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CONTACT: DEP Press Office, 850.245.2112, DEPNews@dep.state.fl.us

SOUTH FLORIDA FLOOD PROTECTION PROJECT APPROVED

~DEP issues construction permit for new levee system~

WEST PALM BEACH – Addressing water quality and quantity continues to be a top priority for the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. In a move to increase flood protection for south Florida residents, the department today issued a permit for the construction of a new levee system. This project is a cooperative effort between the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD), Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission and the Indian Trail Improvement District (ITID).

The environmental resource permit is for the construction of a 6.25 mile levee system within the [J.W. Corbett Wildlife Management Area](#) located in western Palm Beach County. The levee system improvement project consists of constructing a new levee within uplands and wetlands in areas which separate J.W. Corbett from the [ITID M-O Canal](#).

In August 2012, Tropical Storm Isaac brought unprecedented rainfall to areas of central and western Palm Beach County resulting in widespread flooding. During post-storm evaluations conducted by the state, the ITID M-O Canal was identified as an area of critical concern because of localized slope failures, excessive seepage and the formation of boils. Under the direction of Governor Rick Scott, the SFWMD convened a multi-agency working group in September 2012 to develop a plan for strengthening the M-O Canal in an effort to meet current standards and to improve flood protection and safety to the residents in the surrounding areas.

"I'm excited about the effect this project will have on the local community," said Jill Creech, director of DEP's Southeast District. "The impact from Tropical Storm Isaac on the property owners in western Palm Beach County was huge. This project will help restore some peace of mind for residents should another significant weather event, such as Isaac, bear down on our community."

The purpose of the project is to improve flood protection for the residents of the surrounding areas. In addition, the project will expand operational control of water levels as originally designed and permitted, which may attract additional endangered

species to inhabit the area.

“The district moved historic amounts of water from the deluge caused by Tropical Storm Isaac and worked to shore up a key berm for better protection in an emergency situation,” said John Mitnik, SFWMD bureau chief of operations, engineering and construction. “We have engineered a new levee and are ready to initiate construction to help ensure the safety of residents for years to come.”

Phase one of the project is anticipated to be complete by January 2016. Phase two will follow and the levee should be complete by January 2018. The total cost of the project is estimated at \$7.8 million.

About the Florida Department of Environmental Protection

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection is the state's principal environmental agency, created to protect, conserve and manage Florida's environment and natural resources. The department enforces federal and state environmental laws, protects Florida's air and water quality, cleans up pollution, regulates solid waste management, promotes pollution prevention and acquires environmentally-sensitive lands for preservation. The agency also maintains a statewide system of parks, trails and aquatic preserves. To view the department's website log on to www.dep.state.fl.us.

<http://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/FLDEP/bulletins/c94f7f>