

*Proactively managing Herbert Hoover Dike for a safe
and healthy environment*

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has safely operated Herbert Hoover Dike for more than 70 years, diligently and methodically inspecting, maintaining and repairing the embankment and 31 included structures. We have long recognized that the dike is deteriorating. In fact, as recently as 1999, we published a pamphlet that stated, in part, that there is limited potential for a dike failure with lake levels as low as 18.5 feet, and that the likelihood increases at higher lake levels. Accordingly, we have continuously taken steps to address vulnerabilities and to inform our counterparts at the state and local levels as well as the public. The following information is provided in response to the specific measures outlined in Governor Jeb Bush's April 28, 2006 letter:

1. **Lowering lake level in hurricane season:** Lake Okeechobee has been lowered to an acceptable lake elevation for the beginning of the 2006 hurricane season. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will continue to use its current authority to maintain the lake elevation at safe levels throughout the 2006 hurricane season. Further, we are in the process of studying the possibility of revising the approved lake regulation schedule to allow us to manage the lake at a lower average level year-round, to balance estuary health, a viable lake ecosystem and water supply.
2. **Removal of power poles:** The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has already begun removal of the power poles. We will continue to coordinate with Florida Power and Light and with the South Florida Water Management District to remove and relocate power poles constructed on the dike and within the Herbert Hoover Dike right of way. We share your goal to have all power poles relocated off Herbert Hoover Dike project limits.
3. **Daily inspections:** The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has a rigorous inspection program, the frequency of which (from once every ninety days to daily) corresponds to lake pool elevations. Potentially vulnerable areas are identified through these inspections and additional monitoring takes place, even at lower lake elevations, as necessary.
4. **Materials, equipment and personnel for emergency repairs:** Just as we prepared for Hurricane Wilma and previous storms, we will continue to provide all necessary materials, equipment and personnel to ensure that any identified vulnerabilities in Herbert Hoover Dike are quickly and efficiently repaired. We stock supplies at various locations around the Herbert Hoover Dike, and we preposition equipment prior to predicted storms, to allow immediate access and ready availability in the event a repair is necessary. We are presently delivering an additional 65,000 tons of rock and stone to augment our existing supplies.
5. **Acceleration of repairs and rehabilitation:** We are pleased to report that the erosion containment repairs and debris removal that were required as a result of the 2005 hurricanes have been completed. The first phase of the planned Herbert Hoover Dike rehabilitation project is currently under way. The president's budget for fiscal year 2007 includes \$39.5 million to continue this rehabilitation work.

6. **Reevaluate repair design to provide adequate protection:** Repair designs will be reevaluated to ensure optimal protection is provided under congressionally-authorized levels of protection and project requirements.
7. **Engineering solutions for wave action, storm surges and seepage-related erosion:** All engineering solutions are, and will continue to be, developed to optimize dike strengthening. These solutions, however, must be permitted under current congressional authorizations.
8. **Request congressional authorization to improve to dam standards:** Congressional authorizations are requested by local sponsors, in this case, the South Florida Water Management District. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will continue to work with the South Florida Water Management District to review the need for new authorizations, and we will continue to provide assistance to them to further define those authorizations, as requested and as justified.
9. **Hurricane response data and tools to State Department of Emergency Management:** Through our proactive dam safety program, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers consistently coordinates with state agencies responsible for emergency management preparedness and response. This includes, but is not limited to, regularly scheduled coordination meetings, training, exercise participation, and the provision of data and information, such as inundation maps, to assist county and state emergency management and dam safety personnel in the development and/or updating of emergency evacuation plans and overall preparedness. We have had a formal Emergency Action Plan in place since 1994, most recently updated in July 2005 in accordance with new federal dam safety guidelines. During this update process, the Corps provided courtesy copies to the county emergency operation center directors and invited them to join us for a dam safety training course for operators.