



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers**  
Jacksonville District

# News Release

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*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

## **BREAKTHROUGH PHOSPHORUS TREATMENT TECHNOLOGY APPROVED FOR LARGE SCALE TEST**

WASHINGTON --- In a decision aimed at protecting the Everglades from future inflows of damaging phosphorous pollution, John Paul Woodley, Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works, has approved a large-scale test of a new technology that holds great promise for removing phosphorus from waters entering the Everglades ecosystem.

The technology, known as periphyton-based stormwater treatment areas (PSTA), is modeled after an ecological process that has occurred in the Everglades for thousands of years. PSTA utilizes periphyton, a mat-like complex of microscopic plants and algae that occurs naturally in the Everglades. Periphyton is important to phosphorous treatment technology because it has been demonstrated that it very effectively removes phosphorous from the water column. The technology has been adapted for Everglades restoration by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and has already been subjected to a detailed small-scale test. The small-scale demonstration showed that this PSTA technology can reduce phosphorous levels from 80 ppb to less than 10 ppb, the standard established by the Everglades Forever Act. These results are 20 to 30 percent lower than those achieved by other technologies.

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“The Corps small-scale field application demonstrates the great benefit this technology may bring to the Everglades restoration program by reducing phosphorous to levels that will not harm the Everglades,” said Mr. Woodley. “We now need to move to a large-scale field test. We’re excited about the opportunity to do so within the footprint of STA-1E, a stormwater treatment area the Corps now has under construction in Palm Beach County.”

The field test will include the design, construction and operation of a test cell that may cover more than 75 acres. The field test will run approximately 18 months to establish the necessary plant and algal communities and to test water flow levels, conditions, and phosphorous outputs. The estimated cost of the field test is \$5 million and will be funded entirely by the Federal government.

“Everglades restoration is a priority of the Corps of Engineers and the Jacksonville District has committed it’s best and its brightest to the task of finding solutions to the problems that plague this national treasure,” said Colonel Bob Carpenter, Commander of the Jacksonville District. “We’ve pledged to look for naturally occurring remedies, and in this case, the answer was right there in the pristine parts of the remaining Everglades. Our challenge was to figure out how to establish the right conditions and cultivate the right communities in manmade stormwater treatment areas. We think we’ve found the answer.”

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