

September 7, 2012



## *just the* **FACTS**

This fact sheet is provided as a reference to encourage a greater understanding of the various issues related to managing water in South Florida.



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## Tropical Storm Isaac

### Information for Palm Beach County's Western Communities

#### Responsibilities

- The South Florida Water Management District is a regional governmental agency responsible for managing and protecting water resources in South Florida by balancing and improving water quality, flood control, natural systems and water supply. The agency operates the region's primary water control system comprised of more than 1,600 miles of canals; 1,000 miles of levees/berms; more than 500 structures and 700 culverts; and 60 pump stations.
- Local drainage is handled by entities known as 298 districts. In Palm Beach County, these include Lake Worth Drainage District, North Palm Beach Drainage District and Indian Trail Improvement District (ITID).
- Near the county's western communities and adjacent to the Indian Trail Improvement District is the 60,348-acre J. W. Corbett Wildlife Management Area managed by the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC). A levee owned by the Indian Trail Improvement District separates this natural area from The Acreage community.

#### Tropical Storm Isaac Rainfall

- Areas of Palm Beach County received up to 14.85 inches of rainfall in 72 hours from Tropical Storm Isaac. As a result, some communities experienced significant localized flooding and high water in lakes, swales and on roadways.
- The unprecedented rainfall raised water levels in the Indian Trail Improvement District, which manages the secondary canal system in The Acreage, and in the adjacent J. W. Corbett Wildlife Management Area.

#### Relief Actions Taken

- Under the Governor's Executive Order and SFWMD-issued Emergency Orders, nine temporary pumps were deployed and installed by SFWMD to divert water into the C-18 and L-8 canals and to help equalize water levels between the Corbett Area and The Acreage.
- In addition, the FWC degraded roads within the Corbett Area to help convey overland flow in the area toward the temporary pumps.
- These efforts worked together to improve drainage in the western communities by moving water into Lake Okeechobee and to tide. An estimated 2.3 billion gallons of water were moved by the District's temporary pumps.
- During the storm's peak rainfall, SFWMD moved more than 1,500 cubic feet per second (cfs) into Lake Okeechobee from the 10A Culvert at the northwest end of the L-8 Canal, the main drainage canal for The Acreage.
- SFWMD also maximized flows at three major water control structures on its C-51 Canal, helping to move water from impacted areas.

*(more)*

**Levee Adjacent to the J.W. Corbett Wildlife Management Area**

- After the storm, SFWMD field crews surveyed flooding issues in the western communities and, to assist ITID and FWC, also performed inspections on the levee that separates The Acreage from the J.W. Corbett Wildlife Management Area.
- Although the levee is not owned or maintained by the SFWMD, the regional agency took action and repaired areas of sloughing (erosion) identified along the levee during post-storm inspections.
  - In addition, SFWMD stockpiled more than 3,200 cubic yards of material adjacent to the Corbett property for repairs, if needed. This is a proactive measure widely used by operators of levees and dams nationwide.
- When residents observed stormwater runoff making its way across the road that borders the Corbett Area on the east, they were initially concerned about a possible levee breach. This was not the case. Water was flowing east to the Mecca Farms property where a series of former citrus canals and structures directed it north to the C-18 canal and away from The Acreage.
- To further reduce water levels following the storm and to provide short-term relief to the levee, two other actions were put into place:
  - The SFWMD constructed a 200-foot connection, with a weir, within the western border of the Mecca site to draw water via gravity flow from the Corbett Area and onto Mecca Farms for ultimate flow into the C-18 canal.
  - The ITID installed an additional temporary pump near the southeastern corner of the Corbett Area to help manage and stabilize water levels.
- In coordination with the Indian Trail Improvement District, the SFWMD continues to perform daily levee inspections throughout post-storm recovery.
- To strengthen the levee over the long-term, the South Florida Water Management District is working in partnership with Palm Beach County, the Indian Trail Improvement District, the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and the state Department of Emergency Management. This may involve modification of the existing levee or construction of a new facility, subject to funding, permitting and engineering/geotechnical design.
- Based on continuing visual inspections, the levee does not present an imminent threat. However, Florida is approaching the peak of the hurricane season and – in an abundance of caution – state, local and regional agencies are taking the actions necessary to protect the integrity of this levee over the short-term and long-term.

**Recreational Access**

- Some local roadways have been temporarily closed, prohibiting access to the Corbett Area. This was necessary to further stabilize water levels and alleviate flooding. All public entry points, including access to the Boy Scout Camp along the western boundary of the Mecca site, are expected to reopen when recovery is complete.