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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Corps completes pre-storm dike inspection

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District completed an inspection today of the Herbert Hoover Dike in advance of potential impacts from Hurricane Matthew, currently making its way through the Caribbean.

Jacksonville District staff from the South Florida Operations Office in Clewiston completed the inspection of the 143-mile earthen structure surrounding Lake Okeechobee this afternoon (October 4). They reported no new issues or areas of concern since the last inspection conducted two weeks ago on September 20.

“We conduct these inspections as the water level rises on Lake Okeechobee to ensure the safety of the people who live and work in the area,” said Laureen Borochaner, Engineering Division Chief and Dam Safety Officer for Jacksonville District. “These inspections allow us an opportunity to identify any issues early, so we can mobilize the necessary people and equipment to address the problem.”

Should issues arise at the dike, the Corps has an emergency action plan in place to mobilize staff and communicate with state and local officials, as well as the public, on the nature of its response actions. Those actions fall into two broad classifications:

- A Watch Condition is declared when a serious issue with dike integrity is discovered. The issue will likely require emergency repairs and requires continuous monitoring.
- An Evacuation Condition is declared when a breach of the dike is occurring or is imminent. At this point, focus shifts to ensuring people get to safety.

The Corps will monitor conditions and conduct another inspection of the dike after the storm passes.

Additionally, Jacksonville District staff began the drawdown of water levels in the St. Lucie Canal in accordance with standard pre-storm procedures.

“We are focused on communicating the status of our water management preparations and conditions of the dike with state and local officials,” said Col. Jason Kirk, Jacksonville District Commander. “We are positioning liaison officers in the Florida State Emergency Operations Center and with the South Florida Water Management District. These liaisons will enable seamless communications.”

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

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