

District Notes & News



Established 1923

August 2009

SUPERVISORS

Thomas H. Powell

President

Tom Rice

Vice-President

David Beane

Robert Berman

Michael Danchuk

STAFF

Gale English

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Office Hours:

8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Monday-Friday

*The Board of Supervisors meets
the third Thursday of each
month at the Jupiter High
School Guidance Office
at 7:30 p.m.*

*Contact the District Office
for an agenda.*



Changes and Improvements in the District Throughout the Years

While many landowners in the District have been long-time residents, there are quite a few that have moved here in the last few years. "Newer residents may not be aware of the history of the District, the scope of its operations, and the many changes over the years as the area has been developed," said District General Manager Gale English, who has been with the District for nearly 30 years.

South Indian River Water Control District (SIRWCD) was created as a Special District in 1923. The District provides water management and road maintenance for an approximate 12,500 acre area, which includes Jupiter Farms, Palm Beach Country Estates, Egret Landing, and Jupiter Commerce Park.

Special Districts are a unique form of government, providing special services that are not duplicated by other governmental agencies. They provide limited purpose government on a local level with less administrative overhead than any other form of government.

Originally, Jupiter Farms and Palm Beach Country Estates were one large area with no geographical or physical division. However, in 1956, the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) constructed the C-18 canal, which divided the District into two areas and separate drainage basins that required two outfall systems.

In the late 60s and early 70s most of the road grades, canals, and culvert crossings were installed. The improved drainage and ingress/egress made it possible for the initial development of homesites and ranches. As development accelerated, it became apparent that the unimproved dirt roads and existing drainage systems were not adequate for the expanding development. Consequently, in the early 80s the District's road maintenance budget was increased to allow for ongoing shell rock stabilization of major road sections.

At the same time, landowner requests to the Board of Supervisors to seek legislative authority for paving roads was success-

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SIRWCD History

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ful. A total of 23 miles of roadways were paved, providing a network that enabled most landowners to be within approximately one-half mile of a paved road.

Plans of Reclamation or Improvements over the years were instituted for the construction, operation, and maintenance, of drainage improvements for better flood control, as well as improving groundwater recharge and the quality of runoff that is eventually discharged into the Northwest or South Forks of the Loxahatchee River.



SR-706 Outfall Canal Improvement Ribbon Cutting - Left to right: Supervisors Tom Rice, Dave Beane, Mike Danchuk, Tom Powell, General Manger Gale English, Supervisor Bob Berman, Elwyn Cooper of NRCS, and District Engineers Len J. Lindahl and Amy Eason

In the 1980s and 1990s environmental concerns became a major federal issue with the Clean Water Act and the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) establishment of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). Each required new standards for the improvement of stormwater runoff discharges. SIRWCD is a NPDES co-permittee with 34 municipalities, the Department of Transportation, Palm Beach County and four special districts. The District must comply with water quality standards and also must educate the landowners through newsletters and a website produced by the District (*see last page*) about what they can do to help minimize and reduce contaminants.

In the early 90s, construction of waste water collection and water distribution systems became the District's responsibility with the development of Egret Landing and Jupiter Commerce Park.

At this time, development began to accelerate with many more people making the area their home. As a result, there was an increased interest in services such as roadway improvements, increased swale maintenance, community parks, and potable water.

Some residents may be unaware that SIRWCD has only limited powers as a Special District under Chapter 298 of the

Florida Statutes. Under these regulations, improvement projects such as roadway upgrades are limited to those initiated by District landowners through a petition and referendum process. The District nor the Board of Supervisors initiate these types of improvements.

Over the years the Board of Supervisors, on behalf of residents requests, investigated several different types of roadway surfacing materials in order to provide good, serviceable surfaces for reasonable cost. They also researched potable water options for Palm Beach Country Estates and worked with residents on equestrian issues, swales, and other concerns.

To date approximately 25 miles have been paved to Palm Beach County standards and over 37 miles surfaced with open-graded emulsified mix (OGEM). Each project required a majority of the affected residents approval from a referendum. Scarcity and exorbitant costs of roadway materials slowed down the process during the last construction boom, although these costs have come down substantially in the last year.

In this first decade of the 2000s, many additional issues affecting water control are facing District landowners. Large water control structures such as G-160 and G-161 are SFWMD projects that involve a number of entities in northern Palm Beach County, including SIRWCD. In addition, Palm Beach County is interested in increasing water levels in the Pine Glades Natural Area, which borders the District, for environmental restoration. The District General Manager and Board of Supervisors are working closely with staff to ensure the interests of the landowners are protected and that there would not be adverse impacts to the area by these projects.

During this time, Palm Beach Country Estates residents approved a landowner-initiated potable water project. The District worked with staff to negotiate the best prices for construction, as well as with the Town of Jupiter to supply potable water without an annexation requirement. The project came in at over a half-million dollars under budget. As an added benefit, 445 hydrants provide fire protection for the community resulting in property insurance savings for many residents. The Board also offered a hook-up financing plan for residents who wished to pay over time. And, when a costly backflow prevention device require-



Road paving in Palm Beach Country Estates

ment was mandated by the state, the Board successfully fought against its implementation.

So why are the water control aspects of the District so important? The trio of hurricanes that hit this area in 2004-2005, as well as Tropical Storm Fay in 2008, dropped huge volumes of rainfall. Water control upgrades undertaken by the District and associated regulatory agencies enabled water levels to be managed so that no homes in the District were flooded.

However, there was substantial damage to the District's infrastructure from these storms. The District aggressively sought federal grants from the National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and FEMA for these repairs and were able to secure in excess of \$5 million in funding for repairs that would have otherwise had to be paid for by landowners.

Despite the fact that SIRWCD must address the many issues discussed here and deal with over 30 regulatory agencies and cooperative associations that have potential impact on its capital improvements and operations, annual maintenance cost increases have been kept to less than 2% on average over the last 20 years.



New culverts at Canal 2 and Jupiter Farms Road funded by NRCS

Fiscal oversight on the part of the Board of Supervisors, District management and staff over the years have saved residents over \$6 million by refinancing bonds.

The proposed budget for 2010 includes assessment decreases for a majority of landowners in the District. The District will continue to work hard to meet the many obligations to its landowners, as well as the regulatory agencies they work with.

Road Improvements in Jupiter Farms

District General Manager Gale English reported that as part of ongoing maintenance, the following open-graded emulsified mix (OGEM) roadways in Jupiter Farms were surfaced with an asphalt overlay:

- 159th Court from 93rd Terrace to Jupiter Farms Road
- 159th Court from Jupiter Farms Road to 110th Avenue N
- 167th Place from Randolph Siding West to Haynie Lane
- Haynie Lane from 50 feet south of 167th Place north to Indiantown Road

A number of options for overlaying the roadway were considered by the District Engineer, Lennart J. Lindahl prior to selecting the asphalt overlay. "The existing underlying OGEM provides a base for the asphalt overlay," said English. "It is a cost-effective option that offers a nice surface finish and is part of ongoing maintenance for the roadways, so residents will not have to be assessed for the upgrade," he added.



An asphalt overlay was recently applied to Haynie Lane in Jupiter Farms

Two SIRWCD Employees Celebrate 10 Years



Arie Raz and General Manager Gale English

Arie Raz and David Duckett were recently awarded engraved plaques for their 10 years of service with the District.

District Manager Gale English and Supervisor Tom Rice thanked the men for their dedication, service, and commitment to the District at the presentation.

Raz and Duckett are both operating engineers.



David Duckett and General Manager Gale English

Duckett typically operates the backhoe and Raz a side-arm mower, however both also man the District's other heavy equipment when needed.

In 2006, Raz was accepted by the Safety Council of Palm Beach County to serve as a Range Aide Worker and safety instructor. He also is a certified dump truck operator for the District.



SIRWCD Board of Supervisors Election

Two seats are up for election on the Board of Supervisors.

Tom Rice and Dave Beane are running for reelection. Rice and Beane have served on the Board since 1989 and Rice currently serves as Vice Chairman.

Kevin Baker and Mike Ryan, both residents of Palm Beach Country Estates also are running this year.

Ballots were sent out on August 6 and must be received at the Supervisors of Elections office by Sept. 17 or may be cast in person just prior to the start of the Annual Landowner's meeting at 7:30 p.m. at Jupiter High School on September 17.

CAUTION... Supervise Children Around District Equipment

The District wants to remind parents to carefully supervise children when the District's mowers, graders, and backhoes are at work in Palm Beach Country Estates and Jupiter Farms. Adults also should use care around these machines.

Children often love to run out and watch heavy construction equipment at work, though because of their small size, they are difficult to see by the operator. Like your home lawnmowers, the District mowers can take up and throw objects that may represent a danger to nearby children or adults.

Please avoid getting too close to the vehicles and keep any children at a safe distance. It may be fun to watch....but stay safe!





15600 Jupiter Farms Road
Jupiter, FL 33478

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PERMIT # 611

Important Dates

- *Thursday August 20* •
Annual Budget Meeting
- *Thursday, September 10* •
Public Hearing on Budget
- *Thursday, September 17* •
Annual Landowners Meeting

*Don't forget to mail
your election ballots!*

Visit www.sirwcd.org
for news updates!

Florida Stormwater Education Corner Protecting Florida's Water

As we noted previously, SIRWCD must comply with regulations set forth in the NPDES permit that is issued by the Florida Department of Environment Protection on behalf of the EPA in Florida. The objective of the regulations is to reduce or mitigate the impacts of stormwater runoff on the environment. Some of the program elements are:

- Maintenance of structural controls
- Stormwater treatment projects
- Roadway maintenance
- Flood control
- Pesticide and herbicide application
- Fertilizer application
- Illicit discharges
- Construction site runoff

An important part of the permit is public education. The EPA has recently requested that public education efforts be stepped up across the country. Why? Most people are unaware of the impacts of stormwater runoff. Rain falling on our roofs, driveways or even soil that has been compacted by traffic (dirt roads, home-site

construction, etc.) does not naturally infiltrate into the ground. This results in runoff, which is often contaminated by pesticides, fertilizers, pet waste, oils, and many chemicals.

In areas with sewer systems, such as Egret Landing or Jupiter Commerce Park, runoff is directed into drains, which often ends up in bodies of water with little to no treatment.

Because so much of our impervious areas are residential in nature, the EPA feels it is critical that the public be made aware of their impact and role in stormwater runoff - hence the requirement in the NPDES permit for public education.

SIRWCD has been providing a series of informative articles in this newsletter and will be adding sections to a new, updated website that is currently being created on what homeowners can do to help solve the runoff problem and help the District comply with the permit regulations.

This issue's NPDES tip is about using less fertilizer.

- Use fertilizers sparing
- Many plants do not need as much fertilizer or need it as often as you might think
- Consider using organic fertilizers that reduce nutrients more slowly
- Mix compost with your soil so your plants will need less fertilizer
- Don't fertilize before a rain storm

If you use too much fertilizer or apply it at the wrong time, it can wash off your lawn or garden into storm drains or nearby bodies of water, where it causes excess algae growth and reduces water quality.

To learn more, visit the District office for a copy of *Pesticide, Herbicide & Fertilizer Use* by the Palm Beach County Municipal Stormwater Systems Group.

ILLICIT DISCHARGE

If landowners witness anyone dumping materials into the District swales or canal system, please report this to the District Office at 747-0550.