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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Corps prepares for Matthew; issues guidance to boaters & campers

As Hurricane Matthew makes its way through the Caribbean islands, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District is preparing to respond as needed and providing information to boaters and campers on operational adjustments that will take place at navigation locks and recreation facilities.

The Jacksonville District activated its emergency operations center (EOC) at 7 a.m. today (Oct. 4). This action allows district staff to devote added attention to the response actions that might be necessary should Matthew cause impacts as it passes near Florida.

“Our staff is coordinating with state and local officials,” said Candida Bronson, Acting Operations Division Chief for Jacksonville District. “We are adjusting our operations to ensure the safety of those who use our facilities and our staff in south Florida.”

Jacksonville District is issuing the following guidance on its operations in south Florida:

- For boaters, the Corps has extended operating hours for its navigation locks on the Okeechobee Waterway; they will operate from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. Tuesday (Oct. 4) and Wednesday (Oct. 5). Operating hours on Thursday will depend on the track of the storm. To ensure safety of lock operators, the Corps will suspend operations when lightning is in the area, or when winds exceed 35 mph.
- For campers and visitors to recreation sites, Jacksonville District park rangers will monitor conditions at Corps’ campgrounds and recreation areas. If a county government issues an evacuation order for mobile homes or RV parks in an area where there is a Corps’ campground or recreational facility, rangers will order an evacuation of the facility and advise on shelter locations. Visitors should move all campers, motor homes, tents, vessels, and trailers from facilities under evacuation orders.
- Today, field staff are conducting a pre-storm evaluation of the Herbert Hoover Dike surrounding Lake Okeechobee. The current lake stage is 15.78 feet. While no immediate threat exists, the Corps advises people living and working around the lake to be prepared to take action should conditions warrant.

More information on Jacksonville District response actions can be found at www.saj.usace.army.mil.

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