



Northern Palm Beach County Improvement District
359 Hiatt Drive, Palm Beach Gardens, Florida 33418
561-624-7830 · fax 561-624-7839

Contact: Joanna Cunningham
Community Information Specialist
561-624-7830 or Joanna@npbcid.org

Northern Palm Beach County Improvement District
Awarded \$50,000 Grant

*Palm Beach County Public Lands Grant Program
Funds Control of Exotic Species*

Palm Beach Gardens, FL – June 20, 2007 -The Northern Palm Beach County Improvement District has been awarded a matching grant of up to \$50,000 for the control of exotic species in the unnamed slough at the east side of Northfork Drive near the Town of Jupiter. The Whispering Trails Mitigation Project will remove the Old World Climbing Fern and Brazilian Pepper that dominate the area. The Public Lands Grant Program is funding the matching grant through the Palm Beach County Department of Environmental Resource Management.

According to Sam Payson, Staff Biologist for Northern, “These plant species displace and alter native plant communities which native animal species need to survive. The removal of the exotic species will allow for the native community to reestablish and support a greater variety of wildlife. Helping return the correct balance benefits the ecosystem and is an advantage for everyone.”

Exotic species or nuisance plants, on the Whispering Trails property consist of old world climbing fern, Brazilian pepper, downy rose myrtle, melaleuca, air potato, earleaf acacia, and Australian pine. The program provides matching funds for the duration of the grant in order to successfully eradicate the plants which effectively kill the natural growth of native plants.

The work on the project began in March 2007 on the southwest corner of the Whispering Trails preserve tract off of Northfork Drive. A dramatic improvement in the restorative efforts is already evident. The large Brazilian Peppers were cut down, treated and removed. This allowed access to the interior, where the bulk of the climbing fern was located. The fern root mass was two to four feet thick. The work is scheduled to be completed in late June and new trees will be planted. The root mass from the climbing fern was removed to leave bare soil. This will greatly enhance the natural recruitment and the survival of transplanted trees and shrubs. Anticipated completion of the entire project is July 2007.

The Northern Palm Beach County Improvement District is an independent taxing district created by the Florida Legislature in 1959. Its role is to provide services related to water management and infrastructure for properties in northern Palm Beach County.

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