

ARCH CREEK TRUST

POLICY STATEMENT 001

July 16, 1986

Herbicide use in Arch Creek Park and adjacent waters, lands, etc., as proposed by The Florida Water Management Department.

The ad hoc Herbicides Committee of the Arch Creek Trust met to review establish and confirm policy on the use of Herbicides by The Florida Water Management Department. It was concluded that the Committee recommend the Membership uphold The Trust's long standing policy of opposing all Herbicide use in Arch Creek Park as the correct interpretation of the bylaws Article I. Furthermore, this Committee recommends that the Arch Creek Basin and watershed be included in the Trust's opposition on the grounds that Herbicides and/or their byproducts must pass through Arch Creek Park. While recognizing the obvious need for weed management in Arch Creek for the safe and healthy control of the Arch Creek watershed, the Committee proposes the pursuit of the following measures to achieve these goals.

To assure that waters within Arch Creek Park are as safe and healthy to both Wildlife and Visitors as possible, those waters shall be maintained mechanically by joint efforts of The Arch Creek Trust, The Metro-Dade County Parks and Recreation Department and The Florida Water Management Department. This area essentially extends from the Florida East Coast Rail Road bridge tressel to the Florida Water Management Department Salt Water exclusion Dam. Arch Creek Trust involvement can be introduced as soon as The Florida Water Management Department presents written guidelines as to the ideal condition of these waters according to State standards.

To minimize the risks of Herbicide use upstream in the Arch Creek watershed, the Arch Creek Trust shall oppose their use and argue for mechanical weed control for any short term remedy.

To effect long term control of pestulant weeds in Arch Creek, the Arch Creek Trust shall cooperate in improving the shade canopy over it to remove excess sunlight as a contributing factor to rampant growth. This includes removing exotic trees and replacing them with Natives that maximize the health of the stream. Trimming any Natives that may snag debris only in such a way as to preserve the existant shade canopy. And finally, a coordinated planting project to reforest all available public lands and right of way in the Arch Creek watershed will be enthusiastically endorsed by the Arch Creek Trust.

Other long term solutions to the problem of floating pestulant weeds hinge on maintairning surface water velocity throughout Arch Creek. The present design of The Florida Water Management Department Salt Water Exclusion Dam must be altered to allow for the purging of surface weeds by an overshot flow system. The Arch Creek Trust shall argue for this arrangement for the maintenance of floating weeds, algae, scum and debris as well as the emergency release of flood waters. Furthermore, surface water velocity will

be improved by mechanically cleaning the culverts located in the northern quarter of Arch Creek. Even partial obstruction of these culverts hold floating pestulant weeds in optimum growing conditions. The Arch Creek Trust strongly opposes using Herbicides to combat a problem that has resulted from an engineering flaw of the Salt Water Exclusion Dam and in combination with culvert placement.

The Arch Creek Trust will endorse with the cooperation of The Florida Water Management Department, Dade County and The City of North Miami, an annual clean-up effort to remove inorganic debris from Arch Creek. A date may be selected after the school recess is over so that manpower can be solicited from those concentrated there as well as others.

The Arch Creek Trust shall cooperate with the sharing of data and methods with any other group that has an interest in the condition of Arch Creek or are seeking solutions that eliminate the use of Herbicides while controlling health and safety hazards. The documentation of the health of Arch Creek on a day to day basis is important in determining necessary actions. These conditions may swing drastically with the completion of a major project within the Arch Creek watershed such as the Bridge reconstruction that is currently under way.

The steps outlined herein are intended to be accomplished on a cooperative basis. The Arch Creek Trust feels it is in the best interest of all parties concerned to maintain the historic, aesthetic and healthy condition of Arch Creek. "Historically, as committee member Tom Fafford has stated, the diversion of Arch Creek in the late 1850's for the coontie mill, may have been man's first attempt at water control in Florida ... certainly in South Florida. The Florida Water Management's South District therefore has its roots in Arch Creek." But even without this historical connection, the adverse effects of Herbicides on aquatic life in Arch Creek must bring us together in developing solutions palatable to all. A University of California study has singled out Diquat as being particularly questionable in that it can accumulate in tissues to be passed up the food chain. This is in direct contradiction with statements made by members of The Florida Water Management Department to the membership of Arch Creek Trust on June 16, 1986. In addition, The Arch Creek Trust was assured on this date by Margeret Yansura, representing The Florida Water Management Department and other personnel present, including the spray supervisor for the Arch Creek district, that spraying would not commence until after the completion of the reconstruction of the natural bridge. A suspicious kill of Pickerelweed, (*Pontederia cordata*) occurred the week of June 7th at the Salt Water Exclusion Dam. Either there was a clandestine spraying of this vegetation or it can be hailed as a natural event thus eliminating the need for further consideration of the use of Herbicides in Arch Creek. All future contact with The Florida Water Management Department shall take place with this caution. When Elmore Kirkela, past Executive Vice President of the Arch Creek Trust expressed the sensitive nature possible delays in completing the bridge reconstruction would bring about, the unanimous consensus of representatives of The Florida Water Management Department was "they will never know". This is in reference to the

divers doing the bridge construction and whether the application of Herbicides upstream would affect their working conditions and perhaps cause delays in completion.

The committee hereby directs the Secretary to place this policy document on permanent file for inspection by the membership and the public. Copies are to be forwarded to all supporters and agencies with jurisdiction within the Arch Creek watershed.