd.org>.