

Corps of Engineers
South Florida Operations Office



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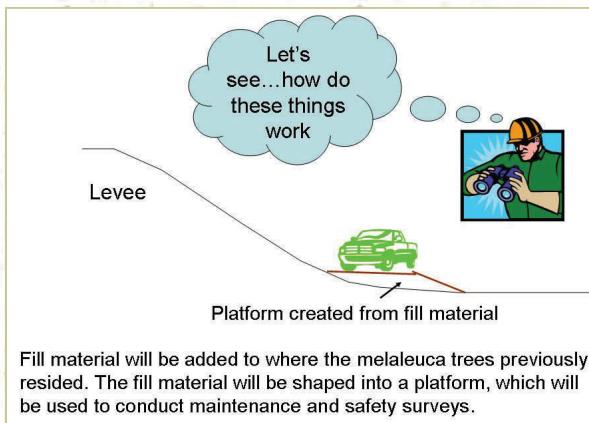
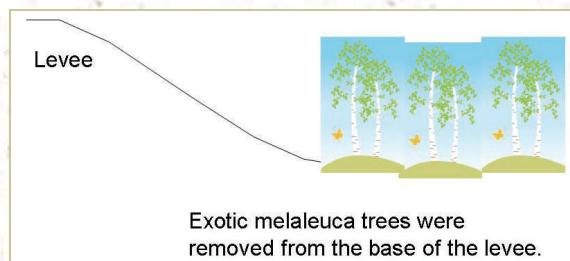
BigWater

Volume II, Issue III

Friday, July 25, 2008

Melaleuca Trees Removed For HHD Inspection Area

The SFOO maintenance section recently completed the removal of exotic melaleuca trees along the south side of the Herbert Hoover Dike. Tree removal began at S-4 pumping station and progressed to the southeast. Only trees located within 50-75 ft from the toe (base) of the levee were removed. The removal of the melaleuca trees was necessary to ensure that dike inspections and maintenance activities can be adequately conducted in the future.



Blue line indicates approximate area of the project site



Ground view of a completed section, looking east



Work in progress

The I2s Get Spruced Up

The four spillways located along the north side of Highway 41 are commonly referred to as the twelves (I2s). More formally these individual water control structures are known as S-I2A, S-I2B, S-I2C and S-I2D. They are essentially a series of flood gates that regulate waters from Water Conservation Area 3 (WCA) to the Everglades National Park (see map on next page). Over the years, the I2s had lost their luster due to natural weathering and graffiti. The structures were recently power-washed and had their railings re-painted, reclaiming their shine of old. The SFOO O&M Contractor, R & D Maintenance Inc. completed the refurbishment project with sparkling results. The following are before-and-after photos taken of S-I2B:

Before



After



Before



After



Before



Photos by
Chuck Mercer

After



The I2s...continued from page 2



Septic Systems Installed For Volunteer Campsites



Two new septic systems were recently installed at W.P. Franklin South Volunteer Campground. The new systems will serve nine campsites, which will be occupied this winter by volunteers participating in the visitor center, manatee watch and water safety programs. The project was completed by R&D Maintenance Inc.. To learn more about volunteer opportunities at Lake Okeechobee, call (863) 983-8101.

Lt. Col. Reid Robertson Presents Awards to SFOO Staff



Duane Kelley, Construction Representative



Julie Coco-Evans, Budget Analyst



Jim Hammond , Chief of Field Operations,
Maintenance & Readiness



Art Ruebenson, Supervisory Park Ranger, and Adam Tarplee, Park Ranger (not shown), were recognized for their outstanding performance as contract services project coordinators for the National Recreation Reservation Services.



Calvin Grinslade, Civil Engineer Technician



Kurt Ramsey , Superintendent of Applied Aquatics Management accepts the Corps Safety Pays Award on behalf of his organization.



Biologist, Mike Boles and Assistant Chief Rob Schnell convey their gratitude to Don Mayes for his astounding 10,000 hours of volunteer service.

Temporary Wildlife Ramps Constructed at Ten Mile Creek Reservoir

Ten Mile Creek Reservoir near Ft. Pierce, Florida was constructed to store and clean water from the Ten Mile Creek basin. The top of the reservoir was constructed with concrete tiers to dissipate wave energy during high water and wind events. Unfortunately, this construction design inhibited the movements of various types of wildlife from entering and exiting the reservoir, and has become particularly problematic for turtles during nesting season.

The SFOO Environmental Stewardship Section was contacted by Jacksonville Planning Division and the UF FWS Vero Beach Office to assist in creating a solution for the problem. They came up with the idea of building wildlife ramps using sandbags.



Photos by Mike Boles



The Environmental Stewardship Section along with the Planning Division, US FWS and SFWMD spent the day of June 10, 2008 constructing the ramps. Since the temporary wildlife ramps have been in place they have been somewhat successful. Some turtles, unfortunately, have reversed direction after discovering and making contact with the sandbag ramps, while other turtles and wildlife have successfully made their way across. The agencies involved in the project are currently working toward a more permanent solution for wildlife to access Ten Mile Creek Reservoir as well as other water storage reservoirs throughout the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Project.

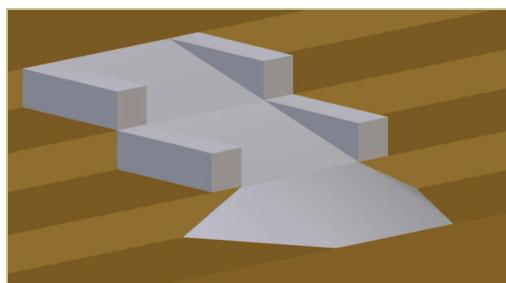


Photo by Christie Combs,
SFWMD

Photo by Liberta Scotto,
USFWS



Moorhen chicks have almost completed their climb



This wildlife ramp is one of the designs that is being considered to provide turtles with a permanent passageway over the reservoir steps at Ten Mile Creek.

The wildlife ramp would be made of Expanded Polystyrene, a lightweight foam-like material.

The design was created by Keith Jones, a Hydraulic Engineer in the Corps' Engineering Division in Jacksonville.

Volunteers Celebrate Earth Day and Take Pride in WP Franklin South Recreation Area with Ranger Bailey on Their Mind

April 19, 2008, Alva, FL: After a morning fuel-up of assorted pastries, juice, coffee, Gatorade and hardboiled eggs donated by the local Winn Dixie, volunteers were ready to dig-in by planting a diverse native plant mix consisting of 13 trees and 79 shrubs on the volunteer campsites of the W.P. Franklin South Recreation Area. A crew of boy scouts and girl scouts, local citizens, Corps of Engineers volunteers and staff gathered in the pavilion to receive direction on the mission of this year's

annual event. Armed with shovels, wheelbarrows, rakes and hoses, WP Franklin Park Ranger, Greg Carpenter handed out the assignments and guided the crew with a brief talk on safety; the discussion was especially geared towards the highly energetic scouts on a sugar buzz.

Supervisory Park Ranger, Art Ruebenson was quite impressed with the great job Ranger, Rich Bailey did in coordinating and planning the event. Sadly, Rich could not attend the affair due to a last-minute family misfortune. Rich's dedication to the event, however, was unquestionable as he continued to plan and organize up till the minute he had to catch his flight, making way to his family in time of need.



Park Ranger, Greg Carpenter briefs the troops

Volunteers kept their thoughts on Rich during the day of the event and worked diligently to make it a success in his honor.



Digging holes for native Fakahatchee grass



Staking a freshly planted Mahogany tree

As the work day came to a close, worn out volunteers followed Park Ranger, Carpenter back to the pavilion, all walking a bit slower and drenched in sweat, mud and fatigue. While at the shelter, everyone involved in the event had a strong sense of pride in the day's accomplishments, which soon became balanced with feelings of condolence for Rich after learning he had lost his sister Mary to cancer.

Hopefully, this day will be remembered and be a reminder for the accomplishments that can be achieved by a small community of individuals that share in common goals and concerns for one another.



A job well done

Corps of Engineers staff who volunteered in this year's event included: Heather Burke, Julie Coco-Evans, Matt Whigham, Robert Schnell, Art Ruebenson and retired boat captain Ernesto Laus.

A special thanks goes out to Parker French Ace Hardware for the donation of water hose nozzles and buckets, Winn-Dixie for the food and drinks, Diamond R. Fertilizer Inc. for the bags of tree fertilizer, Forestry Resources Landscape Supply for the mountain of mulch and Elata Natives, LLC for providing trees and shrubs.

SFOO Corps Day—June 13, 2008

The day was filled with fun that included games, awards, raffles, boat rides, and a hefty lunch.



Fire Burns 40,000 Acres of Lake Okeechobee Area Benefits will be Seen in the Future

There's nothing like the smell of smoke in the morning...

Some 40,000 acres of vegetation and organic soils were burned in Lake Okeechobee's western marsh region, an area that extends from Lakeport to Clewiston, during May through early June. Although the smoke

was a unwanted discomfort for local residents in surrounding communities, the effects of the fire will be beneficial to the overall ecological health of the Lake.



Marsh flora communities can be highly dependent on fire during certain seasons. Fires set back the growth of woody vegetation which routinely invades dry marsh areas during periods of low water. Fire promotes growth of herbaceous (non-woody) vegetation and tends to foster greater wetland plant

diversity. The rapid response of new growth for certain plant species can be observed just days after a burn.

Many animal species also benefit from marsh fires. The everglades snail kite (a federal/state endangered species) prefers to forage in more open water areas that are often created by severe fires. As water levels in Lake Okeechobee continue to rise, fish will migrate into some of the newly burned areas. These areas will serve as feeding, spawning and larval protection sites, creating a healthy habitat, while also providing some great angling opportunities!



Bobcats Celebrate July 4th at the St. Lucie Visitor Center



Friends getting together



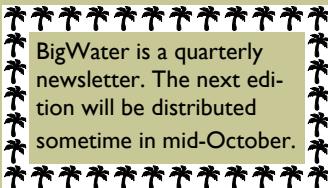
Time to put the rabbit on the grill

Park ranger, Adam Tarplee snapped these photos on the afternoon of July 4th at the St. Lucie Visitor Center.



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Thank you to the following individuals for contributing articles to this edition of BigWater:

Art Ruebenson—Volunteers Celebrate Earth Day & Take Pride...

Jeremy Crossland—Wildlife Ramps at 10-Mile Creek ...

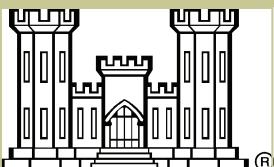
Jon Morton—Fire Burns 40,000 Acres...

Also, mucho gracias to Duane Kelley, Calvin Grinslade, Rob Schnell, Adam Tarplee, Steve Dunham, John Cichoski, Rich Bailey, Hope White, Liberta Scotto, Christi Combs, Chuck Mercer & Joe Warn for contributing content to this edition of BigWater.

Help Wanted

If you would like to contribute articles or photographs to BigWater contact the newsletter editor, Mike Boles.

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863-983-8101 x222



Corps of Engineers

Hooah! - The New Chief Arrives



Steve Dunham (left) has just arrived from Belgium to take over as Chief. Steve was the Director of Public Works (DPW) for United States Army Garrison (USAG) Benelux for the past 3 years. The mission of this garrison was to support and serve NATO organizations and their mission in Belgium, Netherlands, and Luxembourg, as well a few smaller sites. Prior to the USAG Benelux DPW job, he was the DPW for Fort Drum, NY for 1-1/2 years. Steve served previously as the SFOO Chief for 3-1/2 years just over 4 years ago. Welcome back, Steve!

Personnel Changes

Deb Nimi accepted a position as a construction inspection technician with the Army Corps of Engineers in Ft. Sam Houston, TX. Her last day was May 24, 2008.

Phillip Nall - lock & dam operator, transferred from Pt. Mayaca to Ortona Lock

Glen Hutson - new lock & dam operator rover

Wayne Sullivan - former Ortona Lock & Dam operator accepted the position of heavy equipment mobile repair inspector in Clewiston.

Employees Overseas

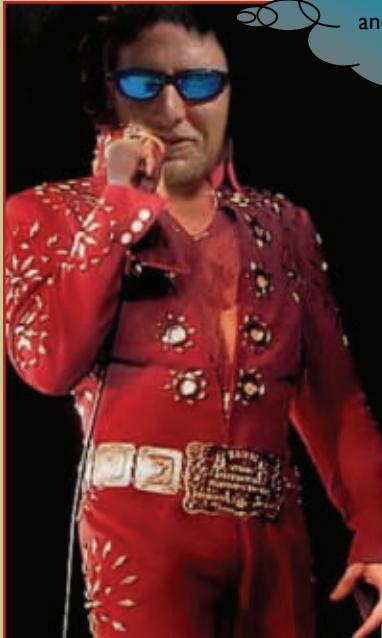
Best wishes to all of the SFOO staff members who are currently serving our country overseas:

John Sztuk - is serving in Afghanistan and will return in May 2009.

Ben Baggs - is preparing for deployment; his duty location has yet to be determined.

Dan Finke - is serving in Iraq and will return in April 2009

Treat me like
a fool, Treat me mean
and cruel, But love me.



It's Heartbreak Hotel for the South Florida Operations Office as biologist, Jeremy Crossland leaves to continue his career at the district office.

Jeremy "Elvis Impersonator" Crossland has worked in the environmental stewardship section since 2002. He will join the invasive species management team in Jacksonville in late July.