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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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Maintenance of South Florida's Levee System

SFWMD keeps levees performing critical flood control function

The South Florida Water Management District has actively maintained South Florida's earthen levees since their construction by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in the 1950s and 1960s. Levees are critical flood control and water supply features in the regional water management system, separating surface water in canals, regional wetlands and water storage areas from adjacent urban and agricultural development.

As part of a nationwide program, the Corps is inspecting levee systems across the country and has finalized some of its inspection results for the State of Florida. This effort is in addition to annual Corps inspections of South Florida's levees, which consistently indicate they are performing as intended.

Investments in Operations and Maintenance

- The water management system in South Florida is one of the largest in the world, providing flood control and protecting water supplies for 7.9 million residents and businesses. The system includes more than 2,000 miles of canals, as well as pump stations and other structures.
- In 2006, the District established a 50-year operations and maintenance plan to ensure regular, timely maintenance of the system.
 - Planned renovations and upgrades already identified under the 50-Year Plan are projected to cost about \$2 billion in today's dollars.
- Over the last five years, the District has invested \$240 million in essential maintenance work as part of this capital improvement plan. The agency's Operations and Maintenance staff has conducted inspections at least once a year on 1,200 structures and 2,800 miles of levees, canals and berms to prioritize projects necessary for continued operation of the regional system.
- For Fiscal Year 2014, the District has budgeted more than \$194 million for flood control operations and maintenance, including another \$50 million in infrastructure improvements.

Historical performance of levees and recent improvements

- The District is focusing its levee improvement efforts on the East Coast Protective Levee, which stretches 105 miles along the western perimeter of the most populated area in South Florida.
- For more than 60 years, the levee has fully performed as expected, protecting residents and businesses in Palm Beach, Broward and Miami-Dade counties.
 - In 1994 and 1999, the levee held up against unnamed storms that brought water levels close to the 1-in-100-year flood mark.
- In July 2013, the District completed \$18 million in upgrades of a 38.3-mile stretch of the East Coast Protective Levee in Broward County.
- In recent years, the District has made many necessary improvements to specific stretches of the East Coast Protective Levee to address maintenance items identified by Corps inspections. The agency is on time or ahead of schedule on all projects to shore up South Florida's priority levees.