



**US Army Corps  
of Engineers**  
Jacksonville District

# News Release

Release No. 0510  
For Release: 22 Feb. 2005  
P.O. Box 4970 Jacksonville, FL 32232-0019

Nanciann Regalado, Corporate Communications  
Phone: 904-232-2236  
FAX: 904-232-2237

---

*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

## **U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS ISSUES PERMIT TO PALM BEACH COUNTY FOR SCRIPPS BIOTECHNOLOGY RESEARCH PARK**

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers issued a permit today to Palm Beach County for placing fill in jurisdictional drainage ditches in an orange grove for the construction of the Scripps biotechnology research park in northwestern Palm Beach County. The decision is consistent with the wetland regulations set forth in Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

As part of the permit review and evaluation process, the Corps considered all comments and concerns received during the public comment period, between August 4, 2004 and October 4, 2004. The comment period was extended an additional 30 days due to the hurricanes. The Corps has also considered all potential alternatives for the 535-acre development, including the Briger tract, Park of Commerce and Parcel 19. All other potential alternatives are either not practicable to the applicant, or have impacts on the environment that are insignificantly different from those on Mecca Farms.

"The proposal to construct the biotechnology research park has independent utility from the remaining planned development on the 1,900-acre site adjacent to Vavrus Ranch, because the biotechnology research park can be constructed without the need for that specific additional development," said Col. Robert M. Carpenter, District Commander.

The Corps issued the permit for the 535-acre portion of the overall development independently from the remaining planned development. "This in no way implies that we would automatically approve future applications to construct surrounding projects," Carpenter added.

Moreover, Mecca Farms and Vavrus Ranch will be subject to intense development pressure regardless of the location of Scripps, because they are two of the last remaining privately owned large land parcels in northern Palm Beach County.

According to the Jan. 15, 2002 Federal Register, independent utility is a test to determine what constitutes a single and complete project. A project is considered to have independent utility if it would be constructed absent the construction of the project in the project area. Portions of a multi-phase project that depend upon other phases of the project do not have independent utility. Phases of a project that would be constructed even if the other phases were not built can be considered as separate single and complete projects with independent utility. (Federal Register / Vol. 67, No. 10 / Tuesday, January 15, 2002 / Notices) In the case of Scripps, other development will likely occur, but may do so in several locations, such as the Briger Tract, Park of Commerce, or other areas as well as Vavrus Ranch, or instead of Vavrus Ranch and the remainder of Mecca Farms.

Palm Beach County will provide mitigation required in the permit approval process, including creation of 40.4 acres of open water lakes with 7.4 acres of littoral marsh and forested wetland plantings. Also, the applicant will provide over 17 acres in two native upland buffer areas.

A web page with complete information, including a copy of the permit package, will be available at <http://www.saj.usace.army.mil> and will be updated on a regular basis.

For further information, please contact Nancy J. Sticht of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Corporate Communications Office at 904-232-1667.