



Memorandum

Memorandum No: 23-012

Date: February 9, 2023

To: Honorable Mayor, Vice Mayor, and Commissioners

From: Greg Chavarria, City Manager

Re: Waterway Quality Monitoring Sites in Recreational Waters

Following the sanitary sewer force main breaks of 2019-2020, public confidence in using the City's waterways for recreational purposes was shaken. In November 2020, the City engaged Miami Waterkeeper (MWK) as a reputable not-for-profit advocate of coastal water quality to establish ten (10) weekly waterway monitoring sites testing for bacterial pollution and posting the data in near real time on an easy to access platform, SwimGuide. These sites have now been monitored from January 2021 through January 2023. At the September 6, 2022 Commission Meeting, Commission asked staff to consider the rotation of the ten monitoring sites.

The original ten (10) monitoring sites fall into three (3) categories. The first category is City-designated Watersport Activity Areas where the City encourages active recreation in the waterway. These include four (4) sites in or near the Intracoastal Waterway (Lake Silvia, Sandbar, George English Park, and Sunrise Bay west of Birch State Park). The second category include sites near canoe or kayak launches (Sweeting Park on the North Fork of the New River, Coontie Hatchee Park on the South Fork of the New River, and Annie Beck Park at the western edge of the Las Olas Isles). The final three (3) sites were considered of general interest due to the impacts of historical discharges (Himmarshee Canal, Tarpon River, and Royal Palm Drive at Las Olas).

The recreational standard applied to MWK waterway samples is the conservative Environmental Protection Agency's swimming beach standard which is intended to provide protection against illness when water is ingested during swimming. For this reason, sites where watersports are encouraged or locations with boat launches should be prioritized for monitoring. As staff work with MWK on a new contract, the three (3) sites of general interest are proposed to be retired and replaced by three (3) sites focused on recreational boating including Cooley's Landing in the downtown area on the New River, Sunrise Paddleboards on the upper Middle River, and Colohatchee Boat Ramp on the South Fork Middle River.

Sampling for bacteria across a broader area in the Venice of America provides the greatest opportunity for residents and visitors to be informed about waterway quality prior to entering the waterways for recreational purposes.

Attachments: Map of Waterway Quality Monitoring Sites

c: Anthony G. Fajardo, Assistant City Manager
Susan Grant, Assistant City Manager
D'Wayne M. Spence, Interim City Attorney
David R. Soloman, City Clerk
Patrick Reilly, City Auditor
Department Directors
CMO Managers

Designated Watersport Activity Areas

- 5 - Lake Silvia
- 6 - Sandbar
- 9 - George English Park
- 10 - Sunrise Bay (Birch)

Sites near Canoe or Kayak Launches

- 1 - Sweeting Park (N. Fork)
- 2 - Coontie Hatchee Park
- 8 - Annie Beck Park

Other Sites of General Waterway Quality Interest (proposed to be removed)

- 3 - Himmarshee Canal
- 4 - Tarpon River
- 7 - Royal Palm Drive

Proposed Sites with Recreational Access

- A** - Cooley's Landing (Downtown - New River)
- B** - Sunrise Paddle (Upper Middle River)
- C** - Colohatchee Boat Ramp (South Fork Middle River)



Sites to retire

