



Department of  
**ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES  
 MANAGEMENT (DERM)**

**What are wetlands and where do wetlands exist?**

Wetlands in Miami-Dade County serve vital functions which are essential to the health and welfare of the people of Miami-Dade County. Our wetland areas provide direct recharge of water to the Biscayne Aquifer, the County's sole source of drinking water. The wetlands serve to filter and purify surface and ground water as well as provide habitat for wildlife, including many rare and endangered species. Their great capacity to absorb water also helps reduce flooding. Additionally, wetlands are often popular destinations for recreational activities, like bird watching, providing an economic and social value. Because of these important functions, wetlands are protected by federal, state, and local regulations.

**Do I have a wetland on my property?**

The best way to determine if your property contains wetlands is to contact DERM for a jurisdictional wetlands determination. Wetlands are not always easy to recognize. They are characterized by hydric soils such as marl or muck, they often have hydrology that saturates the soil for at least part of the year, and, under normal conditions, wetlands will support vegetation typical of wet conditions. However, it is important to note that wetlands do not always look like those found in the Florida Everglades. Some wetland areas do not always appear wet. Certain disturbed sites are often incorrectly assumed to be uplands, especially when viewed during dry times of the year. Wetlands sometimes appear as disturbed areas that may contain illegally dumped solid waste and may be dominated by non-native invasive vegetation. Wetland areas may also include abandoned, former, or even presently active agricultural sites.



Freshwater wetlands in Miami-Dade County occur in areas of lower elevation surrounding the coastal ridge. Jurisdictional wetlands as defined in Chapter 24-5 of the Code of Miami-Dade County often exist within the areas shown on the Wetland Areas of Concern map (Fig-1). However, please note that this map is only an approximate guide. Contact DERM for more information and verification on whether your specific property contains wetlands.

It is recommended that any low lying property within or close to the boundary lines of the Wetland Areas of Concern map receive verification from the Wetland Permitting Program of DERM on whether the property contains wetlands prior to performing any work. Many existing agricultural properties within the Wetlands Areas of Concern map boundaries have the biological characteristics or other indicators that classify them as a wetland. In addition, there are sites outside of the map boundaries that may also contain pockets of wetlands.

**Permits are required for work in wetlands**

Chapter 24-48 of the County Code requires that a Class IV wetland permit be obtained prior to performing any work in wetlands anywhere in Miami-Dade County. Because of the time and costs associated with obtaining permits for work in wetlands, property owners, prospective property owners or anyone planning any land development activity, agricultural activity or any other work in areas that may contain wetlands should contact DERM early in their planning process, and prior to commencing any of these activities. DERM can provide important information on wetland regulations and can identify jurisdictional wetland areas, and explain any permitting and mitigation requirements.

Because of the long history of agricultural operations in South Miami-Dade, many existing farm fields may contain wetlands. If these fields were established and have been continuously operated since prior to 1984, they likely do not require Class IV wetland permits from DERM to continue their existing operations. However, property owners should contact DERM for verification and for more information on whether permits are required. In addition, these property owners should contact DERM for information on permit requirements for other activities

such as placing fill pads for installing agricultural structures, creating roads, new ditches, or for the re-establishment of farming operations on lands that have not been continuously and actively in agricultural use.



**Who should I contact?**

For more information on wetland regulatory issues and to find out if your property contains wetlands, please contact the Wetland Resources Section of the Department of Environmental Resources Management (DERM) at 305-372-6585. Office records are often sufficient to provide an immediate answer to many questions, however, if necessary, DERM staff will prioritize a field inspection. If requested, DERM staff can provide a written letter stating whether a wetland permit will be required from the County for impacts to the parcel in question.

**Other regulatory agencies**

Please note that permits from the US Army Corps of Engineers (Corps), the State of Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) may also be required for work within Miami-Dade County's wetland areas. The Wetland Areas of Concern map (Fig-1) is not intended for use in determining the limits of jurisdiction of these agencies. Applicants should contact these offices:

- Army Corps of Engineers  
 Miami Office.....305-526-7181
- Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP)  
 West Palm Beach Office.....561-681-6600
- South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD)  
 West Palm Beach Office.....800-432-2045  
 Miami Office.....305-377-7274

**Miami-Dade County  
 Wetland Areas of Concern**

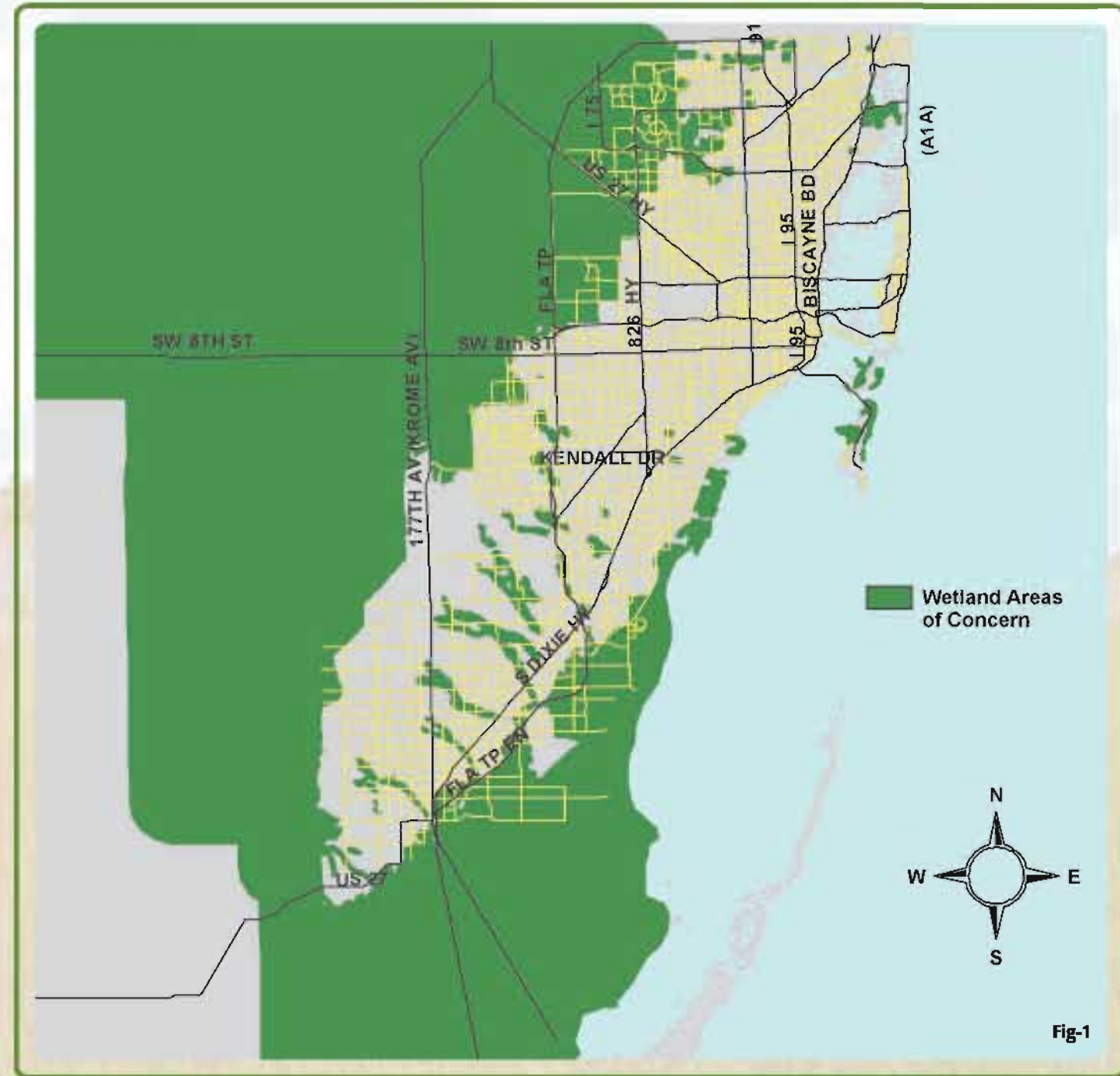


Fig-1

The boundaries shown on the Wetland Areas of Concern map are approximate and are not intended to represent the extent of all wetlands, nor are all wetland areas shown. This map is **NOT INTENDED TO BE USED TO DETERMINE THE LOCATION OF JURISDICTIONAL WETLANDS** or for regulatory purposes, it is simply an approximate guide. For further information contact DERM, Wetland Resources Section 305-372-6585



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701 NW 1st Court Ste-400  
 Miami, FL 33136

For more information call 305-372-6789 or visit us at  
[www.miamidade.gov/derm](http://www.miamidade.gov/derm)



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